

Factors that Enhance English Language Teachers' Motivation in Jordanian Secondary Schools

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Abstract

This study aimed at investigating the motivational level of English language teachers in Jordan. To achieve the goal of the study, the researchers used an English language teachers' questionnaire. A sample of one hundred English language teachers that teach in secondary schools from Amman Second Educational Directorate had been purposively selected to respond to the questionnaire. Data obtained indicated that the Ministry of Education, the school principals, the English language supervisors, the teachers' colleagues and their students do not motivate the English language teachers in the Jordanian public secondary schools. The study also showed that the teachers of English language are motivated because they like their jobs, and teaching will help them in their future. Teaching also gives them security for their families and it is prestigious to be an English language teacher.

Keywords: Factors, Motivation, Teacher, Jordan

1. Introduction

Education in Jordan had been affected lately by several well-documented trends and will have great effect on its future. Such trends are the introduction of large numbers of immigrants into Jordan (ex: from Iraq and Lebanon), which caused the increase in the number of students; and increased the participation rate by women and minorities in the labour force; increased the use of English as a foreign language; increased the requirements for foreign language learning; and possibly increased the use of technology to accomplish unskilled jobs.

According to these variables that affected education, it began to receive a great interest recently from the government and from the Ministry of Education and it also had the greatest interest from King Abdulla and Queen Rania Al Abdulla. Queen Rania lately has been encouraging the process of education on many levels. Her program had begun with improving and maintaining lots of schools especially the ones that are located in the cities in the north and west of Amman and the villages. This included increasing the number of classes and also decreasing the number of students in them and making them more suitable for teaching.

The Queen also focused on the teacher as being a major participant in the process of education. She gave awards for the best teachers all around Jordan. The teacher should be motivated, because s/he is the one who translates educational philosophy and objectives into knowledge and skill and transfers them to students in the classroom (Ofoegbu, 2004).

Teachers' motivation will develop and improve the achievement of students and then positively will affect the process of education. This is because any human's behavior is controlled by the pleasure/pain principle where people seek to maximize the pleasure linked to success and minimizes the pain generated by failure (Weiner, 1992, p. 200).

Education is a process of behavioral change and development that occurs continuously throughout every stage of life. Teachers are active in every stage of that process. The formation of desirable behavior in the student is closely linked to the motivation levels of the teacher, as well as the teacher's attitude and behavior. Low motivation levels in the

teacher, who is in a critical position in the education and schooling process, has a negative impact on the achievement of high standards in education (Kocabas, 2009).

English Language is taught in Jordanian schools as a foreign language. This is due to the importance of this language which is the language of communication in all fields in the world (Broughton, 1978; Dweik, 1986; Schmit, 2002; Cook, 2003; Momen, 2009).

Since English language teachers have greater responsibility so they should give extra effort, they should be motivated more than other teachers in order to improve foreign language achievement. Many researchers have argued that motivation is one of the variables that determine foreign-language achievement (Gardner, 1960; Dweik 1986; Njadat, 1998). Preparing for the future of foreign language (FL) teachers for their careers is a complex process, which requires reflection, opportunities to apply theory to real-life situations and a network for the exchange of ideas and support.

The interest today in the notion of motivation to learn a foreign language differs from how it was in the past where learning another language required intelligence and verbal ability. Concepts such as attitudes, motivation and anxiety were not considered to be important at all. Today, A lot of the old concepts has changed, and one sometimes gets the impression that affective variables are considered to be the only important ones (Gardner, 2001).

It is not easy to identify general principles regarding motivation since human behavior is extremely complex. However, it is a well known fact that people are motivated in various ways and by various means. Knowing what type and level of motivation best suits the English language teachers will benefit teachers themselves, their students, second language achievement, educational administrators, and education system generally (Kocabas, 2009, p. 729).

Motivation is not an observable event, nor is it an object that can be examined under a microscope. Factors affecting motivation can only be understood by interpreting the behavior of individuals and by conducting surveys (Celtek, 2004). To this effect, the main focal point of this study is to find out to what extent the English language teachers in Jordan are motivated.

