MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN SELECTED BOARDING SCHOOLS IN MALAYSIA

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Allah's Apostle said, "Allah guarantees him who strives in His Cause and whose motivation for going out is nothing but Jihad in his Cause and belief in His World, that He will admit him into Paradise (if martyred) or bring him back to his dwelling place, whence he has come out, with what he gains of reward and booty."

-Narrated by Abu Huraira.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to identify the factors that motivate foreign language teachers in selected boarding schools. This study is also to investigate the nature of difference between the teachers of different foreign languages regarding the dimensions of the motivation orientation and the role of goals in motivating teachers of foreign language in their work. One hundred foreign language teachers from 19 selected boarding schools participated in this study whereby they were divided into three groups: Group 1:Arabic, Group 2: French and Group 3: Japanese and Mandarin. The Work Preference Inventory was used as the instrument for this study. The instrument consists of 30 items on a 4-point scale. Four hypotheses were tested for this study. The findings revealed that foreign language teachers were highly motivated by several factors, namely recognition, compensation, challenge and enjoyment in their work. It was found that there were no significant differences between the teachers of different languages regarding the outward, compensation and challenge dimensions. However, there was a significant difference in the enjoyment dimension of their motivation orientation. The results showed that they were strongly committed to their work and goals played an important role in motivating them in their work.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini dijalankan adalah untuk mengenal pasti factor-faktor yang menjadi pendorong kepada guru-guru bahasa asing di sekolah-sekolah berasrama penuh terpilih. Kajian ini juga adalah untuk menyelidik perbezaan antara kumpulan guru-guru bahasa asing berhubung dengan orientasi dalam motivasi dan peranan matlamat sebagai pendorong kepada mereka dalam pekerjaan. Seramai 100 orang guru bahasa asing dari 19 buah sekolah berasrama penuh terpilih telah mangambil bahagian dalam kajian ini,yang mana mereka telah dibahagikan kepada tiga kumpulan: Kumpulan 1: Bahasa Arab, Kumpulan 2: Bahasa Perancis dan Kumpulan 3: Bahasa Jepun dan Mandarin. Kajian ini menggunakan soal selidik yang dikenali sebagai "Work Preference Inventory". Instrumen ini mengandungi 30 item dan 4 skala. Empat hipotesis diuji untuk kajian. Hasil kajian mendapati bahawa motivasi guru-guru bahasa asing dipengaruhi oleh beberapa faktor iaitu pengiktirafan, ganjaran, cabaran dan keseronokan dalam pekerjaan. Keputusan kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa tiada perbezaan berhubung dengan dimensi pengiktirafan, ganjaran dan cabaran bagi tiga kumpulan guru yang berlainan tetapi terdapat perbezaan dalam dimensi keseronokkan bagi tiga kumpulan guru yang berlainan. Mereka sangat komited kepada tugas mereka dan matlamat juga memainkan peranan penting sebagai pendorong dalam pekerjaan mereka.

APPROVAL PAGE

TITLE OF PROJECT PAPER: MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN SELECTED BOARDING SCHOOLS IN MALAYSIA

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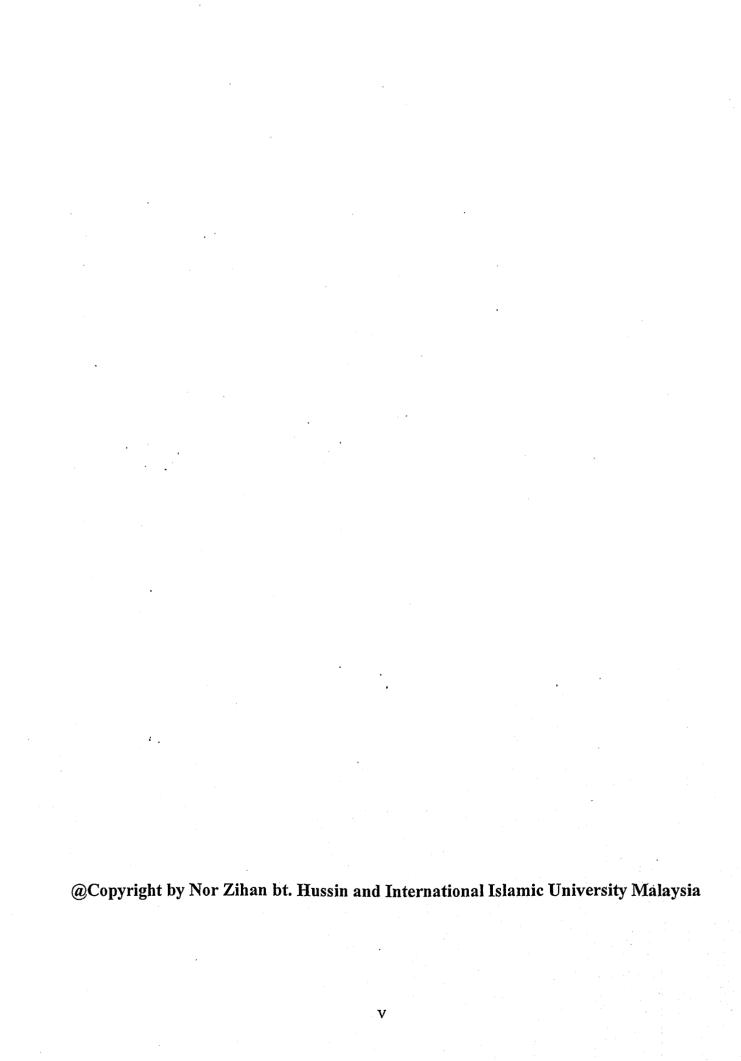Dr. Obiyatulla Ismath Bacha
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by reference notes and a bibliography is appended.

