

An Analysis of Teacher Candidates' Academic Motivation Levels with Respect to Several Variables

Hasan Özder

Atatürk Teacher Training Academy, *Nicosia, North Cyprus*

hasan.ozder@aoa.edu.tr

Aktül Motorcan

Dilekkaya Primary School, *Nicosia, North Cyprus*

aktul.motorcan@aoa.edu.tr

Abstract

The main aim of this research is to analyze prospective teachers' Academic Motivation Levels with respect to several variables. Participants of the research were 176 prospective teachers enrolled in Ataturk Teacher Training Academy in the 2009-2010 Academic Year. The data of the research were collected through the Academic Motivation Scale developed by Vallerand et al. (1992). The research findings suggest that the prospective teachers' academic motivation scores are above the mean. Moreover, a high-level correlation was found between academic motivation scores and academic achievement scores. It was also found that first- and fourth-year students are more motivated than second- and third-year students, and female students are more motivated than male students. When considered the reasons affected prospective teachers' decisions to become teachers, it was observed that the academic motivation scores of those who reported "because teaching is a passion for me" are higher.

Keywords: Prospective teacher, academic motivation, academic achievement

1. Introduction

Motivation is a psychological concept that is of high importance in the field of education. It implies an individual's production of behaviors oriented towards a certain objective in order to meet his/her needs and making of efforts to reach the objective (Ülgen, 1997: 62). The contribution of motivation to success in the process of teaching-learning has been a subject for numerous studies for long years; and the conditions that elicit motivation, types of motivation and the ways to improve motivation have been examined in various fields (Hattie, 2009).

The self-determination theory is one of the theories on the subject of motivation that have been developed so far (Deci et al., 1991; Rayn & Deci, 2000). Self-determination, different from capacity, is a need, and the most basic propensity related to being self-determining is the one that leads organisms to engage in interesting behaviors (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The objective of the self-determination theory is to define the conditions that ensure the healthy development of individuals, groups and societies, and to clearly define the factors affecting the processes of development, integration and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000). When self-determined, people experience a sense of freedom to do what is interesting, personally important, and psychologically vitalizing" (Deci & Ryan, 2006). According to the self-determination theory, individual behaviors might be motivated intrinsically and extrinsically, or they can remain unmotivated (Deci et al., 1991). Intrinsically motivated behaviors are the ones triggered by the satisfaction and pleasure provided by the activities being done. For example, students feel satisfaction and pleasure when they learn something (Vallerand et al., 1992). Three types of intrinsic motivation have been defined (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Vallerand et al., 1992). Intrinsic motivation to know is the intrinsic motivation that stems from satisfaction when an individual experiences after learning something new. Intrinsic motivation to accomplish is the motivation derived from the pleasure an individual experiences after accomplishing or creating something. Intrinsic motivation to experience is the motivation stemming from the good feelings that arise after participating in an activity. Therefore, intrinsic motivation is the motive that drives a person to experience (Vallerand et al., 1992).

Unlike intrinsically motivated behaviors, extrinsically motivated behaviors are not performed because of intense interest to engage in a particular activity (Cokley, Bernard, Cunningham & Motoike, 2001). There exist three kinds of extrinsic motivation: external regulation, introjected regulation and identified regulation (Deci et al., 1991). External regulation implies the behaviors that are regulated for an external outcome. These behaviors emerge through external means such as rewards and constraints. Introjected regulation occurs when an individual internalizes the behaviors that he has assumed as guidelines for possible events. Since these behaviors are regulated by demands and rules, self-determined behavior is not considered. Introjected regulation might include forcing and pressure to act in certain situations that do not allow students to make their real decisions. Identified regulation occurs when the individual is convinced that the behavior is important after evaluating it. As a student defines the regulating process, he becomes more willing to engage in a certain behavior. In this, individuals tend to feel more autonomous, because they can make decisions regarding their own behaviors and they do not respond to external constraints (Cokley, Bernard, Cunningham & Motoike, 2001).

