

*To my family*

Flow Experiences of EFL Instructors in Turkey

The Graduate School of Education

of

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by

Ömür Belce

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İHSAN DOĞRAMACI BILKENT UNIVERSITY  
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Flow Experiences of EFL Instructors in Turkey

Ömür Belce  
May 24, 2019

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

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Asst. Prof. Dr. Hilal Peker (Supervisor)

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

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Asst. Prof. Dr. Armağan Ateşkan (Examining Committee Member)

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

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Asst. Prof. Dr. Hatice Ergül (Examining Committee Member)

Approval of the Graduate School of Education

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Prof. Dr. Alipasa Ayas (Director)

## ABSTRACT

### FLOW EXPERIENCES of EFL INSTRUCTORS in TURKEY

Ömür Belce

M.A. in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Hilal Peker

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This study investigated flow experiences of EFL instructors in Turkey by focusing on absorption, work enjoyment, intrinsic work motivation, skills, activities, and time of the day through age, ethnicity, educational level, gender, sexual orientation, and years of experience variables. The study was conducted over a six-week period with 283 EFL instructors working 30 universities. The data were collected via an online survey consisting of three sections. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The results indicated that EFL instructors experience flow in language classes. The findings also showed that work-related flow can be predicted by skills, activities, time of the day, age, educational level, and years of experience. However, no significant relationship was found between flow and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation.

Key words: Flow, flow experience, EFL, work-related flow

## ÖZET

Türkiye’de İngilizceyi Yabancı Dil Olarak Öğreten Öğretmenlerin Akış Deneyimleri

Ömür Belce

Yüksek Lisans, Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Öğretimi

Tez Yöneticisi: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Hilal Peker

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Bu çalışma, Türkiye’de yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğreten öğretmenlerin akış deneyimlerini, yaş, etnik köken, eğitim düzeyi, cinsiyet, cinsel yönelim ve tecrübe süresi değişkenleri üzerinden, işe kendini kaptırma, işten alınan zevk, içsel iş motivasyonu, öğretilen dil becerileri, aktiviteler ve günün saati konularına odaklanarak araştırmıştır. Çalışma, Türkiye’deki 30 üniversitede çalışan 283 öğretmen ile altı haftalık bir süre zarfında gerçekleştirilmiştir. Veriler, üç bölümden oluşan çevrimiçi bir anket aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Verilerin analizinde hem tanımlayıcı hem de çıkarımsal istatistikler kullanılmıştır. Bulgular, Türkiye’de yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğreten öğretmenlerin dil derslerinde akış yaşadığını göstermiştir. Bulgular ayrıca, iş ile ilgili akışın öğretilen dil becerileri, aktiviteler, günün saati, yaş, eğitim düzeyi ve tecrübe süresi ile tahmin edilebileceğini göstermiştir. Bununla birlikte, akış ile etnik köken, cinsiyet ve cinsel yönelim arasında belirgin bir ilişki bulunamamıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: akış, akış deneyimi, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce, iş ile ilgili akış

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **Introduction**

Flow theory examines the relationship between intrinsically motivating activities and their extrinsic good outcomes. In general manner, flow experiences occur when people are totally concentrated on the present moment, and flow theory introduces a framework to understand these experiences. While an individual experiences flow, he or she feels absorbed in the activity at hand and does not think about time or anything else (Van Lier, 1996). According to Csikszentmihalyi and Nakamura (2002), the flow concept was studied as optimal experience (e.g. leisure, play, sports, and art) especially in the 1980s and 1990s. After flow theory was widely studied in the areas of leisure, play, sports and art, the research on flow experiences in language teaching and learning started. Egbert (2003) states that flow does exist in the foreign language (FL) classroom, and flow theory could be used to explain language learning activities comprehensively. In this regard, both students' and teachers' experiences are important to be examined since the motivation of teachers generated by flow is crucial for effective teaching and creating intrinsic motivation of students to learn (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).

The purpose of this study is to explore EFL instructors' overall flow experiences in EFL classes in Turkey. To this end, the study investigates work-related flow in terms of absorption, work enjoyment, intrinsic work motivation, skills, activities, and time of the day. The present study also examines the differences between different age, ethnicity, educational level, gender, sexual orientation, years of experience groups with regard to flow experiences of EFL instructors in Turkey.