Signature: _____   Date: 30[th]November 2000

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Specially Dedicated to

My family and my friends, graduated from

Université de Franche Comté, Besançon, France.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Motivation in individuals is a complicated process that is difficult to measure or account for. In education, motivation is a major force in school effectiveness as it is central to teachers' work commitment within the school and to the teaching profession.

The majority of research on motivation focuses on teachers in daily schools. Less attention has been given to the teachers in boarding schools. In fact, there are not many researchers who are interested in the topic of boarding school teachers, especially on foreign language teachers. With globalization in education, the importance of these groups of teachers cannot be denied. Not (1998) indicated that most of the foreign language teachers in his survey thought that they might eventually move to another job outside teaching.

The environment at the boarding schools is different to day schools. Boarding schools' students are selected students and the teachers are not supposed to have problem in teaching these talented students. Research by Ryan and Powelson (1991) clarifies how quality teacher-student relationship and environmental support can foster higher order motivation, autonomy and self – regulated training.

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In Malaysia, foreign language teaching is a very difficult task as the students are still not aware of the importance of the subject. Motivation of these foreign language teachers is not easy to maintain as there are many factors that could demotivate the teachers. Motivated teachers are assets to the school and can contribute their energy and commitment toward the nation's educational goals.

Knowledge concerning a teacher's motivation orientation and the factors that may enhance his or her motivational level may enable a school system to influence those factors in a teacher's work environment that increase his or her motivation to grow professionally and to improve his or her teaching skills (Mohd Kamaludin, 1996).

1.2 The Statement of the Problem

The present study focuses primarily on the factors that motivate foreign language teachers in selected boarding schools in Malaysia. It is useful to know the forces that motivate teachers in their daily work.

Compared to science subjects, foreign language is considered less important in the perception of the students and other teachers of other subjects. This is due to the value or the usefulness of the language outside the school. Therefore, this concept could influence the students' motivation in learning the language. Thus, this phenomenon may demotivate the teachers.

Motivation of a teacher of a foreign language, just like any other teachers in general is one area of study that is relatively unexplained. Studies of work motivation have shown that when teachers' needs are met, they can realize their potential and ensure continued self-development. Furthermore, it was felt that motivation in teaching different languages differ, depending on several factors. For example, the motivation of teachers teaching Arabic may well differ from the motivation of the teachers teaching Mandarin. It is a truism that different teachers are differently motivated. It is significant to note that both intrinsic factors and extrinsic factors must be present for maximum motivation to occur (Abdul Roning, 1994).

Investigation of individual differences in motivational orientation is potentially important for both individual psychological constructs and social psychological constructs (Amabile 1994). The studies by Amabile, DeJong and Lepper (1976) and Deci (1971) revealed that individuals' temporary motivational orientation towards activities can differ as a function of the social contexts in which they have engaged in those activities. These studies also revealed substantial variability in the extent to which individuals are affected by social context, for example, by individual differences in enduring motivational orientations.

1.3 Significance of the Study

It is hoped that this study will improve the existing literature on teacher's motivation. This study is to determine the factors that motivate teachers of a foreign language in the context of boarding schools in Malaysia. This study hopefully could provide knowledge and insight into problems of motivation. Thus, this may lead to further research that could improve foreign language teachers' performance.