Amotivation is considered the lowest level of autonomy on the continuum of motivational styles. Individuals who are amotivated are neither intrinsically nor extrinsically motivated. Amotivated individuals lack both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. When individuals experience amotivation, they tend to believe that it is a consequence of something out of control of their own behaviors (Vallerand & Bissonette, 1992). Individuals who are not incited by a motive (who are in the condition of amotivate) generally lack aims or dreams

about their future. Those who believe that actions or behaviors are formed beyond their control cannot feel strong or competent on shaping their future; therefore, they lack of self-concept and self-esteem (Fibel and Hale 1978; Tafarodi and Swann, 1995).

In studies conducted with prospective teachers in different fields, prospective teachers' motivation levels have been found high (Arioğlu, 2009; Demir, 2008; Gençay & Gençay, 2007; İflazoğlu & Tümkaya, 2008; Onuk, 2007; Saracaloğlu, 2008; Umay, 2002). It can especially be said that prospective teachers' intrinsic motivation levels are higher than other motivation levels (Arioğlu, 2009; Demir, 2008; Onuk, 2007). Prospective teachers' Academic Motivation Levels (AMLs) also have a positive impact on their academic achievements (Arioğlu, 2009; Saracaloğlu, 2008, Saraçaloğlu & Dinçer, 2009). It especially increases prospective teachers' academic achievement scores positively. This increase is observed mostly in prospective teachers' achievements in initial teacher training courses (Onuk, 2007). İflazoğlu & Tümkaya (2008), in their study carried out with classroom prospective teachers, found a high correlation between prospective teachers' motivation levels and their achievements in drama courses. Saraçaloğlu & Dinçer (2009), on the other hand, found a positive high correlation between prospective teachers' AM levels and their teaching self-efficacy beliefs.

Besides, in researches made about students in secondary school, it is found that there is a significant correlation between academic achievement and academic motivation variables (Guay ve Vallerand, 1997; Aydın, 2010; Fortier, Vallerand and Guay (1995). However, it is not found any significant correlation between academic achievement and academic motivation variables in researches about the students in the department of Psychology (Baker, 2004; Cokley, Bernard, Cunningham and Motoike, 2001). Different results have been obtained regarding whether prospective teachers' motivation levels differ according to gender or not. While some studies (Gençay & Gençay, 2007; İflazoğlu & Tümkaya, 2008; Onuk, 2007; Saracaloğlu, 2008; Spittle et al., 2009; Vallerand et al., 1992) have found a significant difference in the favor of females, some others (Arioğlu, 2009; Demir, 2008) did not find any significant difference.

According to some studies, prospective teachers' AMLs differ according to the grade level they are in. Especially in the sub-dimensions of intrinsic motivation, it has been observed that the motivation levels of those prospective teachers who are in first and fourth grades are higher than those of prospective teachers who are in second and third grades (Arioğlu, 2009; Spittle et al., 2009). Umay (2002), in the study conducted with elementary school math prospective teachers, has determined that achievement motivation levels of even the beginners were above the mean, and this level became even higher towards the end of the program. As for the amotivation dimension, significant differences were found in the favor of prospective teachers in the third grade (Arioğlu, 2009; Spittle et al., 2009). Demir (2008), in the study conducted on distance learning students, has determined that first-year distance learning students' motivation levels were higher in all mean points than second-year distance learning students' motivation levels. Gençay & Gençay (2007), on the other hand, in their study on students enrolled in vocational school of physical training and sports, found that first-years students' extrinsic motivation scores were higher than those of fourth-year students; that the mean scores of items related to high motivation in the first-grade decreased in consequent grade levels and the mean scores of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation reached their lowest in the fourth-grade. In some other studies, on the other hand, it has been concluded that different grade levels do not affect prospective teachers' motivation levels significantly (Onuk, 2007).

