Motivation and expectations: EFL teachers reporting from Turkey

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Public schools in Turkey are state property and are managed by principals appointed by the Ministry of National Education (MONE). It is very well-known that *institutional culture* is ubiquitous and important for one's success in career development. How such culture is reflected by English teachers working in Turkish public schools is the concern of this paper. Twenty English language teachers volunteered to be data sources in stating their motivation and expectations from their institutions. They were asked to complete and elaborate on two sentences in a semi-structured interview: (a) I work for a Ministry of National Education school because…; and (b) What I expect from my institution is … . The answers to these items were analysed qualitatively and quantitatively, revealing that most of the participant teachers prefer working at public schools due to lack of better alternatives. They also expect mostly financial support from the Ministry, not only for their service but also for improving the infrastructure of schools to teach English more effectively.

Introduction

Institutional culture is generally used to describe the personality of institutions. "One definition of an institution's culture is common ideas, values, and standards that permeate the everyday lives of its members, and that are perpetuated by institutional indoctrination, actions, and leadership" (Simone, 2009, p.5). Similar to this definition, "schools are shaped by cultural practices and values and reflect the norms of the society for which they have been developed" (Hollins, 1996, p. 31). These values affect the way people in a school think, perform, and teach and/or learn.

In Turkey, public schools are properties of the state and are governed centrally by the Ministry of National Education (MONE) (Memduhoglu, 2008). The Ministry of Education is chaired by the Minister who is appointed by the Turkish Presdient. Schools do not have unique mottoes or statements as all have to adopt those promulgated by MONE (see, for example, *Eurydice*, 2021). Public schools also do not have their own unique visual cultural indicators of slogans or flags but all utilise the national emblem of MONE's. However, although all public schools follow the MONE's central regulations and rules, it is visible that each school is somewhat different from others. Therefore, it is of interest to understand a school's uniqueness as viewed by its staff members.

This paper seeks to investigate the motivations and expectations of a group of English language teachers who have chosen to work at public primary schools in Turkey, so that institutions could become better prepared for actions to improve the work performance of teachers. Investigating teachers' expectations about their choices of public schools and what they need to teach will help to understand the conditions needed for teachers to work in a more motivated way that yields effective performance.

Background to the study

Working life is significantly important to know about since it is highly relevant to the well-being of citizens and economic growth of a society. The working conditions and the self-identity across the institution are some of the key concepts which are worthwhile to discern.

As most people view their workplaces as an important arena for self-realisation, they develop some expectations about their institutions. These expectations can reveal the sources of their motivation, which is the main topic investigated in this study.

Motivation has been theorised by many scholars within different frameworks in the past. Four of which had been leading for the researchers in this field were developed by Freud, Maslow, McGregor, Argyris. In 1920s as a psychoanalyst, Freud (2010) accepted all actions as a result of internal, biological instincts that are classified into two categories: life (sexual) and death (aggression). Later, most of his followers denied his explanation, finding it too simplistic. Soon after, within the humanistic framework Maslow (1954) proposed a hierarchy in a human needs triangle to explain motivation and its sources. Consequently, McGregor's (1957) theory of workplace motivation was based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs. He perceived human motivation having roots in lower needs and higher needs, in a framework of human resources management (Latham, 2012). Similarly, Arygris (1957) pictured the changing nature of motivation in the workplace as a continuum, going from immaturity to maturity.

In the literature (Bandura, 1997; Bastick, 2000; Deci, 1972; Moses, Berry, Saab & Admiraal, 2017; Thomson, Turner & Nietfeld, 2012; Yu, 2015) three types of workplace motivation are clearly differentiated. *Extrinsic* comes from the outside of the self, while *intrinsic* is from the inner self. For example, when teachers prioritise motivations such as salary and holidays, they refer to extrinsic motivation. By contrast, committing to work has usually been associated with intrinsic motivation "where rewards come from the activity itself and successful results rather than from conditions controlled by others" (Firestone & Pennell, 1993, p. 491). Furthermore, *altruistic* motives are enacted via the significant value of the profession due to its social influence.