1.1 The Significance of the Study

In spite of all the efforts that have been made to improve the process of education, still the teacher in general and the English language teacher in particular in Jordan is not motivated, which will negatively affect foreign language achievement in Jordanian schools.

It is generally accepted that the competence and commitment of teachers should be the most important determinant of learning outcomes. A lot of studies had been conducted about the importance of English language teacher's role in the process of education in Jordan (ex: Njadat, 1998; Al-Ali & Al- Saleem, 2009), but what is striking, however is just how little systematic research has been undertaken on motivational and incentive issues among EFL teachers in the world generally and in Jordan in particular.

This study will be of use to teachers, students, curriculum planners and English language development programs.

1.2 Limitations of the Study

Results of this study are limited to the following:

The sample, which was composed of 100 English language teachers, was selected on grounds of convenience from the second directorate in Amman secondary public schools during the academic year 2009-2010. Only 77 teachers had responded to the questionnaire. Therefore, one should be cautious in attempting to generalize the empirical findings. It is also limited to the instrument used in the study, which is the questionnaire that was given to the teachers, which was prepared by the researchers for this purpose.

2.1 Review of Theoretical Literature Related to Teachers' Motivation

The concept of motivation had been the focal point for many researchers locally and internationally. Added to that, the concept of teachers' motivation had been the interest of many scholars in the world, but there is a shortage of studies in Jordan about teachers' motivation in general and about English language teachers' motivation in specific.

Ofoegbu (2004) considered "Teachers' motivation" one of the important factors that would lead to classroom effectiveness and school improvement. It has to do with the teachers' desire to participate in the educational process and also to the teachers' attitude to work within the school environment. He also declared that teachers' motivation is anything done to make teachers happy, satisfied, dedicated and committed in such a way that they bring out their best in their places of work so that students, parents and society will greatly benefit from their services. For Ofoegbu Teachers' motivation could therefore be referred to as those factors that operate within the school system which if

not made available to the teacher could hamper performance, cause stress, discontentment and frustration all of which would subsequently reduce classroom effectiveness and student quality output. This implies that "teachers' motivation include factors that cause, channel sustain and influence teachers' behaviour towards high management and academic achievement standards in schools." (p. 6)

Jesus & Lens (2005) believed that teachers' motivation is an important concern for educational leaders and managers because teachers' motivation has an important effect on students' motivation. It is also important for the improvement of educational reforms. First, motivated teachers are more likely to work for educational reform and progressive legislation. Second, it is the motivated teacher who guarantees the implementation of reforms originating at the policy-making level. Teachers' motivation is important for the satisfaction and fulfillment of teachers themselves (p. 120).

According to Davidson (2007) teachers' motivation became a critical factor. On one level, teachers' motivation is determined by a long list of variables, such as the existence of the enabling environment and the equipment that help teachers to carry out their roles. However, at a basic level, teachers' motivation is linked to how teachers feel they are being treated and to the way they perceive their own working and living conditions. For example, if a teacher feels that he or she is being asked to teach too many hours per week, the problem needs to be addressed, regardless of whether or not others in the education system perceive the teacher's workload is too high. In short Davidson (2007) believed that the "fundamental importance of the teachers' role in ensuring effectiveness of education must be recognized, understood, and taken into account. Further, the rights of teachers must be realized in order to secure and strengthen their own commitment to achieving quality education for all." (p. 3)

Praver & Oga- Baldwin (2008) had mentioned three types of language teachers' motivation. The first is the intrinsic motivation such as the internal desire to teach, a dialogue connection between the teacher and the students, a high feeling of efficacy in the classroom and the sense of accomplishment. The second type is the extrinsic motivation, such as long term job stability, autonomy in the freedom of methods, materials and choices in the classroom, positive working relationships, good communication and community and self realizations for teachers requires high expectations of success in the classroom.

