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Teacher Enthusiasm and Collaborative School Climate

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Abstract

The main aim of efforts to improve teaching is to create conditions that are more supportive of student learning and social development. The most tangible output of teaching activities occurs during the teaching activities conducted in the classroom environment. It is therefore reasonable to focus on what happens in the classroom to improve teaching. The quality of interactions between students and teachers is affected by the emotional states of both parties. Positive emotions arising from teachers are an important factor in high-quality teaching experiences for both parties. Due to the enriching and affirming effects of teacher enthusiasm in classroom interactions, it is important to investigate the underlying processes. For that reason, this research was designed to investigate the effects of supportive and collaborative processes on teacher enthusiasm. As a result of this research, it was concluded that organizational values and practices that facilitate and encourage information exchange increase teacher enthusiasm. In this respect, investigating organizational processes that facilitate cooperation and positively affect the achievement of school goals may be beneficial in terms of increasing the effectiveness of schools.

Keywords: Teacher Enthusiasm, Collaborative School Climate, Teacher Collaboration, School Principal Collaboration

1. Introduction

There are many factors that hinder or facilitate effective teaching. These include students' socioeconomic backgrounds, school management, government policies, the structure of the national education system, the curriculum, and teachers' knowledge and skills, among others. However, beyond the factors listed here, the most important factor for effective teaching lies in a teacher's deep commitment to student learning. This commitment represents the enthusiasm of a teachers for students' learning under all circumstances while seeking the best learning opportunities (Day, 2004). A teacher's motivation to teach, his or her style of interaction with students, and his or her professional development tendencies affect the teacher's performance positively and manifest themselves as teacher enthusiasm (Reeve & Su, 2014). Teacher enthusiasm is closely related to effective teaching and effective teachers (Woolfolk Hoy & Hoy, 2013).

Enthusiasm, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is "a strong feeling of excitement and interest in something and a desire to become involved in it." The concept of enthusiasm as a strong emotion reflects the quality of an experience that is taking place. Enthusiasm improves the quality of social interactions. In this sense, it provides an important point of reference for evaluating the feelings of teachers and students, which are reflected in their educational relations (Scheer, 2020). According to Kunter et al. (2008), teacher enthusiasm "reflects the degree of enjoyment, excitement and pleasure that teachers typically experience in their professional activities." The teaching process that occurs between teacher and student is a kind of social relationship. The teacher is not only the person who informs or guides in this relationship; the teacher also energizes the relationship. Teachers who deny the power of their relationships with students foster the emergence of unhealthy attitudes, creating negative consequences for both teachers and students (Metcalfe & Game, 2006). The thought and behavior repertoires of individuals who experience positive emotions in work environments are constantly expanding. Enthusiasm encourages them to increase their social, cultural, and intellectual potential to develop their knowledge, creativity, experience, and expertise (Buric & Moe, 2020). In the research conducted by Kunter et al. (2011), two dimensions related to the conceptualization of teacher enthusiasm emerged. Accordingly, teacher enthusiasm consists of the dimensions of subject enthusiasm, which is specific to a particular field or discipline, and teaching enthusiasm, which arises from teaching-learning practices.

The positive emotions that teachers reflect in the classroom are related to teacher enthusiasm and help students realize the importance of the lesson while developing their own positive emotions (Kim & Schallert, 2014). According to Oprea (2013), the tasks of teachers are not limited to students' efforts to discover, understand, and analyze science and life. They must also help students work toward those goals with enthusiasm. The teacher's enthusiasm is key to good teaching as it captures students' attention and motivates them to learn. Many positive outcomes of teacher enthusiasm can be mentioned. Teacher enthusiasm plays a role in reducing students' boredom in the classroom (Cui, Yao, & Zhang, 2017) and increasing their interest, motivation, and performance during lessons (Frommelt, Schiefele, & Lazarides, 2021; Frenzel, Taxer, Schwab, & Kuhbandner, 2019; Lazarides, Gaspard & Dicke, 2019; Natof & Romanczyk, 2009). In addition, teacher enthusiasm positively affects participation in learning, both socially and behaviorally (Patrick, Hisley, & Kempler, 2000; Dewaele & Li, 2021; Lazarides, Gaspard & Dicke, 2019; Orosz et al., 2015; Taehee & Schallert, 2014; Zhang, 2013). According to Kunter et al. (2011), enthusiasm catalyzes excitement, engagement, and effectiveness in teaching relationships. In this sense, positive experiences that spread to both emotional and behavioral realms have healing and enriching potential for teaching in the classroom.

