

The Examination of Job Satisfaction of Teachers in terms of Commuting Time, Motivation and some Demographic Characteristic

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Abstract

Teachers' appointments & relocations may create problems for both teachers & educational administrators in centralized & developing countries. Policymakers should not only consider school needs but also give attention to teachers' needs while appointing teachers to schools in a nationwide system. Current regulations in Turkey give priority to vacancies in schools. However, this priority causes partners to live apart from each other or let one of them work in schools located, generally, in rural districts or villages away from the other partner or family member in need of special care of a relative. Teachers who work under this circumstances complain about online forms, and teacher unions ask governmental agencies to reconsider their priorities. Both teacher unions and teachers argue that this system of reappointment causes them to be exhausted and feel unhappy. This study, it is aimed to understand if commuting time is related to teachers' job satisfaction together with their motivation, gender, seniority, compulsory duty, and marital status. Results indicated that extrinsic motivation, commuting time & gender are significant predictors of job satisfaction. The findings of the study were discussed & possible suggestions are given according to the results.

Keywords: Commute time, Teaching in the countryside, Teacher appointment, Motivation, Job satisfaction

Introduction

Hiring methods of teachers vary by country. In decentralized countries, like the United States, hiring can be implemented on local levels. However, in centralized countries, like Turkey, teacher appointments are conducted at a national level. The teacher hiring process and their relocations (appointment to a different school) in centralized countries may cause problems.

In Turkey, which may be considered a highly centralized country, teacher hiring and relocation processes are regulated by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). According to new regulations, as explained in Official Bulletin (2015), a teacher may ask for relocations if they have any excuse, such as marriage or health problems of themselves or others who are their close relatives. These processes, generally, are executed on a national level by considering the needs of MoNE as well. However, the way of relocation may cause a problem for both sides. For example, an application of a teacher because of his/her marriage excuse can be evaluated according to his/her previous work locations and years of experience. After estimating a total point of service for the given teacher, he / she is relocated. But sometimes they may not have enough service points for relocation, or sometimes they are relocated to a town that is far away from their partner they want to come together.

In the past years, teachers could be put under the districts' level managers' order in towns where their excuse takes place (e.g., where partner lives), and they were sent to schools that have vacancies later on. But it is canceled, as many teachers given to duty of districts could not be sent to schools as there were no free positions in schools at a given district. As a result, many teachers spent many years without teaching in districts, which was considered as a waste of sources. But the cancellation of this way of relocation got many objections from teachers and teacher unions. Teachers started some campaigns on famous websites, such as change.org (2016), or complained about form sites where teachers meet (e.g., Mebpersonel, 2017), as they were not relocated to a town or city where their partners or relatives in need of private care live. On these sites, it can be understood that sometimes teachers can only find schools that are far away, in some cases up to 240 km-149 miles- from their partners or the ones they are responsible for caring for. In a qualitative study conducted by teachers who teaches in schools away from their home or relatives, they claimed to have lower levels of motivation, being exhausted and lower levels of job satisfaction due to working away and commuting because of this reason (Önen & Doğaner, 2017). Teachers who need to commute long distances reported that they lost teaching ambitions, mentally and physiologically negatively affected. Some of them even indicated they considered quitting the profession if they could find an alternative job (Güvendir, 2017; Önen & Doğaner, 2017).

Teachers who commute long distances indicate having problems with public transformation vehicles and the cost of commuting (Önen & Doğaner, 2017; Stokes, et al, 2000). Indeed, just working in the countryside, without commuting, previously reported lower levels of motivation and job satisfaction among teachers (Bennel & Akyeampong, 2007). For that reason, Karataş and Çakan (2018) argue that reaching the school easily and in short times may help teachers feel physically and psychologically comfortable and, in turn, may increase their motivation and job satisfaction levels.

Indeed, factors affecting the teacher's job satisfaction is a highly studied topic in educational administration literature (e.g., Crossman, & Harris,

2006; Klassen, & Chiu, 2010; Ma, & MacMillan, 1999). It is also highly studied topic in the Turkish educational context regarding the school district, motivation, sociocultural environment of the school and so on (e.g., Güvendir, 2017; Karataş & Çakan, 2018; Palavan & Donuk, 2016; Taşkaya, et al, 2015).

There are also some studies regarding the problems faced by teachers who work in rural districts. For example, Palavan and Donuk (2016) and Taşkaya et al. (2015) has examined the problems of the teachers without considering the effect of commuting where they included the teachers who have to live in rural districts and focusing on environmental and infrastructural shortcomings in districts and schools. However, there is no study considering the possible relationship between commuting to school in rural towns and job satisfaction by considering the possible effect of teachers' motivation and demographic characteristics of the teachers; gender, marital status, having children, years of experience, compulsory duty, and weekly teaching hours which can be considered related together with commuting.

This study, it is aimed to understand if the motivation levels of teachers who work in public schools and their demographic characteristics; gender, marital status, having children, years of experience, compulsory duty, and weekly teaching hours together with commuting time are significant predictors of their job satisfaction levels.

