**Examining Teachers’ Opinions about The Reflections of Teacher Autonomy on Zest for Work**

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**Introduction**

This research aims to explain how teacher autonomy reflects on the phenomenon of zest for work with the help of interviews with teachers. Explanation of situations that create zest for work in teachers is considered important to understand the enthusiasm, excitement, and readiness that teachers will experience while performing their profession. Zest for work, in which relatively few studies have been conducted in the world and Turkey, is a subject that awaits further clarification.

When studies in the field of educational sciences are analyzed, the studies are predominantly problem-oriented. The researches investigating positive examples and cases are much less in number. ( Karaırmak and Cetinkaya, 2008). At this point, one of the character strengths revealed by Park, Peterson, and Seligman (2006)in the context of positive psychology the phenomenon of zest, defined as the enthusiasm for life, is considered worthy of investigation Investigating teachers' opinions on zest for work, which is a phenomenon that can increase the happiness and productivity in personal life as well as professional life, can make a unique contribution to the literature.

Peterson, Park, & Seligman (2009), who examine the phenomenon of zest in the professional context, reveal that people with zest find their job meaningful by working more lively, energetically, and excitedly. Zest for work is seen close to job satisfaction in some ways. Zest for work should be evaluated as a different concept from job satisfaction with the enthusiasm and vitality it contains (Erdoğan, 2013). Psychic energy must be used for zest to occur. Zest occurs when full focus on the activity is achieved. From this point of view, zest for work can also be associated with flow experience ( Csikszentmihalyi, 2020).

Teacher autonomy has been considered as one of the elements that will create zest for work in teachers. To increase the success in educational activities and the productivity of the teacher, teachers should be able to take initiative and act autonomously. Exam-oriented teaching of a certain curriculum with certain methods hinders the creative power of the teacher. (Evcin, 2015). In the report prepared by Eğitim-Bir-Sen (2018) on the Teaching Profession Law, the benefit of professional autonomy granted to teachers working in disadvantaged areas in OECD countries is revealed. It has been stated that the professional autonomy granted to teachers is effective in preventing the diversity of PISA scores within the country.

**Keywords:***positive psychology, zest for work, teacher autonomy*

**Method**

Phenomenology, one of the qualitative research techniques, was used in the research. In phenomenology, the researcher gets to the core of experience (Alpay, 2020). While determining the participant group of the research, it is aimed to reach the maximum diversity. In this way, it is desired to present different perspectives (Ersoy, 2019) For this purpose, online interviews were conducted with thirty teachers of thirteen different branches from eight high schools of different types located in Bolu. A semi-structured interview form was used for the interview. Afterwards, content analysis was applied to the transcribed interviews. Before the interviews, the interview questions were evaluated by three academicians who are experts in their fields. Technical facilities for meetings have been checked. Finally, member check and intercoder agreement were applied. In these ways, validity and reliability were tried to be ensured.

**Findings**

Within the scope of the research, the question “Does your ability to act independently in your teaching practices and to take initiative in many subjects while practicing your profession (teacher autonomy) affect your sense of zest for work? Can you explain this situation?" was directed to the participants. When the answers of the teachers were examined in detail, more opinions were received stating that their professional pleasure decreased because they cannot take initiative and are not autonomous. While thirty-one different codes were written regarding this view, There were twenty-nine opinions that claimed the autonomy of the teacher is sufficient and this situation has a positive effect on zest for work It is seen that the opinions presented by the participants at two different points are close to each other in number. There are nine different opinions of teachers stating that teacher autonomy has no or limited effect on zest for work.

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