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# What Psychological, Linguistic and Sociobiographical Variables Power EFL/ESL Teachers' Motivation?<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

Teachers stand in the middle of a whirlpool of learners' emotions. Rather than standing there as an unmovable rock, they might benefit from being like a flexible reed, or antenna, receptive to the mood and needs of the students, aware of their own emotions and motivations, and able to emit the verbal and nonverbal stream that creates a positive emotional classroom climate focused on attaining the learning objectives. Dewaele, Gkonou and Mercer (2018a) described the qualities of a good teacher as follows:

Essentially, a good language teacher needs to be in a position to manage the emotional tenor of the classroom. This means not only should they be able to harness the emotions of their learners, but they should also be able to regulate their own emotions to ensure they are in the right frame of mind to create positive rapport with learners, generate enjoyment and manage any anxieties. (126)

We are witnessing a growing interest in the psychology of foreign language (FL) teachers in the field of applied linguistics (Mercer, 2016; Mercer & Kostoulas, 2018; Mercer et al., 2016; Talbot & Mercer, 2018) in the wake of the wave of interest in the psychology of the FL learners (Dewaele, 2005, 2012, 2015, 2017; Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). The focus on FL teachers is of crucial importance as teachers are the guides for FL learners, and without their guidance, many learners would stumble in the dark. As De Costa, Rawal and Li (2018) pointed out, 'there has also been energetic increase in attention to language teacher emotions, making it the proverbial newest kid on the SLTE block' (401).

The current study contributes to this field by expanding earlier work (Dewaele et al., 2018a; Dewaele & Mercer, 2018) on sources of individual differences in teachers' self-reported classroom behaviour. In these earlier studies EFL and ESL teachers' self-reported classroom practices were connected with their global trait emotional intelligence (Trait EI), their English proficiency, the length of their teaching experience and their gender. In the current study we focus on FL teachers' motivation (Fernet et al., 2008), considering the relationship with previously mentioned independent variables, as well as teachers' age and the status of their English (first or foreign language). By not just considering global Trait EI but also the four facets that constitute it, namely well-being, emotionality, self-control and sociability (Petrides & Furnham, 2000, 2001), we aim for more granularity in the understanding of the complex relationships between these personality dimensions and motivation.

## Literature Review

Fernet et al. (2008) pointed out that teachers' motivation is associated with students' motivation but that teachers' motivation is particularly complex, given the multiple tasks that they have to perform and the impact these have on their psychological functioning.

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Indeed, 'motivational processes are not necessarily uniform and may vary across the different work tasks carried out by teachers' (257). The authors adopted self-determination theory as a theoretical framework to understand teachers' motivation because they like the fact that it considers both quantity and quality of motivation. They developed the Work Tasks Motivation Scale for Teachers (WTMST) based on the feedback of 609 Canadian teachers in Quebec City in order 'to assess the constructs of intrinsic motivation, identified, introjected, and external regulations, and amotivation toward six work tasks (i.e., class preparation, teaching, evaluation of students, class management, administrative tasks, and complementary tasks)' (274). The WTMST has been used to investigate the link between teacher motivation and effective teaching of pre-service teachers (Perlman, 2013), as well as burnout in teachers (Fernet et al., 2012) and intentions to teach an innovative subject and participate in training (Gorozidis & Papaioannou, 2014).

Fernet et al. (2008) distinguished five dimensions: intrinsically motivated behaviours that teachers 'are engaged in for the pleasure or the satisfaction derived from performing them' (Fernet et al., 2008: 258). They stand in contrast with extrinsically motivated behaviours which are instrumental in nature: identified regulation 'is defined as behaviour that individuals choose to perform because it is congruent with their own values and goals' (258). Introjected regulation 'corresponds to the process whereby an external demand becomes an internal representation' (258). External regulation 'occurs when behaviours are regulated to obtain a reward or to avoid a constraint'. Finally, there is amotivation, which 'refers to being neither intrinsically nor extrinsically motivated' (258). Petrides (2017) explained that Trait EI is a personality trait that is linked to nature rather than nurture:

Trait EI is currently the only definition that recognizes the inherent subjectivity of emotional experience. That the trait EI facets are personality traits, as opposed to mental abilities or competencies, is also corroborated by research revealing that the same genes that are implicated in the development of individual differences in the Big Five personality traits are also implicated in the development of individual differences in trait EI. (2)

