

Foreign Language Teacher's Motivation in Italy A Quantitative Study

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Abstract A considerable amount of literature has been published on foreign language learners' motivation while, although it is acknowledged that teachers play a crucial role in handling students' motivation and it is proved that motivated teachers positively influence learners' engagement in the learning process, far too little attention has been paid to language teachers' motivation. Therefore, it is our will to explore this issue in order to foster the research on it. This article presents the results of a quantitative study we have conducted in Italy. We have collected data through an online questionnaire and, taking into account several scientific principles and theories, we have investigated teachers' motivation through the analysis of: initial job motivation, a set of work values and rewards, job satisfaction and career satisfaction. Eventually, findings are discussed, and suggestions for further research are provided.

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Keywords Teachers' Motivation. Emotion. Italy.

1 The Relationship Between (Teachers') Motivation, Affect and Cognition

As motivation has been widely investigated in the glottodidactic sphere (Titone 1977; Freddi 1994; Balboni 2008, 2012, 2013; Caon 2006; Schumann 1976, 1999; Dörnyei 1994, 1998, 2001, 2007; MacIntyre 2002; Ushioda 2008), we will just recapitulate some of the main aspects that are useful for the purposes of this article.

Motivation is:

- a. seen as the drive that determines behaviour and influences choice;
- b. strictly connected to a goal;
- c. not stable over time;
- d. complex, for it is affected by a multitude of factors (both intrinsic and extrinsic) which depend on the single individual.

Moreover, it is particularly influenced by emotion.

Emotions have been studied in many fields such as psychology, sociology, history, and have been recently put under the spotlight of neuroscience studies as well. It is precisely because there have been attempts to define emotions from so many viewpoints that it is difficult to give a precise definition of this concept. We will try at least to point out some of the main characteristics that emerge from the combination of several studies (Damasio 1994, 2003; Franks 2006; LeDoux 1996; Fabbro 1996; Arnold 1960; Ekman 2003; Méndez López 2011; Oxford 2015). To sum up, emotions are:

- a. evaluative personal responses to a specific event, person or object;
- b. automatic, therefore unconscious, fast, unintentional, not subject to control;
- c. appraised according to parameters of valence and arousal;
- d. influenced by our own past and values;
- e. context-dependent, both on an environmental, social and relational scale.

Confirmation about the tight bond between motivation and emotion is found in Damasio's (1994) **Somatic marker theory**. Later, together with Mary Helen Immordino-Yang, the two scholars state that "learning, attention, memory, decision making, motivation and social functioning, are both profoundly affected by emotion and in fact subsumed within the processes of emotion" (Immordino-Yang, Damasio 2007, 3).

The close relationship between motivation and emotion has been also highlighted from a glottodidactic point of view (Titone 1977; Dörnyei 1998; MacIntyre 2002; Balboni 2008).

If on the one hand emotion influences decision-making, i.e. cognition, on the other hand cognition influences emotion processing. Testament to this is the cognitive **Appraisal theory** (Arnold 1960) that points out the continuum between emotional and cognitive processes through the judgment the brain operates over an emotion.

Consequently, we can say that emotion and cognition (and motivation as well) are inseparably entwined.

As regards teachers, Zembylas claims that a particular attention to the emotional aspects "will contribute to a fuller understanding of the impact of emotions on the personal well-being and motivation of teachers" (Zembylas 2007, 336). Moreover, Balboni attests that

le emozioni influenzano la motivazione dell'insegnante, la sua gestione della classe, ma anche la sua capacità cognitiva, ad esempio nel classificare gli studenti e nel valutarne i risultati. (Balboni 2013, 23)

Therefore, teachers' emotions **must** be taken into consideration as they strongly influence decision-making, behaviour and cognition.

In particular, teacher cognition is described as "the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching – what teachers know, believe, and think" (Borg 2003, 81).

Bier (2014) reports that past experiences in class, especially as student and as trainee, profoundly mark teachers' way of planning, behaving and making decisions, which are the concrete realisation of thoughts and beliefs. Thus, the role models a future teacher encounters deeply condition the behaviour that will be adopted in class, and therefore future teachers' cognition as a whole.

2 Analysing Teachers' Motivation: a Set of Factors and Theories

Working as a teacher is normally a matter of choice. Thus, there must be some original intrinsic and/or extrinsic motives that lead an individual to deciding to become a teacher.