1.1. Ataturk Teacher Training Academy

Ataturk Teacher Training Academy (ATTA) is an institution in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) training classroom teachers and pre-school teachers. It is required in the TRNC to graduate from ATTA to become classroom teacher or pre-school teacher (Teachers Law, Article: 16). The academy accepts students each year through an entrance exam. The entrance exam consists of written and oral stages. The written exam is composed of Math, Turkish Language, Science, Social Sciences and English Language sub-tests. Those who successfully pass the written exam are admitted to the oral exam where their attitudes and behaviors regarding teaching are assessed in terms of certain criteria (ATTA Entry Examinations and Interview Regulations, 2000).

1.2. Statement

How a difference do the AMLs and academic achievements of teacher candidates enrolled in the Ataturk Teacher Training Academy exhibit with respect to the variables of gender, program, grade level, and reasons of choosing teaching as a profession? The sub-problems were determined as follows:

- 1) What are teacher candidates' academic motivation levels, and do they exhibit a significant correlation with their academic achievements?
- 2) Do teacher candidates' AMLs differ significantly with respect to their genders?
- 3) Do teacher candidates' AMLs differ significantly with respect to the program they are enrolled in?
- 4) Do teacher candidates' AMLs differ significantly with respect to their reasons of choosing teaching as a profession?
- 5) Do teacher candidates' AMLs differ significantly with respect to the grade levels they are in?

2. Research Method

The research is of a descriptive character since it analyzes the relationship between teacher candidates' academic motivation and their academic achievement, and since it examines whether their academic motivation differs with respect to several variables.

2.1. Participants

The participants of the research consist of those students enrolled in the Classroom CTP and the PSTP at ATTA Department of Teacher Education in the 2009-2010 Academic Year. In the research, all 204 prospective teachers enrolled in ATTA in the 2009-2010 Academic year were attempted to be reached. However, since 28 prospective teachers were absent in the day the AMS was administered, 176 of them participated in the research.

Table 1. The distribution of the participant prospective teachers in terms of the program, grade level and gender

| Program | 1 st Grade | | 2 nd Grade | | 3 rd Grade | | 4 th Grade | | Total | |
|---------|-----------------------|--------|-----------------------|--------|-----------------------|--------|-----------------------|--------|-------|--------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| CTP | 4 | 15 | 6 | 11 | 8 | 20 | 4 | 19 | 22 | 65 |
| PSTP | 7 | 10 | 7 | 14 | 12 | 17 | 4 | 18 | 30 | 59 |
| Total | 11 | 25 | 13 | 25 | 20 | 37 | 8 | 37 | 52 | 124 |

As it can be seen from Table 1, 124 females and 52 males, a total of 176 prospective teachers, studying at ATTA in the 2009-10 academic year, participated in the study. Of the

participant prospective teachers, 87 (65 female, 22 male) are enrolled in the CTP and 89 (59 female, 30 male) are enrolled in the PSTP.

2.2. Instruments

The research data are the points obtained from the academic motivation scale (AMS) and the prospective teachers' academic achievements. Prospective teachers' personal information is presented with the AMS. In personal information, prospective teachers' genders, programs they are enrolled in, their grade levels and the reasons affected their decisions to choose teaching as a profession was asked. Options regarding the reasons of choosing teaching as a profession are presented below:

Option1: At the demand of my family

Option2: Since it is a job that offers job security and constant income

Option 3: Since I wanted to positively contribute to the society's future

Option 4: Since teaching was a passion for me

Option 5: Since I wanted to work with children

Academic Motivation Scale: In the research, the university form of the AMS, which was developed in 1992 by Vallerand et al., was used. The scale consists of 28 seven-points Likert-type items aimed at measuring motivation according to the cognitive approach. The scale is composed of a total of 7 factors; 3 of which measure intrinsic motivation (to know, to accomplish, to experience stimulation), 3 measure extrinsic motivation (identified regulation, introjected regulation, external regulation) and amotivation.