Trait EI essentially concerns people's self-perceptions of their emotional abilities and their inner world. An alternative label for the same construct is trait emotional self-efficacy. Trait EI consists of 15 facets organised under four main factors: well-being, emotionality, self-control and sociability (Petrides & Furnham, 2001). The factor wellbeing is characterised by the ability to feel cheerful and satisfied with life (happiness), to be self-confident (self-esteem) and to look at the bright side of life (optimism). The emotionality factor is related to the ability of taking someone else's perspective (empathy), of being clear about people's feelings (emotional perception), of communicating feelings to others (emotional expression) and of maintaining fulfilling personal relationships (relationships). The self-control factor refers to the abilities to control emotions (emotional regulation), not to give in to urges (impulsiveness) and to withstand pressure and regulate stress (stress management). The final factor is sociability, and it refers to the ability to influence other people's feelings (emotional management), to stand up for one's rights (assertiveness) and to establish networks thanks to social skills (social awareness).

Research in general education has revealed that Trait EI is a crucial personality trait for teachers. Those who score highly on Trait EI are better equipped to deal with the challenges of working with diverse heterogeneous classes, managing group dynamics and resisting teacher stress and burnout (see e.g. Brackett et al., 2010; Chan, 2006; Corcoran

& Tormey, 2012a, 2012b, 2013; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Such teachers are better able to create engaging lessons that boost learners' motivation (Elias & Arnold, 2006; Graziano et al., 2007; Nizielski et al., 2012).

High levels of Trait EI among FL teachers have been found to be linked to stronger teacher self-efficacy (Moafian & Ghanizadeh, 2009) and better emotion regulation skills during teaching (Gregersen et al., 2014). Gregersen et al. (2014) focused on one learner and one teacher, extracted from a group of ten learners and nine pre-service teachers. The analysis of the qualitative data revealed that the two participants 'exercise EI to understand ways in which a wide range of emotional experiences, inside and outside the classroom, affect the language learning and teaching process' (347–348). Strategic ordering of classroom activities led to a reflection upon daily events that could be transformed into springboards for learning optimism. The authors concluded that 'the process of self-development is facilitated by using EI in effective ways' (349).

Teachers' gender and length of teaching experience has been linked to their levels of Trait EI (Gkonou & Mercer, 2017, 2018). Qualitative data showed that highly emotionally intelligent English teachers were able to draw on their rich teaching experience to interpret and respond to classroom challenges and to manage the class effectively. The combination of expertise gained through their teaching career and their intuitive knowledge shaped their Trait EI and allowed them to be surefooted in taking emotion-related decisions in class.

In a study based on data collected from the same 513 participants as in the present study, Dewaele and Mercer (2018) considered variation in teachers' self-reported attitudes towards their students. The authors found that high levels of global Trait EI corresponded with more positive attitudes towards students and higher enjoyment of lively students. The authors pointed out that the teaching profession might be unsuited to people with low levels of EI. More experienced teachers were also found to have significantly more positive attitudes towards their students although they did not explicitly enjoy working with lively students more. The authors speculated that longer teaching experience may boost emotional intelligence over time but acknowledged that a more neutral interpretation of the finding could be that teachers with lower levels of emotional intelligence are more likely to abandon the profession. Teachers with lower levels of English proficiency were found to have significantly less positive attitudes towards their students and enjoyed their lively students less. The authors speculated that this could be linked to teachers' linguistic insecurity, which could have generated a lack of confidence and a certain degree of defensiveness. Finally, the female teachers had significantly more positive attitudes towards their students but no such difference emerged for the enjoyment of lively students. This finding was linked to earlier studies where female teachers were found to have closer, less conflictual and less dependent relationships with students than male peers.

In a second study on the same database, Dewaele et al. (2018a) focused on teachers' self-reported classroom behaviour (creativity, predictability, classroom management and pedagogical skills). A statistically significant positive relationship emerged between Trait EI and creativity, classroom management, pedagogical skills – and a marginal negative effect on predictability in the classroom. In other words, emotionally intelligent teachers reported being more creative, better at managing the class, having superior pedagogical skills and being slightly less predictable in class. Length of teaching experience had effects that

mirrored those of Trait EI. Teachers with longer experience reported more creativity in their classrooms, better management of classroom activities and stronger pedagogical skills. They were also marginally less likely to be predictable in the classroom. As in the previous study, a word of caution is needed as longer teaching experience might boost Trait EI but, alternatively, it is also possible that teachers with lower levels of Trait EI dropped out of the profession earlier.