In order to increase the academic success of students, the quality of education should be improved and enriched. Teachers play a decisive role in the quality of teaching. In particular, the passion of the teacher for teaching leads students to perceive the teaching in school as being of higher quality (Lazarides, Fauth, Gaspard, & Gollner, 2021). Enthusiasm is contagious by nature. In this sense, teacher enthusiasm is not limited to being an emotional state experienced only by the teacher. The behavioral expression of enthusiasm creates wider excitement and enthusiasm that begin with the individual and spreads throughout the entire school community. In this way, an energy that motivates all social interactions, including professional development, teaching, and guidance, is projected into the school (Wenström & Kuortti, 2021). Enthusiasm increases teachers' abilities to overcome problems and find solutions. Enthusiastic teachers rely on their knowledge, expertise, and experience. Additionally, when they receive support from the school community, they become very good problem-solvers (Zembylas & Barker, 2007). This is because the support provided by colleagues or professional groups constitutes an energizing resource for individuals and improves their moods. Social support also enriches human functioning (Rana & Hariharan, 2016).

According to Galikhanov and Julia (2019), teachers should create educational environments in which participants are satisfied. In other words, teachers are active not only in the fields of knowledge and intelligence, but also in the emotional field. Burnout is one of the main problems challenging the activities of teachers in the emotional field. Negative situations must be overcome in order to create healthy educational environments for students. One of the ways to ensure that teachers reflect positive attitudes to the class is to foster teacher enthusiasm. Teacher enthusiasm has consequences for both teachers and students, enriching the teaching

relationship. Developing the strengths of teachers and the school community is an important source of teacher enthusiasm.

Although emotion is a biological process, the causes of emotions have a social dimension (Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2018). Teachers' perceptions of teacher-teacher and teacher-school principal relations as being collaborative create results that are reflected in the teachers' practices in the classroom (Gregory, Henry, & Schoeny, 2007). In this context, teacher enthusiasm is also affected by factors such as school organization, atmosphere, and the sense of community that occurs among teachers (Cheung, 2015; Bakker & Demerouti, 2014; Keller et al., 2016; Kunter & Holzberger, 2014; Macey & Schneider, 2008). In their research, Wenström, Uusiautti, and Määttä (2018) concluded that professional atmospheres with positive relationships are among the sources of teacher enthusiasm. Facilitating the ways in which employees perform their duties, supporting them with knowledge, creating opportunities for them to encounter new ideas, enabling them to communicate with others and become socially enriched, and helping them to develop their expertise all increase their professional enthusiasm (Russel, 2008). The excitement and new perspectives created by positive interactions can play a role in increasing enthusiasm for teaching. The mutual and positive human relations that develop between collaborators can be an initiator of teacher enthusiasm reflected in the classroom together with the emergence of new methods and information (Wenström, Uusiautti, & Määttä, 2019). Organizational mechanisms that develop and support knowledge, experience, and expertise can create effects that increase teachers' enthusiasm for their subjects and for teaching in general.

Teachers are embedded in an organizational context that surrounds their teaching activities. Contextual conditions such as the administrative processes of the school and interactions between teachers affect teacher enthusiasm. Although many studies in the literature have dealt with teacher enthusiasm in the context of the classroom, studies that deal with this concept within the framework of organizational context are quite limited. Therefore, it is still necessary to reveal the organizational mechanisms that facilitate or prevent teacher enthusiasm (Keller, Woolfolk Hoy, Goetz, & Frenzel, 2016). Antecedents and contexts must be known if teacher enthusiasm is to be developed (Keller et al., 2014). In this context, the aim of this study is to examine the relationship between teacher enthusiasm and collaborative school climate. The findings are expected to allow important inferences to be made about the cooperation processes that will increase teachers' enthusiasm for teaching in general and for their specific subjects. In line with that goal, answers to the following questions are sought in this work:
1. What is the level of teacher enthusiasm among the participants?
2. What are the participants' perceptions of collaborative school climates?
3. Is there a relationship between collaborative organizational climate and teacher enthusiasm?
4. Does the collaborative organizational climate predict teacher enthusiasm?