Table 2: Theoretical Model of the Academic Motivation Scale (AMS)

| Main Components | Factors | Items | Demir (2008) α (n= 350) | Data of the research α (n= |
|----------------------|---------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Intrinsic Motivation | To Know | 2, 9, 16, 23. | .77 | .88 |
| | To Accomplish | 6, 13, 20, 27 | .70 | .81 |
| | To Experience Stimulation | 4, 11, 18, 25 | .70 | .81 |
| Extrinsic Motivation | Identified Regulation | 3, 10, 17, 24 | .73 | .75 |
| | Introjected Regulation | 7, 14, 21, 28 | .73 | .72 |
| | External Regulation | 1, 8,15,22 | .72 | .71 |
| Amotivation | Amotivation | 5,12,19,26 | .80 | .78 |
| Total | | | .85 | .88 |

Reliability: The scale translated into Turkish by Demir (2008) was administered to 350 students enrolled in Sakarya University Hendek Vocational School, and the Cronbach's alpha (α) reliability coefficient was calculated as .85. Cronbach's alpha (α) reliability coefficients of the sub-dimensions of the scale vary between .80 and .70.

In the light of the data obtained in the research, the scale's total Cronbach's alpha (α) reliability coefficient was found 0.882. Cronbach's alpha (α) reliability coefficients of the sub-dimensions of the scale vary between .88 and .71.

Validity: Based on the data of the current research, a factor analysis was also performed, after KMO and Barlett tests had been conducted. It was observed that the KMO value was .903 and the Barlett test was significant ($X^2 = 2965.703$, $p=.000$, $df=378$). It was decided based on these results that the available data were suitable for factor analysis. According to the Varimax factor analysis, the 1st factor explains 39.189% of the total variance.

Academic Achievement (AA) Scores: Prospective teachers' academic achievements were obtained from ATTA Student Affairs. All grades that all prospective teachers enrolled both in the Pre-School Teaching and Classroom Teaching Programs covering the period from their entrance to the Academy to the current grade levels they are in were included within the scope of the research. In other words, GPAs of all participant prospective teachers as of 2009-2010 Fall Semesters were included.

2.3. Analysis of Data

Prospective teachers' AMSs were calculated using the following formula (Vallerand: 2002).

$$AMS = (2 \times ((KN + AC + EXS) / 3) + IDR - (((IR + ER) / 2) + (2 \times A))$$

AMS: Academic Motivation Score, IDR: Identified Regulation, KN: To Know, IR: Introjected Regulation, AC: To Accomplish, ER: External Regulation, EXS: To Experience Stimulation, A: Amotivation

AMS, calculated through the above formula, takes a value between -18 and +18.

For the analysis of the data obtained in the research, ANOVA, 't' test, LSD test and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation techniques were utilized.

3. Results

Tables demonstrating the findings related to the sub-problems of the research are presented below:

3.1. Prospective teachers' AML scores

Prospective teachers' AML scores are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Prospective teachers' AML scores and their correlation with AA scores

| Dimensions | Sub-Dimensions | N | \bar{X} | S | Correlation Values with res (r) |
|----------------------|---------------------------|-----|-----------|------|---------------------------------|
| Intrinsic Motivation | To Know | 176 | 5.98 | 1.11 | .24** |
| | To Accomplish | 176 | 5.63 | 1.08 | .19* |
| | To Experience Stimulation | 176 | 5.44 | 1.19 | .25** |
| Extrinsic Motivation | Identified Regulation | 176 | 5.93 | 1.01 | .18* |
| | Introjected Regulation | 176 | 4.04 | 1.35 | .00 |
| | External Regulation | 176 | 5.49 | 1.13 | -.03 |
| Amotivation | | 176 | 1.48 | 0.92 | -.23** |
| TOTAL | | 176 | 9.56 | 3.86 | .30** |

* p < .05 **p < .01

As Table 3 demonstrates, prospective teachers' score related to their total AMLs is 9.56. Since this score can be within the interval of -18 and 18, it could be said that a score of 9 is high. Moreover, the mean score calculated according to the responses given by the participant prospective teachers to questions related to the dimension of Amotivation is 1.48 (S=0.92). Therefore, since the amotivation level is low, it could be concluded that prospective teachers' motivation levels are high.