In a third study on the same database, Dewaele (2018c) focused on the link between the four factors that constitute Trait EI (well-being, emotionality, self-control and sociability) and 11 dependent variables, including teachers' love of English, attitudes towards their students, their institution, their self-reported classroom practices, their enjoyment, their unpredictability and their creativity. Sociability was found to be significantly positively correlated with nine dependent variables, wellbeing and self-control with eight variables, and emotionality with six dependent variables. Emotionality was significantly positively linked to the English proficiency of English LX users but not to that of the English L1 users.

The influence of other factors in the teachers' profiles have been hotly debated in the field of TESOL, such as the status of the teacher as a non-native speaker (NNEST) or native speaker (NEST). While a large majority of English language teachers worldwide are NNESTs, they are often victims of unfounded ideas, false beliefs and discrimination (Medgyes, 2017; Selvi, 2014). NNESTs are often considered outsiders while NESTs are 'insiders with absolute authority' and are considered to be better teachers. Selvi (2014) presents a list of the advantages of NESTs and NNESTs compiled from the literature of the subject. Interestingly, there is no mention of teacher motivation. The only psychological factor is empathy which NNESTs have more of because of their experience as FL learners, and a willingness to work hard. Dewaele (2018a) argued that the dichotomy between native and non-native speaker is flawed because it assumes the eternal superiority of the former and the lasting inferiority of the latter in a FL. As both are users of language(s) (and not just 'speakers'), it is preferable to speak about L1 users and LX users. All are legitimate users of their language(s) and their proficiency could vary from minimal to maximal. In the present paper we will refer to English L1 teachers and English LX teachers who all work as EFL/ESL teachers. This short literature overview shows that teachers' Trait EI has been positively linked to various aspects of their teaching practices, their attitudes and their relationships with students. It has also revealed potentially indirect effects, as teachers' Trait EI has been linked to other independent variables such as length of experience in the teaching profession. A more granular view of Trait EI might throw new light on the effect of specific facets of Trait EI. Also, research into FL teacher psychology has unearthed complex and dynamic interrelationships between psychological dimensions, linguistic and sociobiographical variables and teaching practices. The relations between all these independent variables and teacher motivation remain underexplored. This is the gap that the present study will attempt to fill.

After introducing the research questions, we will present the methodology for the study before reporting the statistical analyses. The results will be discussed in the following section before drawing some tentative conclusions.

## Research Questions

The present study aims to address the following research questions:

(1a) What is the relationship between teachers' global Trait EI and their scores on the motivation dimensions?

- (1b) What is the relationship between teachers' four Trait EI factors (wellbeing, emotionality, self-control and sociability) and their scores on the motivation dimensions?
- (2) What is the relationship between teachers' years of teaching experience and scores on the motivation dimensions?
- (3) What is the relationship between teachers' English proficiency and their scores on the motivation dimensions?
- (4) What is the relationship between teachers' age and gender and their scores on the motivation dimensions?
- (5) Do English L1 teachers score differently on the motivation dimensions than teachers who have English as an LX?

## Methodology

Data were collected through snowball sampling, which is a form of non-probability sampling (Ness Evans & Rooney, 2013). An open-access anonymous online questionnaire was used. Calls for participation were sent through emails to teachers, students and informal contacts asking them to forward the link to colleagues. The questionnaire remained online from April to September 2016 and attracted 513 valid responses from mono- and multilingual ESL/EFL teachers across the world. Online questionnaires are ideal for collecting large amounts of data from participants from different parts of the world belonging to various age groups and language profiles (Dewaele, 2018b; Wilson & Dewaele, 2010). The geographical diversity boosts the ecological validity of the results, as the effects of local educational practices are averaged out. Finally, the psychometric properties of online versions of traditional questionnaires are very similar to the pen-and-paper versions (Denissen et al., 2010).

The research design and questionnaires received ethical clearance from the author's research institution. Participants started by completing a short sociobiographical questionnaire with questions about gender, age, nationality, country of residence, language history and number of years in the teaching profession.

Participants also filled out the short version of the Trait EI Questionnaire (Short Form; Petrides, 2009), which contains a total of 30 items and yielded a global Trait EI score (mean = 4.56, SD = .60, with scores ranging from 2.7 to 5.9 [absolute minimum = 1, absolute maximum = 7]). The Cronbach alpha was .88. The Trait EI questionnaire also allowed us to calculate scores on the four main EI factors: well-being, emotionality, self-control and sociability.