This study also hopefully could attract the attention of Ministry of Education, principals, and educators. Furthermore, their practices must consider the needs of the teacher and provide them with development programs to improve his or her motivation.

1.4 Research Questions

The study will attempt to focus on the following research questions:

1. What are the factors, which serve as motivators?

2. What is the nature of difference between the teachers of different foreign languages regarding the dimensions of the motivation orientation?

3. Are the teachers who have goals in teaching foreign languages highly motivated in their work?

1.5 Definitions of Key Terms

1.5.1 Motivation

Motivation is a term used in psychology to mean the cause of behavior that is persistently directed toward a goal. It is usually made up of a combination of motives, which may also be called drives, incentives or interests. Drives are usually activated in individual to satisfy a physiological need, such as food, sleep or relief from pain. Incentives and interests are usually said to stimulate action that satisfies emotional and mental needs or desires (New Standard Encyclopedia, volume 11, 1992).

1.5.2 Intrinsic motivation/Extrinsic motivation

Intrinsic motivation is defined as the natural tendency to pursue personal interests and exercise capabilities, and in doing so conquering challenges. It is also the motivation to take part in something primarily for its own sake, because the work itself is interesting, engaging or satisfying. In contrast, extrinsic motivation is when a task is performed not for the work itself, but for external reasons, such as rewards or recognition or dictates of other people.

1.5.3 Foreign Language Teachers.

Foreign language teachers are those teachers that teach other languages other than Malay and English. (In the context of Malaysia's boarding schools). Currently, they are five foreign languages that being offered to the boarding school students: Arabic, French, German, Japanese and Mandarin.

1.5.4 Boarding Schools

Boarding schools provide education as well as home for selected students. These students spend their entire time in the school. The boarding schools constitute a unique sub-system within the larger Malaysian education system. They are 'special' in the sense that they are set up with a specific objective closely linked to the country's educational, social-economic and political developments. They are under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Education unlike the other schools, which are under the jurisdiction of the respective state Education Departments.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a review of motivation theories and provides a discussion of motivation concepts and theories in relation to teaching and learning. In this chapter, the researcher includes a description of definition of motivation and theories of motivation followed by a review of related literature regarding work and motivation.

2.2 Definition of Motivation

The term motivation has been defined in many ways. Researchers like Likert (1961), Kaiser (1981), Ames & Ames (1984) and Sergiovanni (1984) have their own definition of motivation. They equate it with words like "desire," "want," "wishes," "goals," "needs," "drives," "motives" and "incentives."

Robbins (1984), Saedah, Zainun and Tunku Mohani (1996) concluded that motivation might be defined in terms of some outward behavior. People who were motivated exerted a greater effort to perform than those who were not motivated do. They agreed that a more descriptive but less substantive definition would say that motivation

was the willingness to do something and was conditioned by this action's ability to satisfy some need for individual.

Bateman and Snell (1990) refer motivation as forces that energize, direct, and sustain a person's efforts. A highly motivated person will work hard toward achieving performance goals. With adequate ability and understanding of a job, such people will be highly productive.

Robbins and Coulter (1996) defined motivation as the willingness to exert high levels of effort to reach organizational goals conditioned by that effort's ability to satisfy some individual needs.

2.3 Early Study on Work Motivation

There have been many intensive studies of factors relating to work motivation, commencing with the classic Taylor & Hawthorne studies in 1911 and in 1939 respectively.

Taylor, an American engineer, tried to determine the most efficient ways for people to perform their jobs. Efficiency was the major concern. He believed that increasing workers' wages would raise their motivation and their productivity. Taylor recognized the importance of motivation in job performance.

The Hawthorne studies of Elton Mayo reported by Greenberg and Baron (2000) were concerned with task performance and the social conditions in organization. He found that the way employees were treated by management and the relationship they had with each other could affect productivity. Hawthorn's study paved the way for management to improve the work conditions and make workers happy.

2.4 Early Motivation Theories

2.4.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory.

Maslow (1954) was a humanistic psychologist who proposed that within every human being was a hierarchy of five needs:

1. Physiological needs: food, drink, shelter, sexual satisfaction, and other physical requirements

2. Safety needs: security and protection from physical and emotional harm, as well as assurance that physical needs will continue to be met.

3. Social needs: affection, belongingness, acceptance, and friendship

4. Esteem needs: internal esteem factors such as self-respect, autonomy, and achievement and external esteem factors such as status, recognition, and attention.

5. Self-actualization needs: growth, achieving one's potential, and self-fulfillment; the drive to become what one is capable of becoming.