It is seen that, for the sub-dimensions of intrinsic motivation, the mean score for the sub-dimension of "to know" is 5.98 (S=1.11), for "to accomplish" is 5.63 (S= 1.08) and for "to experience stimulation" is 5.44 (S=1.19). For the sub-dimensions of extrinsic motivation,

the mean score for “identified regulation” is 5.93 (S=1.01), for “introjected regulation” is 4.04 (S=1.35) and for “external motivation” is 5.49 (S=1.13).

The lowest motivation level was found in the sub-dimension of “introjected regulation” of extrinsic motivation ($\bar{X} = 4.04$, S=1.35). On the other hand, the highest motivation level was found in the sub-dimension of “to know” of the dimension of intrinsic motivation ($\bar{X} = 5.98$, S=1.11).

It could be said that there exists a significant correlation between prospective teachers’ total AML scores and AA scores ($r=0.295$, $p<.01$). At the same time, there exists another correlation with their AM dimensions. There is a positive correlation between the sub-dimensions of “to know” ($r = .242$, $p < .01$), “to accomplish” ($r = .188$, $p < .05$), and “to experience stimulation” ($r = .246$, $p < .01$) of the dimension of intrinsic motivation and the sub-dimension of “identified regulation” ($r = .183$, $p < .05$) of extrinsic motivation.

3.2. Prospective teachers’ AML scores and gender

T-test was performed to see whether the prospective teachers’ AMLs differ with respect to gender, and the results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Comparison of prospective teachers’ AMLs with respect to gender

| Dimensions | Sub-Dimension | Gender | | | | t | p |
|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------|------|-------------|------|-------|-------|
| | | Female (n=124) | | Male (n=52) | | | |
| | | M | S | M | S | | |
| Intrinsic Motivation | To Know | 6.16 | .91 | 5.53 | 1.39 | -3.58 | .000* |
| | To Accomplish | 5.83 | .97 | 5.17 | 1.27 | -3.71 | .000* |
| | To Experience stimulation | 5.64 | 1.10 | 4.99 | 1.27 | -3.39 | .001* |
| External Motivation | Identified Regulation | 6.08 | .915 | 5.56 | 1.13 | -3.16 | .002* |
| | Introjected Regulation | 4.14 | 1.25 | 3.78 | 1.55 | -1.64 | .103 |
| | External Regulation | 5.46 | 1.10 | 5.60 | 1.19 | .741 | .459 |
| Amotivation | | 1.34 | .75 | 1.82 | 1.19 | 3.19 | .002* |
| TOTAL | | 10.34 | 3.19 | 7.70 | 4.63 | -4.35 | .000* |

As seen in Table 4, prospective teachers’ AMLs differ significantly with respect to gender, in the favor of females ($t=-4.35$, $p=.000$). Of the dimension of intrinsic motivation, significant differences was found in the favor of females in the sub-dimensions of “to know” ($t= - 3.58$ $p=.000$), “to accomplish” ($t= -3.71$, $p= .000$) and “and to experience stimulation” ($t= -3.39$, $p= .001$). Similarly, a significant difference was found in the favor of females in the sub-dimension of “identified regulation” of the dimension of extrinsic motivation ($t= -3.16$, $p= .002$). As for the dimension of amotivation, a significant difference was found in the favor of males ($t= 3.19$, $p= .002$).

3.3. Prospective teachers’ AML scores and grade levels

ANOVA results of prospective teachers’ AML scores with respect to grade level are presented in Table 5. As Table 5 shows, there exists a significant correlation between the dimensions of “to know” ($F= 3.11$, $p= .028$), “to accomplish” ($F=3.79$, $p=.012$), “amotivation” ($F=2.90$, $p= .037$) and total AMLs ($F=4.21$, $p= .007$). LSD test was performed in order to identify the grade levels between which these differences exist, and the findings are given in Table 4.