Well-being includes items such as 'On the whole, I have a gloomy perspective on most things' (reverse) and 'Given my circumstances, I feel good about myself'. The mean score was 5.63 (SD = 1.0), with scores ranging from 1.2 to 7 (absolute min. = 1, absolute max. = 7). The Cronbach alpha score was .84.

Emotionality includes items such as 'I'm normally able to "get into someone's shoes" and experience their emotions' and 'Expressing my emotions with words is not a problem for me'. The mean score was 5.53 (SD = .79), with scores ranging from 2.6 to 7 (absolute min. = 1, absolute max. = 7). The Cronbach alpha was .71.

Self-control is measured through items such as 'I usually find it difficult to regulate my emotions' (reverse) and 'I tend to get involved in things I later wish I could get out of' (reverse). The mean score was 4.83 (SD = .87), with scores ranging from 1.8 to 7 (absolute min. = 1, absolute max. = 7). The Cronbach alpha was .65.

Sociability consists of items such as 'I can deal effectively with people' and 'I don't seem to have any powers at all over other people's feelings' (reverse). The mean score was 4.95 (SD = .90), with scores

ranging from 1.3 to 7 (absolute min. = 1, absolute max. = 7). The Cronbach alpha was .70.

In order to identify potential confounding variables, we checked whether there were any gender differences on the EI factors. A Mann-Whitney test revealed that the only significant difference existed for emotionality, where the female teachers scored slightly higher (mean rank females = 263, mean rank males = 229; Mann-Whitney U = 21386,  $z = -2.3$ ,  $p < .022$ ). Number of years in the teaching profession was found to be unrelated to well-being and emotionality but was positively linked to self-control and sociability (Rho = .17,  $p < .0001$  and Rho = .12,  $p < .0001$  respectively). Age was also linked to self-control and sociability (Rho = .20,  $p < .0001$  and Rho = .11,  $p < .0001$  respectively). The effect size is small for these independent variables (less than 4% shared variance). English L1 teachers did only differ from English LX teachers for sociability (mean rank L1: 279, mean rank LX: 249; Mann-Whitney U = 22722,  $z = -2.0$ ,  $p < .041$ ).

The next part of the survey consisted of the English version of the LEXTALE, a 60-item lexical test developed by Lemhöfer and Broersma (2012). The authors describe LEXTALE as a 'quick and practically feasible test of vocabulary knowledge for medium to highly proficient speakers of English as a second language. It consists of a simple un-speeded visual lexical decision task', which takes 'on average 3.5 minutes to complete' (Lemhöfer & Broersma, 2012). Participants are asked whether an item is an existing English word or not (items include 'scornful', 'platory', 'stoutly', 'unkempt'). The test gives a good indication of overall English proficiency. LEXTALE scores have been found to correlate highly with TOEIC test results, an established test of English proficiency (Lemhöfer & Broersma, 2012). Thus, even though LEXTALE was not designed to capture general English proficiency fully, it is nevertheless a useful indicator of it (Lemhöfer & Broersma, 2012). For L1 users the LEXTALE scores are probably less an indication of general proficiency and more one of L1 vocabulary knowledge. Scores ranged from a minimum of 15 to the maximum possible score of 100. A Mann-Whitney test revealed that female teachers scored lower on proficiency than their male colleagues (mean rank females: 244, mean rank males: 285; Mann-Whitney U = 20672,  $z = -2.8$ ,  $p < .005$ ). Number of years in the teaching profession was found to be positively linked with proficiency (Rho = .18,  $p < .0001$ ). The effect size is small (3.2% shared variance). Age was also linked with higher proficiency (Rho = .25,  $p < .0001$ ). The effect size is also small (6.2% shared variance). The English L1 teachers scored higher on proficiency than their LX colleagues: (mean rank L1 teachers: 372, mean rank LX teachers: 215; Mann-Whitney U = 9983,  $z = -10.6$ ,  $p < .0001$ ).