## **Background of the Study**

Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi first introduced flow theory in 1975. According to Csikszentmihalyi (1990), flow is a “state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at a great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it” (p. 4). According to Bakker (2008), flow is a “state of consciousness where people become totally immersed in an activity, and enjoy it intensely” (p. 400). In order to experience flow, there should be powerful concentration on activities, and activities should challenge but do not defeat one’s skills (Basom & Frase, 2004). In terms of work and work environments, flow is defined as a peak experience and the characteristics of flow experiences at work are absorption, work enjoyment, and intrinsic work motivation (Bakker, 2005). When someone has a flow experience, they lose their sense of time and feel that time passes faster, and also, they forget about everything around them.

In the most well-known definitions of flow, three basic elements are stated: absorption, which means the feeling of immersion in an activity; enjoyment, which means the joy or happiness derived from an activity (Bakker, 2005), and intrinsic motivation, referring to doing an activity only because of the inherent pleasure in the activity, not for any extrinsic good results (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Flow states cannot be defined by only intrinsic motivation, enjoyment, and absorption. Flow researchers have explored some other components of flow states. For instance, Bakker (2005) conducted a study with music teachers and the findings of the study showed that high levels of autonomy, social support, supervisory coaching and feedback are among the components of flow. Besides, “flow is more likely to occur during tasks which the person feels are very challenging and when s/he possesses a high level of skills in facing those challenges” (Moneta, 2004, p. 115). Therefore, in order for a flow state

to happen, challenges and skills should be in harmony. In other words, one should feel challenged, but still their skills should be adequate to overcome the challenge (Basom & Frase, 2004).

Everyone can experience flow states in different ways; namely, flow is a subjective experience. For this reason, there are different factors of flow. For instance, an individual has to devote time and energy to experience flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). Additionally, having an autotelic personality –meaning self-directing or self-rewarding- can be acknowledged to be one of the factors affecting flow. According to Csikszentmihalyi (1990), people who have autotelic personalities can be considered to have more possibility to experience flow than others. Also, if one has clear goals and receives informative and immediate feedback, they can experience flow more easily (Mandigo & Thompson, 1998). Finally, in order to achieve a flow state, there should be a sense of choice and control (Mandigo & Thompson, 1998). Accordingly, it can be concluded from the research studies about flow in literature that flow cannot be defined in an exact way. Rather, flow states are holistic experiences and they include total involvement of the individuals.

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, researchers began to study flow experiences widely in the context of language teaching and learning. For instance, Egbert's study (2003) proposed that flow theory is valuable and useful for analyzing and evaluating language learning activities. Egbert (2003) investigated whether flow occurs in the foreign language (FL) classroom from the point of learners. She explored what type of tasks might likely result in flow by means of a perception survey, observations and interviews. The findings demonstrated that flow did exist in the FL classroom. In terms of investigating flow experiences of EFL instructors, Tardy and Snyder's (2004) study suggested that the concept of flow helps to

understand the practices, beliefs and values of teachers more. They investigated whether EFL teachers experienced flow and by analyzing the reports of teachers they found that teachers achieved flow states. Moreover, they stated some characteristics of teachers' flow experiences such as interest and involvement, authentic communication and spontaneity.

As a recent study, Guan's study (2013) investigated the relationship between flow theory and translation teaching in EFL classes. The study focused on the well-designed translation tasks and whether these tasks enhance students' intrinsic motivation for English learning. Guan (2013) conducted this study with EFL teachers and students in China. The findings showed that if a translation task is prepared appropriately, it could provide flow states for students. Also, the results of the study demonstrated that flow due to the well-designed translation tasks in EFL classes strengthens intrinsic motivation of students for English learning.

### **Statement of the Problem**

"Flow" is not a new concept; however, the research related to flow theory has been relatively new. Csikszentmihalyi (1975) first mentioned the theory as a psychological concept, and then several researchers began to further explore flow (e.g., Abbot, 2000; Ainley, Enger & Kennedy, 2007; Carli, Delle Fave & Massimini, 1988; Jackson & Marsh, 1996; Larson, 1988; Lu, Zhou & Wang, 2009; Moneta, 2004). Many researchers have found out that there is a connection between flow and work and work environments (e.g., Bakker et al., 2006; Bakker, 2008; Basom & Frase, 2004; Kühlkamp, 2015). Some other researchers investigated the relationship between flow theory and education (Admiraal, Huizenga, Akkerman & Dam, 2011; Bakker, 2003; Busch et al., 2012; Kiili, 2005). In addition, some researchers studied flow theory in the field of foreign language education and classrooms (Egbert, 2003),

which suggested that flow did exist in the FL classroom, such as Spanish as a foreign language classroom. Furthermore, there have been several studies which investigated flow in EFL learning (Aubrey, 2017; Azizi & Ghonsooly, 2015; Guan, 2013; Kirchoff, 2013). However, to the knowledge of the researcher, there is little research on flow theory in the context of EFL teaching, and the extent to which language instructors experience flow in their classes. In addition, no study has focused on the overall flow experiences of EFL instructors in Turkey by investigating absorption, work enjoyment, intrinsic work motivation, skills, activities, and time of the day through age, ethnicity, educational level, gender, sexual orientation, and years of experience variables.