Table 5: LSD results of prospective teachers' AML scores between grade levels

| Dimensions | Grade | Difference means | S | p |
|---------------------------|-------|------------------|-------|--------|
| 1.intrinsic-to know | 1-2 | 0.637 | 0.254 | 0.013* |
| | 2-4 | -0.581 | 0.237 | 0.015* |
| 2.intrinsic-to accomplish | 1-2 | 0.837 | 0.250 | 0.001* |
| | 1-3 | 0.485 | 0.227 | 0.034* |
| 3.amotivation | 1-2 | -0.585 | 0.212 | 0.007* |
| | 2-4 | 0.434 | 0.198 | 0.030* |
| 4.general AML | 1-2 | 2.667 | 0.857 | 0.002* |
| | 1-3 | 1.628 | 0.778 | 0.038* |
| | 2-4 | -2.228 | 0.800 | 0.006* |

As Table 5 demonstrates, there exists a significant difference, in the sub-dimension of “to know” of the dimension of intrinsic motivation, between 1st grade students and 2nd year students, in the favor of 1st grade students (p= 0.013). There is also a significant difference between 2nd grade students and 4th grade students, in the favor of 4th graders (p=0.015). In the sub-dimension of “to accomplish” of the dimension of intrinsic motivation, there exists a significant difference between 1st grade students and 2nd grade students, in the favor of 1st graders (p=0.001). Yet another significant difference was found between 1st graders and 3rd graders, in the favor of 1st grade prospective teachers (p=0.034). In the dimension of amotivation, there is a significant difference between 1st graders and 2nd graders, in the favor of the latter (p=0.007). In addition, there exists a significant difference between 2nd graders and 4th graders, in the favor of the former (p=0.030). Finally, in general AMLs, there exist significant correlations between 1st graders and 2nd graders in the favor of the former (p=0.002); between 1st graders and 3rd graders in the favor of 1st grade prospective teachers (p=0.038); and between 2nd graders and 4th graders in the favor of the latter (p= 0.006).

3.4. Prospective teachers' AML scores and their reasons to choose teaching as a profession

ANOVA results of prospective teachers' AML scores with respect to their reasons to choose teaching as a profession are presented in Table 5. As is seen in Table 5, there exists significant correlation between “to accomplish” (F=2.95, p=.021), “to experience stimulation” (F=3.41, p=.010) and total AMLs (F= 3.74, p=.006). LSD test was performed in order to identify the options between which these differences exist, and the findings are given in Table 5.

Table 6: LSD results of prospective teachers' AML scores regarding their reasons to choose teaching as profession

| Dimensions | Option | Difference between | S | p |
|--------------------------------------|--------|--------------------|------|-------|
| intrinsic -to accomplish | 1-4 | -.764 | .325 | .020* |
| | 2-4 | -.824 | .262 | .002* |
| intrinsic -to experience stimulation | 2-3 | -.804 | .256 | .002* |
| | 2-4 | -.773 | .286 | .008* |
| Total AML | 2-3 | -2.259 | .805 | .006* |
| | 2-4 | -2.775 | .899 | .002* |
| | 2-5 | -1.812 | .762 | .019* |

As Table 6 demonstrates, there exist significant differences between the dimensions of “to know”, “to experience stimulation” and total AMLs. The LSD test, which was performed to identify the options between which these differences exist, is presented in the table. In the

sub-dimension of “to accomplish” of the dimension of intrinsic motivation, there exist significant differences between those who selected the 1st option and those who selected the 4th option, in the favor of the latter ($p=.020$); and between those who selected the 2nd option and those who selected the 4th option, in the favor the latter ($p=.002$). In the sub-dimension of “to experience stimulation” of the dimension of intrinsic motivation, there exist significant differences between those who selected the 2nd option and those who selected the 3rd option, in the favor of the latter ($p=.002$); and between those who selected the 2nd option and those who selected the 4th option, in the favor of the latter ($p=.008$). In total AMLs, on the other hand, there are significant differences between those who selected the 2nd option and those who selected the 3rd, in the favor of the latter ($p=.006$); between those who selected the 2nd option and those who selected the 4th, in the favor of the latter ($p=.002$); and between those who selected the 2nd option and those who selected the 5th, in the favor of the latter ($p=.019$).