#### *Participants*

A total of 513 participants (377 females, 131 males) filled out the questionnaire. All were EFL/ESL teachers and their experience in the profession ranged from one month to 52 years. On average, participants had been teaching for 15 years (SD = 10). The mean age was 40 years (SD = 10). The majority of female participants is typical in webbased language questionnaires (Dewaele, 2018b; Wilson & Dewaele, 2010). The largest group were British ( $n = 71$ ), then American ( $n = 40$ ), followed by Ukrainian ( $n = 37$ ), Greek ( $n = 30$ ), Azerbaijani ( $n = 30$ ), Argentinian ( $n = 30$ ), Chinese ( $n = 30$ ), Indian ( $n = 30$ ), Spanish ( $n = 30$ ), Turkish ( $n = 30$ ), Macedonian ( $n = 30$ ), Canadian ( $n = 30$ ), and smaller groups of participants with another 64 nationalities. The sample of participants consisted of 15 monolinguals, 113 bilinguals, 174 trilinguals, 104 quadrilinguals, 81 pentalinguals, 22 sextalinguals,

and 4 septalinguals. English was the most frequent L1 ( $n = 136$ ), and the remaining 376 participants had English as an FL. A majority of participants were teaching English at university ( $n = 290$ ), with smaller numbers teaching in secondary schools ( $n = 154$ ), primary schools ( $n = 63$ ) and nursery schools ( $n = 6$ ). The largest group of participants were working in Ukraine ( $n = 37$ ), Greece ( $n = 32$ ), Spain ( $n = 30$ ), Azerbaijan ( $n = 25$ ), Japan ( $n = 25$ ), the UK ( $n = 17$ ) and the USA ( $n = 17$ ). The remaining participants worked in 103 different countries.

#### *Dependent variables*

The original WTMST deals with motivation for task completion with items tapping into five different dimensions. The items were reformulated in order to focus on the motivation to teach English. This includes three items per dimension with five-point Likert scales. The section started with the following paragraph:

Indicate your degree of dis/agreement with the following items concerning the reasons you teach English. Possible answers: not especially, so-so, quite a lot, a lot, very much.

The first dimension is **Intrinsic Motivation**: (1) Because teaching English is pleasant. (2) Because teaching English is interesting. (3) Because I like teaching English. Mean score was 4.3 ( $SD = .67$ ). A Kolmogorov-Smirnov test revealed that the distribution was not normal ( $KS = .167, p < .0001$ ). The Cronbach alpha value was .83, suggesting very good internal consistency.

The second dimension is **Identified Regulation**: (1) Because it is important for me to teach English. (2) Because I believe teaching English is important for the academic success of my students. Mean score was 4.11 ( $SD = .74$ ). A Kolmogorov-Smirnov test revealed that the distribution was not normal ( $KS = .182, p < .0001$ ). The Cronbach alpha value was .63, which is rather low but still acceptable.

The third dimension is **Introjected Regulation**: (1) Because if I don't teach, I will feel bad. (2) Because I would feel guilty not doing it. (3) I would feel bad doing something different. Mean score was 2.73 ( $SD = .97$ ). A Kolmogorov-Smirnov test revealed that the distribution was not normal ( $KS = .085, p < .0001$ ). The Cronbach alpha value was .83.

The fourth dimension is **External Regulation**: (1) Because it is my chosen profession. (2) I teach English because I'm paid to do it. Mean score was 3.48 ( $SD = .75$ ). A Kolmogorov-Smirnov test revealed that the distribution was not normal ( $KS = .157, p < .0001$ ). The Cronbach alpha value was extremely low: .065. As a consequence, this dimension was excluded from further analyses.

The fifth and final dimension is **Amotivation**: (1) I don't know why because I don't always see the relevance of teaching English. (2) I used to know why I was teaching English, but I don't see the reason any more. (3) I don't know why as sometimes I don't see the purpose of teaching English. Mean score was 1.72 ( $SD = .74$ ). A Kolmogorov-Smirnov test revealed that the distribution was not normal ( $KS = .183, p < .0001$ ). The Cronbach alpha value was .84.

Because our dependent variables are not normally distributed, we opted for general use of non-parametric statistics, namely Spearman rank correlation analyses and Mann-Whitney tests. A Bonferroni correction was applied to avoid Type 1 errors in the second correlation analysis. As a consequence, only p values below .007 ( $.05 / 7$ ) will be considered significant in the second analysis.

## Results

To answer the first part of the first research question, we ran a Spearman rank correlation analysis between teachers' global Trait EI and their scores on the motivation dimensions. It is important to point out

that since almost three quarters of participants had English as an L2, their influence on results is greater than that of English L1 teachers. A highly significant positive relationship emerged with intrinsic motivation ( $Rho = .25, p < .0001$ ) and with identified regulation ( $Rho = .21, p < .0001$ ). No relationship was found with introjected regulation ( $Rho = .06, p = ns$ ) and a highly significant negative relationship emerged with amotivation ( $Rho = -.34, p < .0001$ ). This suggests that high Trait EI teachers are more intrinsically motivated, have stronger identified regulation and are less amotivated. According to Plonsky and Oswald (2014: 889), these correlation coefficients are situated between small and medium (.25 and .40).