As important is understanding which specific elements affect learners' motivation, so is knowing which ones influence teachers' motivation, especially considering that the reasons for taking up this career have significant impact on teachers' commitment to the job (Koran 2015).

Although intrinsic motives are seen as motivation's amplifiers,

language teachers often find it difficult to maintain their intrinsic motivation to teach due to the numerous external factors, such as the work environment and student response to instruction. (Praver, Oga-Baldwin 2008, 1)

Thus, it is important to identify which aspects are considered as positive influences, and which ones as negative influences in order to be aware of what can either boost or lower teachers' motivational level.

Several theories that have been used to explore students' motivation, such as goal theories (Locke, Latham 1994; Ames 1992), expectancy theory (Dörnyei 1998), self-determination theory (Deci, Ryan 1985), and self-efficacy theory (Bandura 1977), have been applied to investigate teachers' motivation. Furthermore, (language) teachers' motivation has been examined by measuring the level of job satisfaction (Pennington 1995; Baleghizadeh, Gordani 2012; Koran 2015), also using scales of values and rewards (Kassabgy et al. 2001), while other scholars focussed on "demotivational factors" (Sugino 2010; Zarisfizadeh 2012) in order to discuss the main causes of motivation and demotivation among teachers.

Taking into account the economy of this article, we refer the reader to the abovementioned authors for a detailed presentation of all the theories

and parameters. We will only report some results of some quite recent studies on teachers' motivation, in order to have a clearer picture of the ways through which it has been analysed.

Concerning **goal theories**, research on teachers' motivation takes strongly into consideration the influence of goal-achievement (Woolfolk Hoy 2008; Praver, Oga-Baldwin 2008; Wyatt 2013).

As regards foreign language teachers, Knowles (2007) conducted a study in a Japanese university and came to the conclusion that

what was very clear was that all the teachers did have goals, and no matter how they were expressed, or how attainable they were, these goals were important to them. (Knowles 2007, 8)

Koran (2015) refers to the **Expectancy Theory** in his work on EFL teachers' job satisfaction and motivation in Iraq. He attests:

The study also suggests that many teachers feel motivated when their efforts are fairly recognized and praised by the administration, parents and students. This finding supports the Expectancy Theory. Individuals will respond favorably if they perceive their goals are realistic, achievable and a reward comes with them. (Koran 2015, 79)

Analysing language teachers of English in Oman by adopting **Self-Determination Theory**, Wyatt (2013) concludes that creating the conditions that can satisfy those psychological needs which trigger intrinsic motivation (i.e. autonomy, competence, and relatedness) is vitally necessary for the well-being of teachers, and consequently for the well-being of their students. When those needs are satisfied, teachers will engage more enthusiastically in teaching, perform driven by intrinsic motivation, and therefore feel closer to their ideal self.

Two years later, the scholar also examined language teachers' **self-efficacy** beliefs in order to propose a conceptual model that depicts how they might grow (Wyatt 2015).

Caprara and his colleagues (2006) analysed Italian teachers' self-efficacy beliefs as determinants of job satisfaction and learners' academic achievement.¹

They claim:

Teachers with high levels of self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to be able to create the conditions and to promote the interpersonal networks

¹ As our study concentrates on teachers' motivation, we will consider only the reference to the results concerning the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and job satisfaction.

that nourish and sustain their work satisfaction. [...] [I]t is likely that teachers' perceived sense of competence is a primary source of intrinsic motivation and satisfaction. The relation between teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and their job satisfaction further corroborate this reasoning. (Caprara et al. 2006, 485)

Teachers' job satisfaction is described as "the ability of the teaching job to meet teachers' needs and improve their job/teaching performance" (Ololube 2006, 1).

Several studies (Pennington 1995; Kassabgy et al. 2001; Ololube 2006; Baleghizadeh, Gordani 2012; Ghenghesh 2013; Koran 2015) have investigated teachers' motivation correlating it to **job satisfaction**. Some of these researches concentrated specifically on language teachers' motivation (Pennington 1995; Kassabgy et al. 2001; Baleghizadeh, Gordani 2012; Koran 2015).