As for motivation of teachers at schools, numerous studies have focused on a range of factors. Some have based the reason on school management styles that have exploited transformational leadership skills to enact effective teamwork and school improvement (Andriani, Kesumawati & Kristiawan, 2018; Berkovich & Eval, 2017; Haryono, Amrullah, & Surah, 2020; Wiyono, 2017). Other studies emphasised autonomous motivation of the self, that is a sense of choice and willingness, and a full commitment (Kim & Cho, 2014; Näkk & Timoštšuk, 2021; Nolan & Rouse, 2013; Wagner & French, 2010; Zhang & Wang, 2018). This type of motivation is fed by environments that sustain basic psychological needs, such as autonomy, supportive interpersonal relationships and confidence in professional competence (Reeve & Su, 2014). Although altruistic reasons are not satisfactory by themselves alone, if combined with intrinsic and/or extrinsic factors,

they yield better results in teacher retention. Contributing to community and raising children for the future of the society have been mentioned in the studies conducted into such motives (Chiong, Menzies. & Parameshwaran, 2017; Erten, 2014; Mukminin et. al., 2017; Song, Gu & Zhang, 2020).

Teachers transfer from universities into their workplaces with expectations which may be mostly unrealistic and misleading for their further career development (Weiss, 1999). Despite usually being reconstructed during practice teaching prior to becoming a full time teacher, prior beliefs may be long lasting and teachers will act in accord with their first impressions (Tauber, 1998). However, this usually starts after some time, since it may take several months for novice teachers to develop their own routines (Kizildag, 2007). They may find public school teaching to be either a "rewarding experience, an opportunity to help children in creative ways in a supportive atmosphere", or "a lonely frustrating experience, a series of disheartening conflicts and disappointments" (Murnane & Phillips, 1977, p. 1). For some, there is a gap between what is expected and offered (Bano, Noreen, & Bashir, 2019), which complicates career pathways.

Whether it is a positive beginning, all teachers develop expectations from the management. Studies conducted on teacher expectations from their institutions have been analysed in range of categories such as institutional support, collegial collaboration and teacher leadership. Permissiveness in leading professional development and taking initiatives in decision-making processes for in-house issues have become hot topics teachers raise (Angelle & DeHart, 2011; Kıranlı, 2013; Rutledge, 2003). Workload, salary and status have been other topics highlighted among the expectations of entry level teachers (Cockburn & Haydn, 2004; Kyriacou & Kunc, 2007; Spear, Gould & Lee, 2000). Such expectations are situated in line with the organisational structures and they change accordingly (Sæbø & Midtsundstad, 2018) from one to another.

Method

Research design

This study is exploratory in nature and aims to understand the participant teachers' perspectives on working for MONE schools. It is designed as a qualitative and descriptive one aiming at discerning sources of teachers' motivation to prefer working at public schools and their expectations from the institutions as well. Interviews enable the researcher to elicit perspectives of people who share common experiences (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). Therefore, the study is designed qualitatively by giving teachers two core purpose statements to start the semi-structured interviews.

Participants

The participants in this study were 20 English language teachers, including fourteen females and six males working at public schools in Turkey. The study excluded teachers working at private schools, as the aim was only to explore and describe the state of public schools from the perspectives of their staff. The participant teachers varied in terms of

their experience and the socio-economic status of the school they worked at. Socio-economic status of the schools participants were working at is a consideration, as the profiles of the students at those schools is also a variable influencing staff behaviours and attitudes (Parker, Hannah & Topping, 2006; Hartas, 2011; Kormos & Kiddle, 2013), as well as their motivations and expectations. Table 1 shows the socio-economic status of the participants' schools.

Table 1: Socio-economic status of the participants' schools

Teacher types	Socio-economic level of the schools							
	Low		Middle		High		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Novice	6	30	0	0	0	0	6	30
Socialising	5	25	3	15	0	0	8	40
Experienced	1	5	3	15	2	10	6	30
Total	12	60	6	30	2	10	20	100

As seen, more experienced teachers (11 and more years) work mostly at middle and high socio-economic schools, whereas socialising (6 to 10 years) and/or novice teachers (1 to 5 years) work mostly at low-income schools.