2.2 Review of Empirical Studies Related to Teachers' Motivation

Gheralis (2003) employed a qualitative research approach to identify and document different motivational influences affecting EFL teachers' motivation in Greek. The research consisted of a series of in-depth qualitative interviews with Greek state EFL and non-EFL teachers. Most of the findings coincided with insights from other teachers' motivation studies; namely that the intrinsic aspect of teaching was more satisfying and more motivating than the extrinsic motivational factors. However, the findings have also highlighted an area that had not been paid much attention to in the literature, the temporal dimension of teacher motivation, which plays an important role in the development and motivation of the teacher due to the fact that teaching as a profession is a lifelong engagement.

Shoaib (2004) conducted a study that dealt with the motivation of foreign language teachers. A qualitative research approach was employed to identify and document different motivational factors affecting EFL teachers' motivation within and outside their educational institutions. The method of analysis employed for this study consisted of thirty semi-structured individual interviews and one focus group interview with Saudi Arabian and non-Saudi EFL teachers from three different educational sectors, following an in-depth interview based survey approach in combination with several aspects of grounded theory. He concluded that much of the demotivation experienced by EFL teachers was due to the conflict between commitment and the inadequacies of the educational institutions teachers worked in. Also, he asserted that the nature of the job itself was not the reason for teachers' lack of motivation.

Wang (2005) conducted a study that aimed to explore whether or not extrinsic and intrinsic motivation affect teachers' satisfaction in China. In-depth interviews based on semi-structured questionnaires were used as the major research method. The survey was conducted on a sample of sixteen teachers who were selected from four schools, two public and two private. The study resulted in that teachers in private schools seem to be more dissatisfied than their counterparts in public school. Wang also maintained that teachers' motivation has been concerned with three major factors influencing their motivation and occupational choices: demographic traits, intrinsic factors relating to their inner feelings about the job, and extrinsic factors relating to the objective characteristics of the work itself.

Hammad (2008) conducted a study that aimed at exploring the level of motivation of private schools in Amman Municipality and its relation to their performance. The study population consisted of all private school teachers, 814 male teachers and 1803 female for the school year (2007-2008), In addition to 200 private school principals. The sample consisted of 300 teachers and 100 principals. Two questionnaires were used in the study. The first was to

reveal the level of motivation of the private school teachers in Amman. The second was to identify the performance of private schools teachers from the principals' point of view. The study concluded that the motivation level of the private schools teachers in Amman was high. It also showed that the performance of the private schools teachers in Amman was high from the principals' point of view.

3. Research Methodology

A questionnaire that was prepared and given to teachers was the main instrument used by the researchers to collect the data. It aimed at measuring the degree of the English language teachers' motivation in secondary schools in Jordan. A five point Likert scale was used for the subjects' responses on the statement. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of motivation to 10 motivational sources by using a Likert scale of Poorly Motivated =1, Slightly Motivated =2, Neutral=3, Motivated =4, Strongly Motivated =5

The questionnaire consisted of two dimensions; the first one meant to collect the demographic data of the participants such as age, gender, educational degree and experience of English language teachers in teaching. The second dimension contained a list of motivational sources to find out to what extent English language teachers are motivated by these sources. (See Appendix A)

4. Data Analysis

Responses given to section B in the questionnaire show that the English language teachers in Jordanian public secondary schools are not highly motivated as it is shown in table one below. This result is in agreement with the results of Al 'Amosh (1995) who had indicated that teachers in general are not highly motivated in Jordan. And this agreed with Dweik (1986) who maintained that one of the major problems of learning English language in Jordan was related to the teachers who are not motivated. From table one, item 10 shows that only 34% of the English language teachers are motivated by the Ministry of Education. English language teachers' salaries are too low especially when compared with the English language teachers in the private schools.

The response to item nine shows that not more than 48% of the English language teachers are motivated by their school principals; teachers are not psychologically or emotionally supported by their principals; their suggestions and opinions are not taken seriously. Any creative, active and responsible teacher needs to be recognized for her or his dedication and to be thanked as a token of appreciation and to be given financial incentives, this is a fair way to recognise and acknowledge hardworking teachers. The principal must always appreciate the teachers' performance. This was what Kocabas & Karakose (2002) and Diamantes (2004) indicated when they claimed that the school administration is responsible for motivating teachers.