Baleghizadeh and Gordani (2012) investigated EFL teachers' motivation in Iran. They argue that the main motivational aspects connected to quality of work life are:

- a. work conditions;
- b. chance of growth;
- c. social integration in the organisation;
- d. use and development of abilities.

Furthermore, they highlight the importance of being rewarded, and of participating in decision-making processes within the institutional organisation.

Eventually, another way to explore motivation is through the analysis of what have been described as **demotivational factors** (Sugino 2010; Zarisfzadeh 2012; Bier 2014).

Sugino (2010), who investigated demotivation among language teachers in Japan, found that the most crucial source of demotivation is students' attitudes, among which there is using cell-phones in classroom, sleeping during class, taking rebellious attitude, and not being interested in studying.

3 A Study in Italy: Purpose, Participants, and Instruments

In order to explore foreign language teachers' motivation in Italy, we have conducted a quantitative study aiming at:

- a. investigating the main reasons that motivated foreign language teachers to enter their job;
- b. examining the values that are most important to foreign language teachers;
- c. examining what kind of rewards foreign language teachers get from their current job;

- d. analysing how satisfied foreign language teachers are with their career and job;
- e. seeking to explore whether there is a correlation between career satisfaction, initial motivation, values and rewards.

Participants of this survey were 232 foreign language teachers of several types and levels, from all over Italy.

Data were collected through an anonymous online questionnaire between November and December 2016.

The form is divided into four parts. The first part collects teachers' general information (age, years of experience in foreign language teaching, and type of school in which respondents are working at the moment), the second one is dedicated to initial job motivation, the third one focuses on values, and the fourth one deals with rewards.

In order to investigate the main reasons why participants chose to work as teachers, we adapted the ten yes/no questions Koran (2015) proposed in his study.

Following, a list of 39 values, most of which were taken from Kassabgy and his colleagues' (2001) work, was used to analyse the degree of importance of some aspects of work. Except for the last one, the items were grouped into 5 clusters corresponding to some teachers' basic needs (i.e. extrinsic values, values related to institutional support, values related to self-realisation and personal growth, values related to self-determination and autonomy, values related to relationships and affiliation) as in the original work. Respondents were not informed about this subdivision in order not to influence the answers.

In part 4, we proposed the same items of the 'values section' in the key of rewards, maintaining the same question order, asking the participants to which extend they are fulfilled in their current job. We maintained the five groups adopted in the 'values section' in order to be able to make a more suitable comparison when analysing data.

The questionnaire ends with four more questions that investigate the level of job and career satisfaction of the respondents. More precisely, the participants were asked to indicate whether they are satisfied with their current profession and job, and whether they would change profession and/or institution they work for.

A 5-point Likert scale has been used both for part 3 and part 4.

4 Analysis and Results

Most of the teacher who participated in our study is 40 or older (84.5%), hence outlining a section that might have taught a foreign language for several years. A confirmation to this may be represented by the fact that

the vast majority of all the participants (91.8%) has a teaching experience of more than five years. Therefore, we may say that our sample is mainly characterised by experienced teachers. Teachers who were currently working in a second-grade secondary school mostly took part in the questionnaire (74.1%), while 17.2% of the participants were teaching in a first-grade secondary school, the 5.2% in a primary school, and the rest in other kinds of institutes.

4.1 Initial Job Motivation

As regards **initial job motivation**, we have considered percentage values greater than 50% since the items of this section are all yes/no questions.

Initial job motivation	Yes
Teaching fitting my lifestyle	84.9%
Contributing to society	78.4%
Vocation	76.7%
Autonomy in the class	75.9%
Potential of changing students' lives	65.9%
Job security	34.9%
Quantity and scheduling of holidays	23.7%
Proportion between salary and number of working hours	13.8%
Not having got the admission to the desired job	8.6%
External pressures	7.3%

The results highlight that drives are mainly of an intrinsic and an altruistic nature. Teachers do not consider extrinsic motives as decisive.

4.2 Values

Concerning values, we have calculated the average of every item and we have considered aspects showing a mean greater than 4.0 as significant, being 4 the threshold that represents a 'quite important' condition. Values equal to or exceeding 4.5 are considered as 'very important', while means that are between 3.999 and 3.0 represent 'not particularly important' aspects; those that are between 2.999 and 2.0 indicate 'unimportant' aspects, and those that are lower than 2.0 mirror conditions that are 'not important at all'.