Data collection and analysis

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews where participants were asked to complete the following sentences in their mother tongue, Turkish:

a. I work for Ministry of National Education because ………………… .
b. What I expect from my institution is ……………………………… .

The answers were clarified, where necessary, by asking fringe questions to elicit the exact meanings employed by the participants. They also were asked to cite what type of public school they were working at in terms of socio-economic status and location. Interviews were conducted either face-to-face or through emails between January and March 2019. Six participants were interviewed face-to-face and 14 participants were emailed. Face-to-face interviews lasted for about twenty to thirty minutes. Table 2 shows pseudonyms, demographics and data collection procedure for the participants.

In the data analysis procedure, descriptive and content analysis techniques were applied. Data were examined by the researcher and an expert from the field to validate and confirm the reliability of the results. For reliability purposes, the items were grouped as "Agree" and "Disagree" and a consensus for all items was determined. Some data segments to be used in the current paper were later translated into English and shared with the relevant participants for providing member check.

Table 2: Participant pseudonyms and data collection procedure (N=20)

	Pseudonym	Experience	Gender	School socio-economic level	Location	Data collection procedure
1.	Esra	Novice	Female	Low	Rural	Email
2.	Ali	Socialising	Male	Middle	Urban	Face to face
3.	Mehmet	Novice	Male	Low	Rural	Email
4.	Ay e	Socialising	Female	Low	Urban	Email
5.	Zehra	Novice	Female	Low	Rural	Email
6.	Yasemin	Socialising	Female	Middle	Urban	Face to face
7.	Zeynep	Experienced	Female	Middle	Urban	Face to face
8.	Ahmet	Experienced	Male	Middle	Rural	Email
9.	Elif	Socialising	Female	Low	Urban	Email
10.	Sinem	Novice	Female	Low	Rural	Email
11.	Neva	Experienced	Female	Middle	Urban	Email
12.	Orhan	Novice	Male	Low	Rural	Face to face
13.	Tuba	Experienced	Female	High	Urban	Email
14.	Esen	Socialising	Female	Low	Rural	Email
15.	Nuray	Socialising	Female	Low	Rural	Email
16.	Fatma	Experienced	Female	Low	Urban	Face to face
17.	Didem	Socialising	Female	Middle	Urban	Email
18.	Gönül	Socialising	Female	Low	Rural	Email
19.	Selim	Experienced	Male	High	Urban	Face to face
20.	Cenk	Novice	Male	Low	Rural	Email

Findings

Findings from the analysis are grouped under two categories as (a) *motivation* towards the institution and (b) *expectations* from MONE. For the first category, the participant attitudes elicited towards working at public schools fall into three different groups: positive, negative and indifferent. For the second category, *expectations*, the participants anticipate support from MONE, which can be grouped under four separate areas: financial, morale, infrastructural and professional. Tables 3 and 4 display the descriptive figures of the participant answers.

According to Table 3, the frequency of a positive attitude towards the schools the participants work at and their profession is 84%, whilst negative is only 4% and indifferent is 12%. Having a positive attitude towards the institution is identified with a number of reasons, mainly originating from the social rights and security of the position provided by the MONE.

One of the participants summarised his extrinsic reasons as follows:

> Social security and a guarantee position are provided by MONE. And I don't have to compete for my salary. I think working at public schools is a better alternative to working at private ones since private schools usually abuse your energy. (Quote #1, Mehmet)

Table 3: Attitudes towards working at MONE schools (N=25)

	Quality of the attitude	n	%
Positive	Guaranteed work	8	32
	Giving the access for social responsibility and serving the public	5	20
	Protected social rights and insurance	3	12
	Not as busy as other professions	2	8
	Supportive school management/recognition	2	8
	Good working hours	1	4
	Total positive	21	84
Negative	Burnout/dislike working with children	1	4
	Total negative	1	4
Indifferent	No better alternative	3	12
	Total indifferent	3	12
Overall total		25	100

Guaranteed positions provided by MONE, who regulate salaries by excluding competing factors such as hardly ever using incentives or punishments, is the biggest factor for eight participants. Two teachers, referring to institutional support, were quite happy working with their school management because they got recognition for their profession and infrastructural support from the managers. Another participant explained this intrinsic motivation via the following excerpt.