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

This research aims to investigate the effect of collaborative organizational climate on teacher enthusiasm. Quantitative research that examines the relationships between dependent and independent variables is called correlational research (Johnson, Christensen, 2020). Correlational research design was preferred from the quantitative research approach because it was suitable for the purpose of the research.

2.2 Sample and Data Collection

The research population consisted of primary, secondary and high school teachers from the İstanbul province in the 2021-2022 academic year. The sample of this research consists of 526 teachers working in public schools. Random sampling method, in which each element has an equal and independent chance of being selected (Özen & Gül, 2007), was used to determine the study group. Demographics of the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the participants

Gender	ƒ	%
Female	282	53.6
Male	244	46.4
Total	526	100
Type of School	ƒ	%
Primary School	147	27.9
Secondary School	214	40.7
High School	165	31.2
Total	526	100

Of all the participants 53,6% (n=282) were female, and 46.4% (n=244) were male. Besides, 31.2% (n= 165) of the participants work in high schools, %40.7 (n=214) of the participants work in secondary schools and 27.9% (n= 147) of the participants work in primary schools.

2.3 Data Collection Tools

The data of the research was used on two scales. The first of these scales is the Teacher Enthusiasm Scale developed by Kunter, Frenzel, Nagy, Baumert and Pekrun (2011). The scale was adapted into Turkish by Kasalak and Dağyar in 2020. The Teacher Enthusiasm Scale, which is a 5-point likert-type scale, consists of two sub-dimensions, subject enthusiasm (5 items) and teaching enthusiasm (5 items), and a total of 10 items. The Cronbach-alpha coefficient is .963 for the whole scale, .969 for the teaching enthusiasm sub-dimension, and .978 for the subject enthusiasm sub-dimension.

The second scale is the Collaborative School Climate Scale developed by Sveiby and Simons (2002). The scale was adapted into Turkish by Limon and Durnalı in 2017. The Collaborative School Climate Scale, which is a 5-point Likert type scale, consists of four sub-dimensions: collaborative school culture (5 items), collaborative school principal (5 items), collaborative teacher (5 items) and intra-coterie collaboration (2 items), and a total of 17 items. The Cronbach-alpha coefficient is .940 for the whole scale; 904 for the collaborative school culture sub-dimension, .937 for the collaborative school principal sub-dimension, .882 for the collaborative teacher sub-dimension, and .905 for intra-coterie collaboration sub-dimension.

2.4 Data Analysis

The data obtained as a result of the research were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences Windows 25.0. Percentages, averages and standard deviations of the variables were tested with descriptive statistics.

Table 2: Kurtosis and skewness values

Sub-scales	Kurtosis	Skewness
Teacher Enthusiasm	-.826	-.327
Teaching Enthusiasm	-.741	-.883
Subject Enthusiasm	-.646	-.902
Collaborative Climate	-.413	-.863
Collaborative School Culture	-1,208	.139
Collaborative School Principal	-1.193	-.282
Collaborative Teacher	-.821	-.221
Intra-Coterie Collaboration	-.941	-.493

Kurtosis and Skewness values were examined to determine whether the study variables were normally distributed. Kurtosis and Skewness values between +1.5 and -1.5 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013) are considered normal distribution. As the sampling is adequate according to the law of large numbers and the central limit

theorem (N=526), the analyses were continued with the assumption that the distribution was normal (Harwiki, 2013; İnal & Günay, 1993; Johnson & Wichern, 2002).

3. Results

The teacher enthusiasm and collaborative school climate levels in accordance with the thoughts of participants were determined with descriptive statistics. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation analysis results

Variable	M	Sd	1	2	3	4	5
1. Teaching Enthusiasm	3.811	.1,281					
2. Subject Enthusiasm	3,838	1,266	.665**				
3. Collaborative School Culture	3,106	1.109	.523**	.536**			
4. Collaborative Principal	3,250	1.148	.510**	.625**	.700**		
5. Collaborative Teacher	3,208	1.035	.533**	.614**	.590**	.708**	
6. Intra-Coterie Collaboration	3.418	1,216	.559**	.589**	.523**	.569**	.648**

As shown in the Table 3, all variables identified in the study yielded high and significant means. In addition, there are positive and significant correlations between the teaching enthusiasm and subject enthusiasm, which are the dependent variables of the study, and all independent variables. Table 4 shows the results of the regression analyses of all independent variables.