As regards **extrinsic values**, none of the aspects is considered particularly important.

Extrinsic values	Media
Job security	3.724
Earning a good salary	3.021
Having a profession that is prestigious	2.806
Being promoted to a senior supervisory job at some point in the career	2.612
Having a prestigious job title	2.552
Fringe benefits	2.181

Even needs connected to the **institutional support** do not reach the boundary that mirrors a discreet level of importance. However, they are quite close to the threshold.

Needs satisfied through institutional support	Media
Being evaluated positively by my superior	3.974
Having a manageable work load	3.927
Working for a reputable educational organization	3.840
Having a supervisor who gives clear guidance	3.832
Having a job in which I am relaxed and have peace of mind	3.828
Having clear rules and procedures	3.694
Having flexible working hours	3.573

Three out of the five aspects associated with **self-realisation and personal growth** as are considered to be very important.

Self-realisation and personal growth	Media
Having a job in which I can perform to the best of my ability	4.694
Having a job that is enjoyable and stimulating	4.694
Having a job in which I can learn and develop my abilities to my full potential	4.569
Attending teacher training classes	3.974
Having a challenging job	2.866

None of the aspects related to **self-determination and autonomy** is considered unimportant.

Self-determination and autonomy	Media
Having the freedom to do what is necessary in my teaching to do a good job	4.646
Being able to work independently and use my own initiative	4.263
Receiving frequent feedback about the effectiveness of my performance	4.172
Being allowed to deal creatively with students' problems	4.142
Being recognised for my teaching accomplishments	4.138
Having a job that is fun	3.922
Stick to and achieve the aims of the module/programme	3.784

The last set of entries deals with values that are linked to **relationships** or need of affiliation.

Relationships and need of affiliation	Media
Really helping my students to learn a foreign language	4.836
Being evaluated positively by my students	4.651
Being fairly treated in my organization	4.582
Having contact with professionals in the field of foreign language teaching	4.496
Having good relationships with colleagues	4.461
Working with other teachers as a team	4.461
Having a supervisor who is responsive to suggestions and grievances	4.444
Being able to introduce changes without going through a lot of bureaucracy	4.379
Having a good relationship with my supervisor	4.207
Having sufficient variety in tasks/type of activity	4.056
Being included in my organization's goal-setting process	4.000
Have a good relationship with my students' parents	3.996
Having a friendly relationship with my students	3.763

Concretely helping students to learn a foreign language turns out to be the most important aspect of the whole 'values section'. Therefore, it can be seen as the main goal of this job.

Eventually the vast majority of foreign language teachers believe that it is very important to have the possibility to teach the same students for several consecutive years (4.457).

4.3 Rewards

We have analysed rewards adopting the same method. Means that show a score greater than or equal to 4.5 reflect aspects that are ‘fully rewarded’; those between 4.0 and 4.499 represent ‘fulfilled’ conditions; means between 3.999 and 3.0 indicate aspects that are ‘partially fulfilled’, numbers between 2.999 and 2.0 mirror conditions that are ‘not rewarded’, while those that are lower than 2.0 represent aspects that are ‘not rewarded at all’.

Despite job security is very close to 4.0, none of the **extrinsic rewards** can be considered as fulfilled.

Extrinsic rewards	Media
I have good job security	3.991
My job title is satisfactory	3.599
Teaching foreign languages is a prestigious profession	3.332
I have good fringe benefits	2.125
I have prospects for promotion	2.073
I have a good salary	2.034

Concerning rewards linked to the **institutional support**, working for an esteemed institute is the only one that can be considered as achieved.

Rewards linked to institutional support	Media
I work for a reputable educational organization	4.310
My supervisor evaluates me positively	3.965
I’m relaxed and have peace of mind in my job	3.810
My supervisor gives clear guidance	3.547
There are clear rules and procedures at work	3.409
I have a manageable work load	3.358
I have flexible working hours	2.944

Aspects regarding **self-realisation and personal growth** are those that are all more or less fulfilled.

Self-realisation and personal growth	Media
My work is enjoyable and stimulating	4.224
I attend teacher training classes	4.215
I have a job in which I can perform to the best of my ability	4.181
My job provides scope to learn and develop my abilities to my full potential	3.616
My job is challenging	3.082

On the question of rewards belonging to the **self-determination and autonomy**, only two of the seven aspects could be considered as fulfilled.