Method

This study is designed as a correlational study, as explained in Fraenkel and Wallen (2006). Motivation levels which are handled as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, gender, marital status, having children, years of experience, compulsory duty, weekly teaching hours, together with commuting time, were predictor variables. The job satisfaction level of the teachers was handled as the outcome variable. The sample of the study is chosen among 3292 teachers who work in Burdur. In total, 286 teachers have participated in the study, but the data of 15 participants were removed as there were incomplete responses; after all, 253 of the participants' data was included in the data analysis processes, which may be considered satisfactory (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). To understand the possible relation of commuting,

first of all, teachers whose commuting time was above 20 minutes were reached. A later similar number of teachers who do not commute more than 20 minutes were reached to get a sample varying

commuting time. Participants' demographics were given in Table 1, about commuting time (more or less than 20 minutes).

Table 1: Characteristics of the Participants about Commuting Time

Variables		Commuting time					
		More than 20 mn		Less than 20 mn		Total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
Gender	Female	69	53.07	54	43.9	130	51.4
	Male	61	46.93	69	56.1	123	48.6
Marital Status	Married	98	46.6	25	58.1	210	83
	Single	112	53.4	18	41.9	43	17
Compulsory Duty	Yes	39	78	84	41.37	50	19.76
	No	11	22	119	58.63	203	80.24
	1-10 years	88	67.69	42	32.31	130	51.38
Years of Experience	10-20 years	30	28.3	76	71.7	106	41.89
	21 and more	5	29.41	12	70.59	17	6.71

Instruments

To understand the characteristics of the sample, a demographic information form consist of 14 questions is developed. The form is first sent to five teachers for increasing face validity. Additionally, the adult motivation scale, developed by Ateş and İhtiyaroğlu (2019), is used. The adult motivation scale has two dimensions; intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and 21 items. Cronbach alpha value estimated for intrinsic motivation dimension is .72 and .79 for extrinsic motivation in this study. To understand the job satisfaction level of the teachers, the job satisfaction scale developed by Güler (1990) is used. The job satisfaction scale has 14 items and has a Cronbach alpha value of .93 in this study.

Results

To understand if the motivation levels of teachers and their demographic characteristics, gender, marital status, having children, years of experience, compulsory duty, and weekly teaching hours together

with commuting time are significant predictors of their job satisfaction levels, a regression analysis was conducted. However, before running the analysis, assumptions of regression analysis were checked.

First of all, outliers and normality of the data are checked. Box plots analysis yielded 15 outliers, and they are removed from the data set. Visual inspections of the histograms showed acceptable normality and skewness and kurtosis values were all in the +/- 2 range, which is considered acceptable (George & Malley, 2010). Linear relationships among job satisfaction levels, motivation, seniority, Commute duration, weekly course hours are inspected by scatter plots; no relationship was observed, but generally, linear relationships were noted.

Multi collinearity between job satisfaction and other continuous variables, firstly, checked by correlation analysis. As can be seen in Table 2. All the significant correlation values are between .16 and .62, which indicates a lower level of collinearity likelihood.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis Results

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
Extrinsic Motivation						
Intrinsic Motivation	.59**					
Seniority	.16*	.17**				

Weekly Course hours	-.21**	-.21*	.05			
Commuting time	.30**	-.25**	-.34**	-.42		
Job Satisfaction	.62**	.42**	.23**	-.26**	-.49**	

*Correlation is significant at .05 level, ** Correlation is significant at .01 level

Additionally, VIF and Tolerance values are also checked for multi-collinearity. VIF Values were all under ten, indicating no multi-collinearity problem (Tonta, 2008). Tolerance values were also around one, which also indicates no multicollinearity problem (Sevinç, 2013). Another assumption of regression analysis, homogeneity of regression slopes, were checked by scatter plots, visual inspection of scatter plots showed normal distribution. As a result, it is assumed that there is no violation of assumptions and safe to conduct regression analysis.

Results of the regression analysis yielded a significant regression model ($R=.73$, $R^2=.54$),

($F_{(9,243)}=31.38$, $p<.01$) where four of the nine variables in the model, namely extrinsic motivation, Commute duration, weekly course hours, and gender are determined as significant predictors of job satisfaction (Table 3). These variables explain the 54 percent of the variance in job satisfaction. Standardized beta values are .46 for extrinsic motivation, -.34 for Commute duration, -.18 for weekly work hours, and -.14 for gender where being female is negatively predicting job satisfaction. However, intrinsic motivation, seniority, having children, marital status and compulsory duty did not significantly predict job satisfaction.