4. Discussion

Prospective teachers’ AMLs were found in the research to be high. Prospective teachers’ general academic motivation level was found to be 9.56. Since this score can be within the interval of -18 and 18, it could be said that a score of 9.56 is high. We can propose as the reason of this the idea that these prospective teachers chose ATTA willingly and consciously. Moreover, it could be proposed that the fact that prospective teachers have been provided with the teaching consciousness throughout their studies increased their motivations. This finding is in parallel with the findings of other many researches (Arioğlu, 2009; Demir, 2008; Gençay & Gençay, 2007; İflazoğlu & Tümkaya, 2008; Onuk, 2007; Saracaloğlu, 2008; Umay, 2002; Fortier, S. M., Vallerand R. J. & Guay, F. (1995). But, this findings is not in parallel with the other researches (Baker, 2004; Cokley, Bernard, Cunningham & Motoike, 2001).

Among the findings is that prospective teachers’ AM levels positively influence their academic achievements. It is observed that AAs of those who have high AMs are also high. It could be argued that getting pleasure from activities performed throughout the teaching process is an important factor for AA to increase. This idea is also supported by other studies’ findings (Arioğlu, 2009; Saracaloğlu, 2008; Onuk, 2007; İflazoğlu & Tümkaya, 2008). Prospective teachers’ amotivation levels, on the other hand, were found to be low. Besides, it was observed that there exists a negative correlation between amotivation level and AA. This finding is in parallel with the findings of other researches (Arioğlu, 2009; Saracaloğlu, 2008; Onuk, 2007; İflazoğlu & Tümkaya, 2008).

Motivation levels of female students were found higher in the research than those of male students. It could be said that in the society we live in female students are inclined more to elementary school teaching as a profession. This might be the reason lying behind female students’ higher motivation levels. Findings of other studies carried out in this field also support this (Gençay & Gençay, 2007; İflazoğlu & Tümkaya, 2008; Onuk, 2007; Saracaloğlu, 2008; Spittle et al., 2009; Vallerand et al., 1992).

Prospective teachers’ reasons to choose teaching as profession also influence their AM levels. It is observed that those prospective teachers who have higher AM levels are concentrated around the options “*Since I wanted to positively contribute to the society’s future*” and “*Since I wanted to work with children*”, whereas others who have lower AM levels mostly picked the option “*Since it is a job that offers job security and constant income*”. It could be concluded departing from these findings that having to choose teaching by means of external influences has a negative impact on prospective teachers’ academic motivations.

Prospective teachers’ AMLs were found to be high in 1st and 4th grades, and low in 2nd and 3rd grades. Besides, amotivation levels of 3rd graders were determined to be higher than

other grade levels. These findings are in parallel with the findings of the researches carried out by Arioğlu (2009) & Spittle et al. (2009). The reason of this might be the high number of theoretical courses given in 2nd and 3rd grade levels.

Prospective teachers' AMLs were found to be high in 1st and 4th grades, and low in 2nd and 3rd grades. These findings are in parallel with the findings of the researches carried out by Arioğlu (2009) & Spittle (2009). Especially in the sub-dimensions of "to know" and "to accomplish" of the dimension of intrinsic motivation, it was observed that motivation levels of 1st and 4th graders are higher than those of 2nd and 3rd graders. On the other hand, prospective teachers in the 2nd grade had the highest amotivation levels. The reason of this might be the high number of theoretical courses given in 2nd and 3rd grade levels.

The following suggestions have been developed in the light of the findings obtained through the research:

- 1- The influence of the qualities of the academic staff on prospective teachers' motivation might be investigated.
- 2- After prospective teachers graduate and start working, it might be investigated if there exists a correlation between their in-class performances and their AM levels.
- 3- In future studies to be carried out to assess prospective teachers' motivation levels, other independent variables that are not considered in the current study might be considered.
- 4- A research might be carried out to determine prospective teachers' motivation strategies. Thus, factors that could improve prospective teachers' motivations can be defined.

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