In Turkey, EFL instructors feel demotivated at times during their teaching and classes (Han & Mahzoun, 2018; Olmezer Ozturk, 2015). Various reasons have been stated in these studies such as administration, students, working conditions, and institutional atmosphere. There might be some other reasons that are related to flow since flow and intrinsic work motivation are closely related (Bakker, 2003, 2007). In that sense, the factors and activities that cause flow states in English preparatory schools in Turkey should be discovered. In the area of EFL teaching, Tardy and Snyder conducted a prominent study in Turkey in 2004. It was an exploratory study and they investigated flow experiences of EFL instructors working at a private university in Turkey by conducting interviews with the participants of the study. The results demonstrated that EFL instructors did have flow experiences and flow theory could be used as a useful framework to understand the instructors' practices, beliefs, and values in their work. However, this study investigated flow theory only through qualitative approach and with a small sample size. In addition, no study has quantitatively explored the overall extent to which EFL instructors in Turkey have

experienced flow. Also, no study has investigated nationwide flow experiences of EFL instructors working at both state and private universities in Turkey by means of an online survey that is multilayered. These layers are absorption, work enjoyment, intrinsic work motivation, skills, activities, time of the day, age, ethnicity, educational level, gender, sexual orientation, and years of experience in terms of flow theory.

### **Research Questions**

The present study aims to address the following research questions:

1. To what extent do EFL instructors in Turkey experience flow?
2. How well skills, activities and time of the day as a whole predict work-related flow?
3. How well work-related flow is predicted separately by
  - a) teaching different skills
  - b) type of activities
  - c) time of the day
- 4) Are there any differences between different groups of EFL instructors in terms of flow experience in teaching EFL? These groups are:
  - a) age groups
  - b) ethnic groups
  - c) educational degree groups
  - d) gender groups
  - e) sexual orientation groups
  - f) years of experience groups

### **Significance of the Study**

There have been some research studies indicating that flow experiences exist in EFL settings (e.g., Azizi & Ghonsooly, 2015; Guan, 2013; Ak Senturk, 2010). However, the studies have mostly focused on flow experiences of learners as case studies. Also, there is limited research on the potential factors leading to flow such as different skills, time of the day, and years of experience. Hence, this study may contribute to the field by providing valuable information about EFL instructors' flow experiences. Additionally, the findings of this study may help identify particular type of activities that can be done to increase the possibility of having flow experiences in an EFL class. Moreover, the implications of the study can help to uncover other factors of flow experiences that have not been stated in the literature before.

At the local and pedagogical level, the results of this study will benefit language instructors, helping them to understand their own flow experiences reflectively and thoroughly. This study was conducted with 283 EFL instructors from 16 public and 14 private universities in Turkey. These universities are located in six out of seven different geographical regions of Turkey and 11 different cities. Due to the diverse setting of the data, this study could shed light on teacher motivation in EFL settings in Turkey (i.e., motivation subcomponent of flow experiences). Also, determining the factors and activities that lead to flow may help EFL instructors and become aware of the reasons why they experience flow when they do and understand the variables of flow states better.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter, the background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, and significance of the problem have been presented. The next chapter is the literature review presenting the related studies from literature on flow

theory in a detailed and synthesizing way. The third chapter is the methodology chapter, which explains the participants, setting, instrument, data collection procedures and data analysis of the study. The fourth chapter elaborates on the data analysis by introducing the tests that were run for analyzing the data and the results of the analyses. The last chapter is the conclusions chapter, which covers the discussion of the findings, pedagogical implications, limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.

## **CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Introduction**

This research study investigates the degree to which EFL instructors in Turkey have flow experiences. Also, this study explores the factors leading to flow experiences and types of activities making flow experiences easier to occur in EFL classes in Turkey. This chapter presents the relevant literature beginning with an introduction to the concept of flow. Next, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation types will be reviewed regarding flow theory. Then, the conditions that must exist for a flow experience will be examined. After that, examples of flow in various contexts, including education in general, language learning and the field of ELT from related studies will be discussed. The ways of measuring flow will also be provided. Lastly, factors affecting flow and activities leading to flow will be investigated.