Table 1. The Level of English Language Teachers' Motivation

Motivational Sources	Mean	%	Rank	The level of Motivation
1-I am self motivated because I like my job	3.71	.742	1	High
2-I am motivated because teaching gives security for my family	3.70	.740	2	High
3-I am motivated because teaching will help me in my future	3.65	.730	3	Medium
4-I am motivated because it is prestigious to be an English language teacher	3.60	.720	4	Medium
5-I am motivated by my students	3.04	.608	5	Medium
6-I am motivated by my students' parents	2.68	.536	6	Medium
7-I am motivated by my teaching colleagues	2.56	.512	7	Medium
8-I am motivated by my school principal	2.40	.480	8	Medium
9-I am motivated by my English language supervisor	2.40	.480	8	Medium
10-I am motivated by the Ministry of Education	1.68	.336	9	Low

In addition, the responses to item eight show that only 48% of the English language teachers are motivated by their English language supervisors and 52% are not. The role that the English language supervisors had taken in the public schools is to criticize the teachers and to look for their weaknesses and disadvantages. The first thing most of the supervisors give when attending an English language class is to talk about the shortcomings of the lesson instead of beginning by the advantages and thanking the teacher for the work that she or he had done. This gives a negative impression to the teacher, and this is the reason why most of the English language teachers and the teachers of other subjects do not like supervisors attending their classes.

Furthermore, Most of the teachers in the public schools have B.A degrees in English language and literature without having any courses related to the language teaching methodology. So the role of the English language supervisors is to stand up with the English language teachers and guide them in the right way.

Item seven shows that not more than 51% of the English language teachers are motivated by their English language colleagues and 49% are not. Item number six also shows that about 54% of the English language teachers are motivated by their students' parents, which has a negative impact on the teachers. The more they are appreciated for their work, the more they are dedicated. Culturally speaking, people in Jordan tend to blame the teachers for the children's failure and if the children are already clever they attribute success to the family. Consequently, the teachers of English language need to be encouraged and supported by the students' parents and also must be grateful and appreciate their work.

From table one, item number five indicates that 61% of the English language teachers are motivated by their students. Sometimes when you have different levels in one class or when you have a class where the students are weak, this could reduce the teachers' degree of motivation. This result is in agreement with Scott, Cox, and Dinham (1999) and Praver & Oga- Baldwin (2008) who all indicated that what could motivate a teacher is to have a dialogue connection between the teacher and the students, a high feeling of efficacy in the classroom and the sense of accomplishment.

Responses to item four, in table one show that 72% of English language teachers are motivated because it is prestigious to be an English language teacher. English language is the language of communication in the world in almost every field and it is the second and official language in most countries and is taught as a foreign language in many countries. Jordan is one of the countries where English language is taught as a foreign language because of its importance. Teaching English language begins in the public schools from the first grade. Therefore, because English is an important language in the world and because it is an important language in Jordan it is prestigious for the teachers of English to teach such a language.

Results for item three also indicate that 73% of English language teachers are motivated because teaching will help them in their future, while responses to item two show that 74% of these teachers believe that teaching gives the financial security for their families. These three points could be explained by the economic condition of the people in Jordan; the salaries of workers in the public sectors are so low when compared with the private sectors or when compared with other countries. In addition, not every person can have the opportunity to work in the private sector and also some people prefer the public sectors for the job safety that they have in the public rather than the private sectors despite their low salary. These outcomes are in agreement with Gheralis (2003), Wang (2005) and Davidson (2007) who declared that teachers' motivation has been concerned with three major factors influencing their motivation and occupational choices: demographic traits, factors relating to their inner feelings about the job, and factors relating to the objective characteristics of the work itself.