To answer the second part of the first research question, we replaced global Trait EI with the four trait EI facets. A Spearman rank correlation analysis with Bonferroni correction (see Table 15.1) showed statistically significant positive relationships between motivation dimensions and intrinsic motivation and identified regulation. Well-being and sociability had the biggest effect sizes, with 7.8% and 5.2% of shared variance respectively. Statistically significant negative relationships emerged between the four trait EI facets and amotivation. Emotionality and wellbeing had the biggest effect sizes, with 10.3% and 9% of shared variance respectively. This finding suggests that teachers with higher levels of wellbeing, emotionality, self-control and sociability were more likely to be strongly intrinsically motivated and committed to their students and they were less likely to suffer from Amotivation. The positive relationship between introjected regulation and sociability failed to reach statistical significance.

The answer to the second research question is brief, as Spearman rank correlation analyses between length of teachers' experience and the scores on the motivation dimensions failed to reach statistical significance. In other words, teachers who have been in the profession for longer are not necessarily more motivated.

The third research question focused on the link between English proficiency and the motivation dimensions. Spearman rank correlation analyses revealed significant negative relationships between English proficiency, identified regulation, introjected regulation and amotivation. In other words, the more teachers were proficient in English, the less likely they were to suffer from amotivation and their behaviours were less extrinsically motivated.

The fourth research question on the effect of age and gender showed that while participants' age was unrelated with the motivation dimensions, the female teachers were more motivated than their male peers but did not differ for amotivation (Table 15.2).

A series of Mann-Whitney tests revealed that the 377 female teachers scored significantly higher than the 131 male teachers on intrinsic

Table 15.1 Correlation analysis between motivation dimensions, TEI factors, experience, proficiency and age

Dependent variables		Wellbeing	SelfControl	Emotionality	Sociability	Experience	Proficiency	Age
	<i>Rh</i>							
Intrinsic motivation	<i>o</i>	.280	.156	.157	.227	.084	-.032	.053
	<i>p</i>	.000	.000	.000	.000	.056	<i>ns</i>	. <i>ns</i>
	<i>Rh</i>							
Identified regulation	<i>o</i>	.225	.161	.126	.157	.064	-.132	.046
	<i>p</i>	.000	.000	.004	.000	<i>Ns</i>	.003	<i>Ns</i>
	<i>Rh</i>							
Introjected regulation	<i>o</i>	.057	.040	-.013	.104	.087	-.217	.043
	<i>p</i>	<i>ns</i>	<i>ns</i>	<i>ns</i>	.019	.048	.000	<i>Ns</i>
	<i>Rh</i>							
Amotivation	<i>o</i>	-.300	-.236	-.321	-.209	-.092	-.126	-.091
	<i>p</i>	.000	.000	.000	.000	.037	.004	.040

Table 15.2 The effect of gender on the motivation dimensions (mean ranks)

Gender	Intrinsic motivation	Identified regulation	Introjected regulation	Amotivation
Female	267	264	265	2530
Male	219	226	224	2258
<i>Mann-Whitney U</i>	20045	20951	20692	24257
<i>Z</i>	-3.3	-2.7	-2.8	-.31
<i>p</i>	.001	.008	.005	<i>Ns</i>
<i>d Cohen</i>	.288	.231	.247	.027

motivation, identified regulation and introjected regulation but no difference existed for amotivation (see Table 15.2). According to Cohen (1992) the effect sizes are small (the threshold being  $d = .20$ ); for Plonsky and Oswald (2014) they do not reach the threshold for L2 research, which is  $d = .40$ .

To answer the final research question, a series of Mann-Whitney tests revealed that the 137 English L1 teachers scored significantly lower than the 376 English LX teachers on intrinsic motivation, identified regulation and introjected regulation but no difference existed for amotivation. According to Cohen (1992) the effect sizes are small to medium for identified regulation and introjected regulation (the threshold for medium being  $d = .50$ ). According to Plonsky and Oswald (2014), these are small effect sizes.

## Discussion

Motivation levels of EFL/ESL teachers in the present study were found to be linked to a range of psychological, sociobiographical and linguistic variables.