Autodeterminazione e autonomia	Media
I am allowed sufficient freedom to do what is necessary in my teaching in order to do a good job	4.190
I stick to and achieve the aims of the module/programme	4.129
My job is fun	3.935
Creativity is emphasised and rewarded	3.668
I receive frequent enough feedback about the effectiveness of my performance	3.500
Independence and initiative are rewarded	3.440
Teaching accomplishments are recognised	2.991

Rewards that show an orientation towards **relationships** or need of affiliation are those that show the largest number of fulfilled aspects.

Relationships and affiliation	Media
I have good relationships with colleagues	4.340
I know that I am really helping my students to learn a foreign language	4.250
My students evaluate me positively	4.211
I have a good relationship with my students' parents	4.090
I am fairly treated in the organization	4.060
I have a friendly relationship with my students	4.021
My job provides sufficient variety in tasks/type of activity	4.017
I have a good relationship with my supervisor	3.961
I am included in my organization's goal-setting process	3.621
My supervisor is responsive to suggestions and grievances	3.599
I have sufficient opportunities for contact with professionals in the field of foreign language teaching	3.315
The emphasis is on team work	3.172
I am able to introduce changes without going through a lot of bureaucracy	2.927

In the end, most teachers have the possibility to teach the same students for several continuative years, but they are not enough to consider this aspect as generally fulfilled (3.840).

4.4 Career and Job Satisfaction

The means obtained from the last four questions are shown in the table below.

No.	Degree of satisfaction	Media
40.	I am totally satisfied with my profession as a teacher	3.784
41.	I am totally satisfied with my present job	3.746
42.	I would change my career if I had the opportunity to do so	1.991
43.	I would change my current job if I had the opportunity to do so	2.215

We have also intersected results regarding career satisfaction, job satisfaction and the willing to change career/job. For the economy of this essay, findings will be discussed in the last chapter.

4.5 Values and Rewards' Match

Results concerning the parallel between values and rewards have highlighted that almost all the conditions that are very important to teachers (six out of seven) are fulfilled. The top three are:

- a. Concretely helping students to learn a foreign language
- b. Having a job in which teachers can perform to the best of their abilities
- c. Having a pleasant and stimulating job

The only very important factor that is not fulfilled is having a job that permits to learn and develop abilities to their full potential.

Important values are mainly related to relationships, self-determination and autonomy, self-realisation and personal growth.

The kinds of rewards teachers get mostly concern relationships, self-realisation and personal growth, and partially self-determination and autonomy. However, none of them is completely achieved.

The top three are:

- a. Having good relationships with colleagues
- b. Working for a reputable institute
- c. Concretely helping students to learn a foreign language

Teachers tend to give little importance to extrinsic aspects, which are also the least rewarded.

4.6 Further analysis of some questionnaires

Eventually, in the interest of exploring whether there is a correlation between career satisfaction, initial motivation, values and rewards, we have analysed and compared the results (in terms of means) of four groups of respondents. Specifically:

- a. generally satisfied teachers (GSTs), i.e. teachers that tend to be satisfied with their profession and would generally keep it;
- b. definitely satisfied teachers (DSTs), i.e. teachers that are definitely satisfied with their profession and would generally keep it;
- c. generally dissatisfied teachers (GDTs), i.e. teachers that tend not to be satisfied with their profession and would generally change it;
- d. definitely dissatisfied teachers (DDTs), i.e. teachers that are definitely not satisfied with their profession and would generally change it.

In other words, we have only varied the parameter of career satisfaction and maintained the tendency concerning either keeping or changing career.

As we are dealing with some small sample sizes (especially as regards GDTs and DDTs), caution must be applied, as the findings might not be reliable.