It is worthy to note that responses to item one from table one show that 74% of the English language teachers are motivated because they like their jobs. When the teachers like their jobs, they will be more active, affective, and creative and will give more for their students. These results are in the same line with Hussin (2000), Ofoegbu (2004), Wang (2005) and Praver & Oga- Baldwin (2008). They all agreed on the internal desire to teach as an important factor for English language teachers' motivation.

5. Conclusion & Recommendations

Data obtained indicated that the Ministry of Education, the school principals, the English language supervisors, the English language teachers' colleagues and their students do not motivate the English language teachers in the Jordanian public secondary schools. The study also showed that the teachers of English language are motivated because they like their jobs; because teaching will help them in their future, teaching gives them security for their families and finally because it is prestigious to be an English language teacher.

Based on this study the following recommendations may contribute to enhancing English language teachers' motivation in Jordan. These recommendations are as follows:

1. The Ministry of Education should give fair salaries for teachers depending on their years of experience, their specializations and the age of the students they teach.
2. The Ministry of Education should provide schools with suitable facilities and suitable aids for teaching English language.
3. The Ministry of Education should make continuous surveys to keep close and up-to-date with the teachers' problems.
4. The Ministry of Education should make it clear that the role of the English language supervisors is to positively guide the English language teachers.
5. The Ministry of Education should also conduct workshops and training programs to assist English language teachers.

Suggestions for Future Research

Related future studies that can build on the research findings are important and can be undertaken in a number of ways to overcome the limitations outlined throughout this research. Fundamentally, the researcher believes that the limitation of this work is the bases for future research. For future research in this area, the following points should be borne in mind, as potentially fruitful avenues of research:

1. Conduct more studies about the concept of English language teachers' motivation and study its relation with teachers' performance, job satisfaction and student's achievements.
2. Perform comparative studies between the English language teachers' motivation in the private and the public schools in Jordan.

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Appendix A

English Language Teachers' Questionnaire

Factors that Enhance English Language Teachers' Motivation in Secondary Schools

Dear Teacher,

We are conducting a study on English language teachers' motivation. The intention of this research is to find out whether English language teachers are motivated or not, and to explore the factors that could motivate them.

We kindly request your participation, which will involve filling out the questionnaire. It should take between 10 to 15 minutes. The questionnaire is confidential.

Sincerely,

The researchers

Questionnaire

This questionnaire aims at investigating English language teachers' motivation in secondary schools. The researchers assure you that the information provided in response to the items in the questionnaire will be used for the sole purposes of academic research. Your cooperation in filling out the questionnaire as accurately as possible is highly appreciated.

The questionnaire consists of three parts: 1. demographic data. 2. English Language teachers' level of motivation. 3. Factors that enhance English Language teachers' motivation.

Section A: Demographic Data

1. Gender:

- ☐ Female
☐ Male

2. Age:

- ☐ From (20-30) years
☐ From (31-40) years
☐ From (41-50) years
☐ More than 51 years

3. Highest educational qualification achieved:

- ☐ Diploma
☐ Bachelor degree
☐ Master Degree
☐ Other

4. English language teaching experience.

- ☐ Less than 5 years
☐ From 5 - less than 10 years
☐ From 10 – less than 15 years
☐ 15 and more

Section B: The Level of English Language Teachers' Motivation

- On a scale from 1 to 5, please show to what extent you are, as an English language teacher, motivated by the following

No.	Motivational Sources	1	2	3	4	5
1	1-I am self motivated because I like my job.					
2	2-I am motivated because teaching gives security for my family.					
3	3-I am motivated because teaching will help me in my future.					
4	4-I am motivated because it is prestigious to be an English language teacher.					
5	5-I am motivated by my students.					
6	6-I am motivated by my students' parents.					
7	7-I am motivated by my teaching colleagues.					
8	8-I am motivated by my school principal.					
9	9-I am motivated by my English language supervisor.					
10	10-I am motivated by the Ministry of Education.					

1: Poorly Motivated

2: Slightly Motivated

3: Neutral

4: Motivated

5: Strongly Motivated

Thank You