> I love the school I work at. The facilities are good. I set up a language classroom. The management is positive about what I have been doing. The students are all OK and are attentive to me. I work for MONE; it is because they meet my expectations. (Quote #2, Didem)

Other positive attitudes for working at public schools originated from a few similar factors, such as feeling responsible for community service and a passion for public work. One of the participants also highlighted the balanced working hours set by the school. When sources of motivation were analysed, the public value of the teaching profession and the prestige of working as an English language teacher among other subject fields at their school were two altruistic motives for their positive attitude towards the institution.

However, as can also be seen in Table 3, there were a few participants who had negative or indifferent attitudes towards the schools they work for. Either the burnout effect or having no better alternative for public schools was their reason to choose to work with MONE schools. The participant in Quote #3 below evaluated MONE schools as her choice of a workplace, comparing it with private schools.

> [I] have no better alternatives… Private schools may sometimes pay a bit more but they make you work so hard and the salary you get is less compared to what you really deserve. They abuse your energy, in fact. This is why I choose MONE. I work less and get paid less. Fair enough! (Quote #3, Sinem)

Private schools are well-known to have higher socio-economic status students. Parental collaboration and a well-built school infrastructure also are favourable reasons for most of the teachers preferring to work at. Yet, there is also one another reason to work at private school in Turkey. Since the state-mandated teacher certificate exam (KPSS)[1] is a rather difficult one that was instituted for those seeking to work at public schools almost two decades ago, many of those who could not pass the exam tended to seek work at private schools which have their own recruitment procedures. Particularly, it is easy for English language teachers to find a position at private schools, as demand for successful learning of a foreign language is high. However, high workloads assigned to English language teachers at private schools, and the higher status of appointments at a public school with a higher certificate exam score, diminish the advantages provided to teachers by private schools, and make public schools more favoured as workplaces.

In another quote below, the participant describes his burnout. He bases his feelings upon his dislike of teaching children. However, as central appointments are done regardless of teachers' preferences for age group and levels, the participant admits that he does not have a better alternative, as explaining why he remains in his position.

> I do not like to teach children and this is why I feel like I am too tired to go to school. However, I have no other alternatives. The conditions in our country are not so good now. If I quit working for MONE, I cannot find another job. (Quote #4, Orhan)

Both participants Sinem and Orhan, feeling indifferent or negative respectively, mention the limited access to other professions with their teaching degree. Accepting the MONE regulations of not being able to choose the schools they wish to work at, both refer to *alternativeless* working conditions by pointing out a lack of intrinsic motivation.

When the expectations of participant teachers from their institution are analysed, one can easily notice only one keyword: *support*. The types of support expected from MONE schools as stated by the participants can be divided into four categories. As shown in Table 4, these are professional (32%), financial (26%), infrastructural (22%) and morale (20%).

Participant teachers emphasised highly the significance of professional development, for both the school subject taught but and the pedagogy. Immediate expectations about the school subject are access to better balanced, four-language-skill based textbooks and supporting teaching materials. Since the textbooks are provided by MONE and mandated for use through all levels of K-12, teachers highlighted the need for the modifications of learning goals and curriculum, taking into consideration teachers' own field experiences during the process. In Quote 5 (next page) Selim summarised this expectation.

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[1] The Selection Examination for Professional Posts in Public Organizations (KPSS) was put into action in 2002 after adoption of the State Officer Selection Exam policy by the Turkish government in 1999, to provide democratic and fair competitive conditions for public servant appointments, as there has always been a great demand for working at the state institutions in Turkey (Kılıçkaya & Krajka, 2013; Karataş & Okan, 2020).