Concerning **initial job motivation**, the following table shows the comparison between the results:

Initial job motivation	GSTs	DSTs	GDTs	DDTs
Teaching fitting my lifestyle	87.5%	97.8%	50%	50.0%
Proportion between salary and number of working hours	11.7%	17.4%	20%	16.7%
Not having got the admission to the desired job	3.9%	6.5%	40%	66.7%
Potential of changing students' lives	75%	71.7%	50%	16.7%
Vocation	87.5%	93.5%	50%	33.3%
Autonomy in the class	76.6%	67.4%	80%	66.7%
Job security	32.8%	26.1%	60%	83.3%
Quantity and scheduling of holidays	23.4%	15.2%	30%	50.0%
External pressures	3.1%	2.2%	10%	16.7%
Contributing to society	85.9%	89.1%	50%	16.7%

It emerges that both GSTs and DSTs have chosen this career for they were mainly driven by intrinsic and altruistic factors, while GDTs and DDTs were mainly driven by extrinsic factors.

Since the economy of the article does not allow us to report all the results concerning the four groups' values and rewards, we will just describe the analysis process in order to discuss the findings in the next paragraph.

Firstly, we have calculated the means of every item belonging to the values and the rewards sections for each group of teachers. Secondly, we have compared the quantity and the type of values and rewards between the groups. Eventually, we have considered the discrepancies related to those items that are not rewarded (showing a rate that is less than 3.0) in order to highlight the lack of some conditions in relation to their importance. Moreover, we have compared the sums of all the discrepancies of the four groups.

5 Discussion and Conclusion

This quantitative study set out to explore Italian foreign language teachers' motivation through the analysis of several aspects, i.e. initial job motivation, values, rewards, job satisfaction and career satisfaction.

We have taken into account several motivational models and theories that have been presented in the literature review, and related the above-mentioned factors to them in order to examine the outcomes of the online questionnaire we used.

From the answers given by 232 Italian foreign language teachers, results indicate that:

- a. the main reasons that motivated these teachers to enter their career are mainly of an intrinsic and an altruistic nature. Therefore, according to Koran (2015) they may have responded more favourably as regards commitment to the job.
- b. The only main extrinsic drive that plays a crucial role is autonomy. However, referring to Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory, autonomy is a fundamental component that fosters intrinsic motivation;
- c. in general, foreign language teachers attach a greater value to aspects related to relationships and need of affiliation, self-determination and autonomy, and to self-realisation and personal growth. This fact may let us suppose that they are somehow aware that fulfilling these aspects would foster their intrinsic motivation;
- d. except for one, i.e. having a job that permits to learn and develop abilities to their full potential, all the very important values are satisfied, but not totally. On the other hand, twelve of the fourteen important values are not satisfied. This may negatively influence the degree of motivation;
- e. none of the rewards can be considered as fully achieved. Nevertheless, the kinds of rewards these language teachers get are mostly connected to relationships, and to self-realisation and personal growth. This may trigger intrinsic motivation.

- f. On the contrary, the fact that rewards related to self-determination and autonomy are only partially accomplished, may negatively affect motivation;
- g. in line with the expectancy theory, the lack of rewards connected to important values does not favour motivation. Moreover, those indicated by this sample of teachers coincide with most of those that are considered as demotivating factors;
- h. on average, teachers are somehow satisfied both with their career and their current job, but we cannot talk about a general satisfaction.
- i. Considering the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation, it is possible that these teachers' motivation is not very strong;
- j. there are teachers who are happy with their profession although their work-life is not completely satisfying. Consequently, we may suppose that intrinsic motivation in present, which is confirmed by the fact that they would generally keep their career, while there is a tendency to want to change their current job if they had the possibility;
- k. there is also some evidence to suggest that some teachers are driven by some extrinsic factors as they would keep their current job despite not being happy either with their career or with their job;
- l. it seems teachers who were driven by intrinsic and altruistic motives tend to be more satisfied with their career than those who were driven by extrinsic reasons, suggesting that there may be a correlation between initial job motivation and current career satisfaction;
- m. there is the possibility that the degree of importance attached to values and the types of values are interlaced with career satisfaction, and therefore we could claim that values do influence motivation insofar as they are either fulfilled or not;
- n. rewards seem to play a crucial role both in terms of type of rewards and in terms of degree of accomplishment. Lack of rewards is likely to affect both job satisfaction and career satisfaction, and therefore language teachers' motivation as well.

Despite its exploratory nature, this study has gone some way towards enhancing our understanding of some possible reasons that may influence foreign language teachers' motivation. However, we are aware that the issue of motivation is so extensive that it would be difficult to deepen all aspects. Therefore, other parameters may be taken into account in the next study in order to have a clearer picture of the current situation.

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