Table 3: Regression Analysis Results

Variables	Beta	SE	Standardized Beta (β)	t	p	Paired r	Partial r
Constant	.32	.61	-	.53	.6		
Gender	-.21	-.07	-.14	-2.1	.03	-.17	-.19
Marital Status	-.07	.11	.04	-.62	.55	-.07	-.04
Having children	.1	.11	.06	.9	.38	-.06	.06
Compulsory duty	.02	.11	.05	.11	.92	.18	-.07
Seniority	.05	.07	.04	.69	.5	.22	.05
Extrinsic Motivation	.83	.10	.46	.83	.00	.62	.47
Intrinsic Motivation	.68	.12	.04	.57	.57	.43	.04
Weekly work hours	-.02	.05	-.18	-3.82	.00	-.27	-.24
Commuting time	-.02	-.02	-.34	-6.83	.00	-.49	-.41

$R = .73$; $R^2 = .54$; $F_{9,243} = 31.38$; $p = .00$

In short, results indicate that extrinsic motivation is the primary variable predicting job satisfaction where there is a positive correlation. Secondly, commute time is negatively predicting job satisfaction, indicating that an increase in commute duration is related to a decrease in job satisfaction. Similarly, weekly work hours are also negatively related to job satisfaction. Finally, being a woman also negatively predicts job satisfaction.

Discussion and Conclusion

It is not surprising that extrinsic motivation was found significant predictor of the job satisfaction level. There are studies reporting similar results

(e.g. Ada, et al., 2013; Gökkaya & Türker, 2018; Mardanov, 2020). For example, Ada et al. (2013) also concluded that extrinsic motivation is an important predictor of job satisfaction, along with approval from principals, the infrastructure of the school, and socio-economic conditions around the school. The commuting duration was the second highly related predictor of job satisfaction. As mentioned in the results section, an increase in commuting duration is connected with lower job satisfaction. In a previous qualitative study (Önen & Doğaner, 2017), teachers indicated spending so much time while reaching school lower their free time in the daytime when compared to other teachers. In turn, they complained

about not completing their duties at home. They also complain about frustration and losing their willingness to teach in their schools. Saeed et al. (2013) report similar results in their studies. They indicated that by the increase in commute durations resulting from working in far way districts, teachers' performance gets lower and their family life is negatively affected. Taşkaya et al. (2016) also report complaints of teachers on commuting who work in rural districts, especially during the winter season.

Weekly work hours were another significant predictor of job satisfaction found in this study. This was not surprising as the literature presents numerous findings on the relation between job satisfaction and higher workload levels in the type of work hours. The educational research literature also suggests similar results; for example, Çiftçi and Dikmenli (2015) report that teachers who work lower than 17 hours (nearly half of the teachers' weekly course hours may be given in a week) have higher levels of job satisfaction. Again, İnandı, et al. (2013) reports similar results but express much lower job satisfaction on females when compared with males. This may also be related to the last significant predictor of job satisfaction in this study, gender. Female teachers have a lower level of job satisfaction in this study. This result is supported by the literature; there are similar studies indicating that female teachers are affected more from work hours (e.g., Ayaz, 1993; Abd-ElFattah, 2010; Çanak, 2014; Tunacan & Çetin, 2009; Bedük, 2005; Karabıyık, 2012). Küçük (2015) explains that females are not only responsible for their jobs but also for family, home and their self-care. İnandı, et al. (2013). Also, explain by similar factors, responsibilities in the family harvests females. However, there are also studies reporting no significant gender differences on job satisfaction (Crossman & Harris, 2006; Gençtürk & Memiş, 2010; Kılıç, et al., 2013; Koruklu, et al., 2013; Yavuz & Karadeniz, 2009; Telef, 2011; Yelboğa, 2007). Çanak (2014) explains this inconsistency as the gender effect may be related by other factors and not a sole factor affecting job satisfaction.

However, some of the variables included in the model did not significantly predict the job satisfaction levels of the teachers; intrinsic motivation, seniority,

having children, marital status, and compulsory duty. Finding intrinsic motivation non-significant while extrinsic motivation is significant in this study may be because commuting causing extra expenses for teachers to which is more related to extrinsic factors. The compulsory duty, which can only be fulfilled in a school that does not have desired conditions was also non-significant. This may be because reappointment of teachers committing long distances is not only teachers who have a compulsory duty. Having children and marital status, on the other hand, can be explained by the fact that they are a more likely problem for females. Female teachers may be feeling more responsibility for children and household duties than male teachers, as Biernat and Wortman (1991) suggest. For that reason, the gender effect could have caused an interaction effect on the model. As a result, gender's possible effect is more likely than marital status and having children. Seniority also did not show a significant difference. Being experienced, which results in more service points and the likelihood of reappointment to a school desired, could be expected to be an important factor. However, working in schools which are highly away from home is a current condition, while having higher service points results can be seen in future. In addition, having higher service points do not always guarantee reappointment; sometimes, it takes years for a teacher who has very high seniority to find a vacancy in nearby schools.

Considering the findings, it can be recommended for school administrators and district managers to make those schools located in rural sites more enjoyable by improving conditions. Schools in better conditions can be desired more and teachers can ignore how they should take every day. Principals if can create a socially warm organizational climate, teachers may enjoy the social outcomes, which in turn can be a remedy, as suggested in previous studies (e.g., Önen & Altındal, 2017). By considering the significance of extrinsic motivation on job satisfaction, financial aids or transportation supports can be evaluated for those teachers. In addition, lowering the weekly work hours can decrease the load on teachers. This may also help them to lower the days they have to be in school. If they have extra free days in a week by lowering the work hours, they

may feel less frustrated and have time to take care of the household duties and children.

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