Table 4: Support that participants expect from MONE (N=50

Type of support		Descriptive data	
		f	%
1. Professional	Access for a regular in-service training	4	8
	Access for a variety of teaching materials	4	8
	Opportunities for the pursuit of academic career	2	4
	Modification of the curriculum and the goals of learning	2	4
	More balanced textbook contents for 4 language skills	2	4
	Access for international mobility through EU projects	2	4
	Total professional	16	32
2. Financial	Higher salary	5	10
	Less working hours	6	12
	Support for the students	2	4
	Total financial	13	26
3. Infrastructural	Well-equipped classrooms and labs for ELT	7	14
	More classroom space/Less crowded groups	4	8
	Total infrastructural	11	22
4. Morale	Recognition of the profession as an important school subject	4	8
	Recognition of the school subject for life learning	4	8
	Maintenance of the good attitude from the management	2	4
	Total morale	10	20
Overall total		50	100

> I believe it is best if the MONE asks for our opinions about the textbooks they write and send. A more balanced textbook in terms of four language skills would be my answer as for the expectations. They also change the curriculum but (they) never ask our opinions. They are not aware of the students' proficiency levels in English… I really wonder how they write the curriculum… They should really re-consider the readiness levels of the students before modifying the old curriculum. (Quote #5, Selim)

Participant teachers also displayed expectations from MONE for pedagogical improvement opportunities, which they referred to as in-service training and academic career opportunities. They also seek MONE's assistance for mobility opportunities through *Erasmus+* collaborative projects of the European Union. Following demonstrates Yasemin's quote below illustrates enthusiasm for academic improvement and criticism of how MONE is limited in giving such opportunities. She expected in-service training from MONE, but she also suggested a critical evaluation after giving such chances, so MONE does not invest in vain.

> I really would like MONE to give opportunities to us in doing masters and PhD studies. However, how hard we try they limit us on one side. On the other hand, they do not recognise our degrees. I am equal to a less contributing teacher even if I have a PhD degree. I ask for an open mind from MONE for enthusiastic people about improving themselves, like me… I wish MONE could have more consistent policies … MONE should provide in-service training to all teachers but also test them in the end. Giving

training but not evaluating the results would be a waste of time energy and money.
(Quote #6, Yasemin)

For the second category of financial expectations, the participants anticipated higher salary for the work they do. Alternatively, they also expect less working hours. It is well-known that most of the English language teachers at MONE schools teach no less than 20 hours per week; this might extend to 35 hours a week at some schools. Two of the participants also mentioned the need for financial support for disadvantaged students. The quote below summarises the financial expectations, emphasising the work overload on teachers.

> If the government prioritises education over other issues in Turkey, they should show it
> explicitly. The attitude should be in favour of children's learning. In every speech a
> politician, somehow, states that education is so important. Then, they should not
> overload me as a teacher; open new schools and hire more teachers; pay me more so that
> I can focus more effectively on fewer students spending more effective time. (Quote #7,
> Mehmet)

The third category of expectation from MONE is related to financial support, not for oneself, rather for infrastructure of the schools; this category is the support not only for the classroom design but also about the group numbers. Some teachers expect the schools to have well-equipped language laboratories. Furthermore, they expect more classroom spaces with less crowded classes. This expectation is closely related to Quote #7 above, in which the participant teacher mentioned the need for opening new schools and hiring more teachers.

The last expectation of the participants identified here is about morale support. The teachers expect their institution to recognise English as having a different status from other school subjects in terms of its unique pedagogic requirements and lifelong learning goals. They expect a good collaboration between the school and parents, in that parents could motivate their children in learning English. Moreover, the participants who received positive attitude from their management mentioned they needed them to continue the similar perspective. Quote #8 below is an example of the need for recognition from school management.

> My school management must come to the realization that English language learning is
> different from other school subjects. I think my students need to have hands-on
> experience; they should listen, act out, do, touch and speak. They should prepare posters
> paint pictures and talk about them. They should sing English songs and watch English
> movies. I should be teaching them. I definitely need facilities for these activities and the
> management should understand that these are all for the students' benefit. (Quote #8,
> Esra)

Discussion

This article is an extension of Kizildag's (2009) study on the challenges faced by English language teachers working at MONE schools in Turkey. The participant teachers in this study seemed to provide solutions to the challenges of that study by stating their

expectations. Evaluation of their reasons for working at MONE schools provides support for policies and practices that are working well at the public schools in this sample.