Teachers with high levels of Trait EI, and more specifically with high levels of well-being, self-control, emotionality and sociability, were more likely to report high levels of motivation. However, the effect size was typically small. This finding extends previous observations on the positive relationships between Trait EI and other dependent variables reflecting teachers' classroom behaviour and attitudes in the same sample of participants (Dewaele et al., 2018a; Dewaele & Mercer, 2018).

A closer look at the relationship between the motivation dimensions

and the four facets of Trait EI revealed that the crucial dimension of intrinsic motivation was most strongly correlated with well-being, followed by sociability, and finally with emotionality and self-control. It suggests that the most happy, optimistic, positive, empathic participants who enjoy social interactions and who are able to control their emotions and are sufficiently assertive were most likely to be highly motivated

Table 15.3 The effect of the status of English (L1/LX) on the motivation dimensions (mean ranks)

English	Intrinsic motivation	Identified regulation	Introjected regulation	Amotivation
L1	229	207	195	252
LX	267	275	280	259
<i>Mann-Whitney U</i>	21857	18904	17197	25050
<i>Z</i>	-2.7	-4.7	-5.8	-.50
<i>p</i>	.007	.0001	.0001	ns
<i>d Cohen</i>	.233	.416	.526	.042

teachers. These participants were also most strongly convinced of their duty towards their students and about their mission as teachers. These psychological characteristics could be read as the profile of natural teachers. It further underlines the importance for teachers to have a sufficient degree of Trait EI before entering the profession (Dewaele et al., 2018a; Vesely et al., 2014). This is crucial not only for their own happiness and ability to cope with the stress in the profession and in-class frustration (Brackett et al., 2010; Chan, 2006; Morris & King, 2018), but also for the classroom atmosphere, learners' emotional wellbeing, and the teaching outcomes (Gregersen et al., 2014; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). The effect size is too small to draw a wide-ranging conclusion but a possible implication is that the teaching profession might benefit from discouraging candidates with very low levels of Trait EI to join teacher training programmes. Just like fear of heights precludes one from becoming a window cleaner and fainting at the sight of blood precludes one from entering the nursing profession, a lack of emotional intelligence is a serious obstacle in becoming a teacher. Further research would be needed about teachers' minimal threshold in Trait EI. It is possible, of course, that training (Brackett & Katulak, 2006; Nelis et al., 2009; Vesely et al., 2014) might help candidates with low Trait EI to tackle this problem. Further research is also needed based on actual teacher behaviour rather than self-reported behaviour before any policy implications can be considered.

The answer to the second research question was slightly surprising, namely the fact that length in the teaching profession was unrelated to motivation levels on the various dimensions. Only a long-term longitudinal study could shed light on the possible fluctuations in teachers' motivation. The fact that average motivation levels do not change does not mean that nothing happens beneath the surface (Dewaele & Jiang, 2015). It is reasonable to expect that younger teachers may be more idealistic and highly motivated. While some might maintain or strengthen their motivation, others may suffer from burnout which would certainly dampen their motivation and increase the probability of them leaving the profession early (Brackett et al., 2010). As a consequence, only the most resilient and motivated teachers would remain in the profession until their retirement.

The third research question focused on the relationship between English proficiency and the motivation dimensions. Level of proficiency

turned out to be unrelated to intrinsic motivation but negative relationships emerged between proficiency, identified regulation, introjected regulation and amotivation. In other words, high English proficiency was linked to lower levels of amotivation but also lower levels of extrinsic motivation. Having the necessary linguistic capital to teach English meant the teachers tended not to experience amotivation. The difference in the relationship between proficiency and intrinsic motivation on the one hand and proficiency and the other motivation dimensions on the other hand shows that they really reflect different aspects of motivation. It is possible that those who had chosen the profession because of external factors, rather than a burning intrinsic motivation, might invest less overall in English. Having lower levels of non-intrinsic motivation could be both the cause and consequence of lower levels of proficiency in English. Considering the fact that the English L1 teachers had significantly higher proficiency levels than their LX peers, it is worth repeating the correlation analyses for the L1 and LX groups separately. Proficiency turned out to be unrelated to motivation for the English L1 participants, while the negative relationships were stronger for the LX group – with the exception of intrinsic motivation which remained unrelated to proficiency. This suggests that the effort that LX teachers had made to gain proficiency in English had carried over in their identified regulation and introjected regulation, and had lowered their amotivation.