Table 4: Regression analysis results

	Independent Variables	B	t	p	F	Model	R^2
Teaching Enthusiasm	Collaborative School Culture	.257	4,560	.000	88.317	0.000	.399
	Collaborative Principal	.083	1.335	.182			
	Collaborative Teacher	.192	2.926	.004			
	Intra-Coterie Collaboration	.316	6.527	.000			
Subject Enthusiasm	Collaborative Culture	.106	2.074	.039	126.983	0.000	0.494
	Collaborative Principal	.300	5.309	.000			
	Collaborative Teacher	.246	4.112	.000			
	Intra-Coterie Collaboration	.266	6.042	.000			

The findings provide insight into the importance of sub-dimensions of the collaborative school climate in teaching enthusiasm and subject enthusiasm. Table 4 shows that teaching enthusiasm was significantly predicted by to collaborative school culture (β=.257), by collaborative teacher (β=.192), and by intra-coterie collaboration (β=.316), which together accounted for 39,9% of the variance (R^2=0.399, F=88.317, p<0.00). According to the findings of the research, collaborative principal does not affect teaching enthusiasm (p=.182>.000). According to the findings, as collaborative school culture, collaborative teacher attitude and intra-coterie collaboration, teaching enthusiasm also increases.

Another sub-dimension of teacher enthusiasm is subject enthusiasm. According to the data of this research subject enthusiasm was significantly predicted by collaborative school culture (β=.106), by collaborative school principal (β=.300), by collaborative teacher (β=.264), and by intra-coterie collaboration (β=.266), which together accounted for 49.4% of the variance (R^2=0.494, F=126.983, p<0.00). As collaborative school culture,

collaborative school principal attitude, collaborative teacher attitude, and intra-coterie collaboration increase, subject enthusiasm increases.

3.1 Discussion

At the heart of efforts to improve education systems are variables that can improve and enrich the quality of teaching. Teacher performance is one of the most important of these variables (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2006). A teacher's motivation within his or her field of expertise and general teaching practices is the primary determinant of successful and high-quality teaching. Moreover, teachers' motivational orientations are important predictors of successful teaching practices (Mahler, Großschedl, & Harms, 2018). The ways in which the emotional experiences of teachers regarding their subjects and practices of teaching are reflected in teachers' behaviors are conceptualized as teacher enthusiasm (Keller et al., 2014). One of the most important reasons for the interest in teacher enthusiasm is related to the nature of emotions and behaviors. People can influence the emotions and behaviors of others through their own emotions and behaviors. That is, teachers can cause students to have positive experiences in the classroom environment with their enthusiasm for their subjects or teaching in general, or both (Mitchell, 2013). Positive emotional experiences such as happiness and satisfaction experienced by enthusiastic teachers cause those who experience learning in those classrooms to have positive emotions as well (Punia & Bala, 2021). Therefore, revealing the mechanisms that increase teacher enthusiasm is important for both teachers' satisfaction and students' academic success and social development. In this study, it was aimed to investigate the organizational factors underlying teacher enthusiasm because the support provided by the school administration and other teachers as a characteristic of the collaborative organizational climate can improve the quality of teaching by enabling teachers to maintain positive orientations toward teaching and their specific areas of expertise.

The first of the subdimensions of collaborative climates is the collaborative school culture. As a result of this research, it was concluded that collaborative cultures increased teachers' enthusiasm for both their subjects and teaching in general. Collaboration is closely related to duty, commitment, organizational goals, and collectivity. When considered in the context of organizational culture, collaborative cultures reflect organizational values, norms, and beliefs related to those concepts. Organizational goals, duties, student achievement, and norms of solidarity improve cooperation by guiding teachers' behaviors (Tłuściak-Deliowska, 2018). Collaborative school cultures can be used to shape work environments that ensure the professional development of teachers and the academic development of students through the sharing of knowledge, experience, and expertise (Jong, Meirink, & Admiraal, 2019; Leithwood, Sun, & Pollock, 2017). A collaborative culture provides a climate where members benefit from each other. The processes of working together, helping each other cope with problems, and providing support facilitate professional development. The development of a teacher's potential triggers positive emotions such as self-confidence and satisfaction (Poom-Valickis, Eisenschmidt, & Leppiman, 2021). School environments where teachers have positive feelings about the teaching profession increase teacher enthusiasm (Aldridge & Fraser, 2016), and supportive social climates help teachers experience positive feelings toward their work (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016). According to Russell (2008), who studied the factors affecting enthusiasm in work environments, the idea of designing the work to meet human needs is very important. Working life is a path of growth where one's knowledge and expertise develop. In this process, the formation of a supportive environment based on social and intellectual cooperation contributes to increasing enthusiasm for work. This line of reasoning supports the findings of the present research. It is likely that the sharing and solidarity encouraged by collaborative school cultures will increase teachers' enthusiasm for their specific subjects and for teaching in general.