Starting with the MONE's institutional image, with participants preferring to work at public schools, it seems that MONE schools have a good reputation according to findings from this research. Although the reasons given by participating teachers vary, they mostly fall between *MONE providing a guaranteed job,* and *a passion for the profession.* Okcabal and Gok's (1999) large-scale survey conducted two decades ago also revealed that teachers in Turkey held positive attitudes toward their profession. Furthermore, participants in the present study show extrinsic motivation towards the work they do, and also intrinsic reasons for working at state schools. It is well-known that teaching requires passion and dedication. As cited in numerous studies (Barbieri, Rossetti & Sestito, 2017; Börü, 2018; Ertürk & Aydın, 2017; Webb & Ashton, 1986), teaching is a profession whose energy is supplied substantially from intrinsic motives. These studies also outline factors affecting motivation, some of which are also parallel with the expectations of the participants of this study.

Though having a positive image as an institution, MONE is not without problems and challenges in providing the most secure employment throughout Turkey (Kizildag, 2009). Though private schools are not an equally good alternative to MONE schools most of the time, the teachers in this research study display their expectations from MONE and the school managements to make them better places to work, with reference to their sources of motivation. Analysing these expectations, all are related to the challenges teachers have been experiencing. First of all, financially, teachers feel underpaid for the amount of the work they are doing. The workload and large class sizes are well-known problems in Turkey. It is stated in a recent MONE annual report (*National Education Statistics: Formal Education 2019-20*, 2020) concerning the numbers of schools, students and teachers that there has been a decrease in class sizes since the academic year 2008; the average is 22 students. However, this number is higher for lower levels and metropolitan city schools, going up to 1:30 pupil:teacher ratio. That MONE has been recruiting fewer teachers than the real needs of schools is responsible for these over-crowded classrooms which create extra workload for the teachers. A recent OECD report (2020) also evidences that teachers, especially those working at primary schools in Turkey, are the ones who work for the longest hours whilst earning almost the smallest amount of money, among other 33 countries (see also *Hurriyet Daily News*, 2015).

In recent years, MONE has tried alternative ways of recruiting teachers at a cheaper cost. It has hired casually rather than permanently, where it does not pay the full costs of insurance and but only the hourly wages excluding school holidays. Although it is much criticised, teachers still apply for these casual staff positions as MONE has no other real competitor in the Turkish teaching market. Teacher graduates do not find jobs in MONE schools unless they pass the certificate exam (KPSS) with a satisfactory score, and they have to accept to work for a rural school for at least 4 years at the beginning of their career. This is clearly seen from the participant demographics in Table 1 above; all the beginning teachers are working at rural and low socio-economic status schools. Also, "norm staffing" (each school has a fixed number of teachers and the number is

determined by MONE) has severely limited the chances for new teacher graduates to obtain work at central urban schools. Even though the reason behind the application is for improving the quality of education, it seems the process is still like a work in progress. An OECD (2005, pp. 95-96) report stated that MONE targets some beneficial effects at public schools via norm staffing where "no redundant personnel shall be employed" and this is done for keeping "the number of students in each class, branch of group (…) within the internationally accepted norm limits".

Second, for morale support, participants in the current study mostly needed recognition of their profession and the need for learning English as a foreign language. In the quote below, Esra emphasised that recognition of English as a significant school subject should start with school management, which in turn will bring the facilitation of learning and teaching.

> English as a school subject must be recognised by the managements as important, first. Otherwise, different requirements of the course will never be understood and realised. Most of the schools treat English as other school subjects. That is, teachers give their lectures and students only listens. Impossible do so in a foreign language where students lack opportunities to practice out of schools in Turkey. (Quote #9, Esra)

This demand is an example of intrinsic motivation which is most likely related to belonging. Acceptance is developed by a good match to the social and academic expectations of the school's staff. Security and relatedness at work is thought to be an important issue for intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The status of teaching in Turkey is high according to the *Global Teacher Status Index 2018* report (Dolton, Marcenaro, De Vries & She, 2018). Turkey ranked as 9th among 35 countries, where China is at the top with 100 points out of 100. The report also highlighted the correlation between PISA scores and teacher status; however, Turkey, Malaysia and India showed the opposite: though status is higher, the success rate is low! It may be because salaries paid to teachers have to be raised 129% as well as requiring an urgent, substantial decrease in pupil:teacher ratios (*Hurriyet Daily News*, 2014), which is also related to extrinsic motivation stated by the participants, i.e., salaries, as mentioned above.