The fourth research question dealt with the link between sociobiographical variables and the motivation dimensions. Age was found to have no relationship with the motivation dimensions but older teachers suffered less from amotivation. This could be linked to the fact that amotivated teachers probably leave the profession early, meaning that teachers with longer experience probably had a stronger motivation from a young age. Gender had a slightly stronger effect, with female teachers scoring higher on both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation than their male peers (a small effect size). This is not surprising, given the finding that the same female teachers had significantly more positive attitudes towards their students than male teachers (Dewaele & Mercer, 2018). However, the same female teachers' self-reported classroom behaviour did not differ from that of their male colleagues (Dewaele et al., 2018b).

The fifth and final question considered the effect of the status of teachers' English, having it either as an L1 or as an LX, on their motivation. Surprisingly, English L1 teachers reported significantly lower levels of motivation (but not amotivation) than LX teachers. The effect size was small to medium depending on the frame of reference. This pattern is very different from the one for proficiency. So English L1 teachers, despite having higher levels of proficiency than LX teachers, are less motivated. Could it be that having had to make less effort to acquire the language, having made less emotional investment in the learning of their L1, they may not value it as much, maybe because they take it for granted? A quick additional Mann-Whitney test confirms this hypothesis: LX teachers scored significantly higher than L1 teachers in response to the item 'How do you feel about the English language?' with the following range of responses: (1) Hate it, (2) Don't like it much, (3) Neutral, (4) Like it, (5) Love it. The mean rank of LX teachers was 271 versus 219 for L1 teachers (Mann-Whitney  $U = 20564$ ,  $z = -4.4$ ,  $p < .0001$ ).

Might the LX teachers have the faith of the more recently converted? Might they feel more strongly that investing in English is a worthy pursuit, boosting their motivation to master the language as learners and

as teachers? This adds an interesting twist to the ongoing debate about the place of LX teachers in foreign language education (Selvi, 2014). It certainly adds fresh evidence for those defending NNESTs in TESOL. Would the benefit of having an L1 teacher with superior proficiency but lower motivation outweigh the LX teacher with lower proficiency but superior motivation?

The main limitation of the present study is the one that applies to all research using non-random sampling, namely the fact that selfselected participants are more likely to be interested in the topic and more likely to score above average on various positive aspects of EFL/ESL teaching. In other words, lowly motivated EFL/ESL teachers were less likely to participate in the research. Therefore, the findings need to be interpreted with this limitation in mind. The current study was also exclusively quantitative in orientation. Much research in this area has been qualitative, based on relatively small samples (Gkonou & Mercer, 2018; Gregersen et al., 2014). The strength of the current approach is its unusually large sample from a wide and diverse population of EFL/ESL teachers, which allowed solid statistical analyses, and the identification of general patterns. Further research is also needed, based on observation of teaching behaviour, in order to find out whether teachers with (very) low Trait EI are really poor teachers. Only then can proper implications for the profession be developed.

#### Conclusion

The present correlational study found strong relationships between teachers' global Trait EI, as well as the four dimensions that constitute Trait EI (well-being, emotionality, self-control and sociability) and their scores on the motivation dimensions of intrinsic motivation, identified regulation, introjected regulation, external regulation and amotivation (Fernet et al., 2008). English LX teachers turned out to be more motivated than English L1 teachers. High proficiency in English was linked to stronger motivation among the LX teachers. Female participants also scored higher on the motivation dimensions. Only length in the teaching profession was unrelated to motivation.

The main pedagogical implication of this study is that (trainee) teachers who have the right psychological profile, i.e. sufficiently high Trait EI, are more likely to be good teachers and more likely to be motivated to do their job well. It also means that candidates for the teaching profession with very low levels of Trait EI may have to be discouraged from becoming teachers, for their own sake and that of their future students. Of course, the effect sizes were small and there is no clear cut-off point on what constitutes 'sufficient' Trait EI for teachers. It is also unclear to what extent Trait EI could be boosted by training. To conclude, more experimental research is needed on the topic, based on actual teaching performance.

#### Post-Reading Tasks

- (1) What can individual teachers do to boost their Trait EI and motivation?
- (2) What can institutions do to boost their teachers' Trait EI and motivation?
- (3) Should the teaching profession be closed to teachers with low levels of Trait EI and motivation? If yes, what should be the threshold? How should this be implemented?

#### Note

- (1) This finding suggests that these two facets of Trait EI may benefit from training.

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Uncorrected

# Proofs

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