Collaborative school climate scale includes two sub-dimensions emphasizing especially the cooperation practices among teachers. The first of these is teacher collaboration sub-dimension, which expresses the collaboration between the teachers in the school, and the other is the intra-coterie collaboration sub-dimensions, which express the collaboration within the groups formed by the teachers in the same branch. According to the findings, these two variables increase both teaching enthusiasm and subject enthusiasm. Learning opportunities outside the classroom increase teachers' motivation to teach. When teachers are interested in their own learning processes apart from teaching in the classroom, their passion for teaching is affected positively. Teachers'

concentration on acquiring new knowledge and skills also increases their enthusiasm for teaching by developing their sense of mastery and autonomy (Kunter & Holzberger, 2017). Professional support helps teachers maintain their enthusiasm and excitement in their daily teaching practices. In this sense, working environments in which support is offered by colleagues make it easier to maintain teacher enthusiasm (Wenström, Uusiautti, & Määttä, 2019). The school communities that develop and support teachers' self-efficacy are among the important organizational mechanisms underlying teacher enthusiasm (Buric & Moe, 2020). Similarly, Sheppard, Hurley, and Dibbon (2010) concluded that the collaboration of teachers with their colleagues increased their performance and enthusiasm. According to Hoy and Miskel (2013), in a healthy school climate, the school directs all its energy toward its purpose of existence and, in this sense, task-oriented relationships develop. Teachers are highly committed to teaching and learning; they are willing to participate in processes that will help them improve themselves and teacher enthusiasm is high (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). According to Bailes (2015), interactions among teachers improve their professionalism and professional respect and increase their enthusiasm for students.

According to the findings of this study, while the cooperative school principal attitude does not affect teaching enthusiasm, it increases subject enthusiasm. Enthusiasm for a teacher's subject arises from the relationship between that teacher and the subject he or she teaches, independently of other variables related to the classroom (Kunter et al., 2011). The indirect influence of school principals on teaching activities in the classroom, with a lack of direct classroom experience, may have caused the participants of this study to associate principals' supportive activities with subject enthusiasm rather than teaching enthusiasm. In order for teacher collaboration to take place in real terms, facilitators who support collaboration are needed, and school principals can create conditions that facilitate cooperation by organizing meetings to exchange information between teachers and transfer innovations to the organization (Tran et al., 2020; Vangrieken, Dochy, Raes, & Kyndt, 2015). School administrators can support individuals by enriching the job content through the circulation of information that they facilitate in the organization or transfer to the organization from outside. Individuals who acquire new methods and strategies can develop their potential more fully and this can increase their enthusiasm (Wenström, 2020). According to Shakoor and Iqbal (2018), teachers are a source of power and that power is devoted to teaching every day at school. Teachers need support from colleagues and administrators to maintain their power and enthusiasm in this regard. In particular, the professional knowledge of education administrators and the application of the latest teaching techniques in the school can increase the energy and ambition of teachers. The cultivation of teacher enthusiasm should be on the agendas of school administrators. It is within the scope of the responsibilities of the school administration to develop strategies that will increase student learning and to introduce practices that will improve and enrich teacher performance for this purpose (Bloom, Lemos, Sadun, & Reenen, 2015).

According to Bakker et al. (2017), organizational climate is one of the important professional resources buffering the negative effects that teachers are exposed to due to teaching-related problems. Collaborative professional relationships that can improve the quality of teaching require a supportive culture and structure (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018). In light of the data obtained in this research, it can be said that the practices and organizational norms at the levels of both school administrations and teachers exert effects on teacher enthusiasm. The positive emotional experiences of both teachers and students regarding teaching practices in the classroom are beneficial for both teacher satisfaction and students' academic and social development. In this respect, mechanisms that encourage cooperation within the school community can be important resources for improving the quality of teaching.

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