As a third category of expectations from MONE, participants also revealed the importance of infrastructure investment by MONE in language learning and teaching. The study by Do an (2009) showed that English language teachers in Turkey had capacities for integrating ICT (information and communications technologies) into their teaching. *DynEd*, an Internet-based English learning software, is set up in almost all MONE schools nationwide (Kizildag & Köse, 2017). However, Kizildag (2009) mentioned the lack of technical support and infrastructure deficiencies which hindered the optimising of benefits from this expensive investment by MONE. Another expectation of teachers was about textbooks and the curriculum modifications. The expectation of a better balanced, four-language-skill textbook is also very valuable feedback for the curriculum and textbook writing committee. The English teachers in Do an's (2009) study usually opted out of using *DynEd* as they felt stifled with the crowded curriculum requirements, which one reason why teachers also state they expect more effective further modifications of the

curriculum, to better consider students' proficiency levels and optimising learning and teaching goals.

Lastly, teachers expect MONE to develop a more consistent access to in-service training for teachers, as well as mobility opportunities across European Union countries through more support for *Erasmus+* projects. MONE has been delivering in-service seminars at a large-scale for years. Yet, according to a finding from this study, participants are asking for more opportunities to access professional development in a range of topics related to learning and teaching. Furthermore, development is needed in using English for communicative purposes, as the communicative approach to teaching a foreign language is a basic tenet in the curriculum provided by MONE. *Erasmus+* projects can provide teachers and students across Europe an avenue for improving learning and teaching outcomes. Turkey has been increasingly successful in implementing such projects in its national educations system. A 2020 progress report prepared by the European Commission as a working paper recognises this:

> Turkey has been participating in the EU education programmes since 2004. In the current financial period (2014-2020), around 280,000 participants from Turkey have taken part in the *Erasmus+* programme. During these years, Turkey has received the highest number of applications for *Erasmus+* among all the participating countries. … As of June 2020, applications for the *Erasmus+* programme's mobility actions had increased from 10,584 in 2018 to 12,816 in 2019, with a budget of nearly EUR 123 million. (European Commission, 2020, p. 98)

Yet, considering the number of young persons in the population in Turkey, the opportunities are regarded as rather limited by the participants in this study. Therefore, MONE should also ensure to improve the chances of mobility while communicating with the Turkish National Agency to be given more partnership project opportunities.

Conclusion

It was this paper's purpose to verbalise English language teachers' images about MONE and public schools in Turkey by expressing their motivations and expectations from their work places and the Ministry. In other words, teachers, in a way, described their ideal environment to teach English and work effectively. Ideally, the findings will contribute to improving the conditions for learning and teaching English in Turkish public schools. The information is for school managers, though mostly for decision-making authorities at the Ministry level, as well as for coordination with other related institutions. Turkey has been investing increasingly large funds for English language teaching and learning. Gencel (2005) stated that the investment for learning English in Turkey includes importing textbooks and related learning materials and hiring native speaker educators and supervisors, sponsoring citizens for English language education in countries where English is spoken as the first language, and opening private language schools. The per person cost for learning English at private schools in Turkey is approximately six to seven thousand Turkish Lira per year. Hopefully, the findings from this study will provide guidance towards more optimum conditions for learning and teaching English at MONE schools.

As to limitations, the study has a small number of participants reached with snowball and convenience sampling strategies. However, considering the diverse demographics in school socio-economic status, school locations and experience level of teachers, the findings give clear hints from participants about improving working conditions and the motivational levels of the EFL teachers that will enable higher quality work. Some distant teachers were emailed for interview purposes instead of face-to-face meetings. Nevertheless, they were constantly in communication via mobile technologies and could always be accessible, when necessary. The study excluded related topics such as self-efficacy and leadership. Further studies focusing on such matters could yield beneficial results and suggestions for authorities concerning decision-making for future quality improvement processes.

Acknowledgements

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