### **Flow Theory**

“Flow theory” is a term introduced by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in 1975. According to Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi (2014), “flow is a state in which individuals are fully involved in the present moment and they forget about everything in the environment” (p.239). When in a flow state, the person is concentrated on what s/he is doing and highly-committed to the task at hand.

Flow experience is called “optimal experience”, in that, it is ‘simply an experience that flows according to its own requirements’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014, p. 215). In that sense, there are two basic dimensions of optimal experiences that are challenges and skills. These parameters are related to “what there is to do and what one is capable of doing” (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014, p. 211). In order for a flow state to occur, challenges and skills should be almost equal. This perfect balance between

challenges raised by an activity and skills of an individual are considered leading to flow states in which one feels enjoyment, happiness, and satisfaction.

Flow researchers have defined the characteristics of flow states as follows (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014):

(a) intense and focused concentration, (b) merging of action and awareness, (c) loss of reflective self-awareness, (d) a sense that one can control one's actions, (e) distortion of temporal experience, (f) experience of the activity as intrinsically rewarding, such that often the end goal is just an excuse for the process. (p. 90)

Namely, in a flow experience, one feels totally concentrated on what one is doing and nothing else can distract them. Also, individuals are not aware of what is happening in the world around them at the time of a flow state and they are focused on the present moment, which leads to merging of action and awareness. When in flow, people lose their reflective self-consciousness, especially as a social actor. In other words, they stop seeing themselves from the eyes of others. Furthermore, individuals experiencing flow feel a sense of control over what they can do. As for the feeling of time, they feel that time has passed faster than usual. Finally, flow states occur when an activity is done because of intrinsic motivation and when individuals are doing an activity just for the sake of doing it (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014).

### **Conditions of Flow**

The concept of flow refers to a “subjective experience” that is felt when one reads a good novel, plays a favorite sports branch or has a stimulating conversation (Csikszentmihalyi, 2009, p. 394). Flow theory suggests there is no need for individuals to force themselves to enter a state of flow; it just happens. In that sense, it is difficult to define flow in an exact way since it is a complicated phenomenon depending on several variables such as a sense of control, curiosity, motivation,

happiness, and satisfaction (Abbott, 2000; Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989; Hsu & Lu, 2004; Schüler & Brunner, 2009). Also, Csikszentmihalyi (1992) thought that defining flow too precisely was not a good idea and was like “breaking the spirit”.

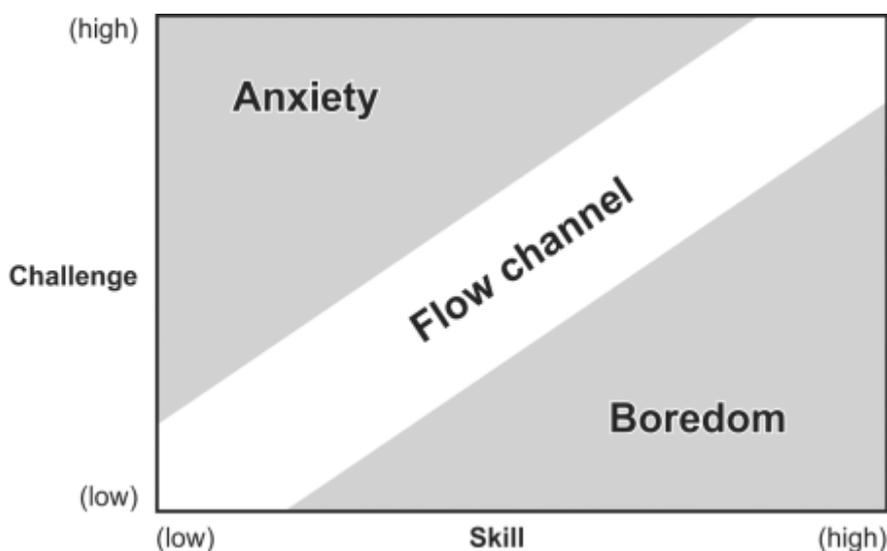
Still, flow theory provides for some preconditions that must exist for flow to occur:

- a) a balance between challenge and skills
- b) focused attention and intense concentration
- c) interest
- d) a sense of control (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Egbert, 2003).

According to flow theory, the balance between challenge and skills is important for the emergence of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Egbert, 2003; Tardy & Snyder, 2004; Van Lier, 1996). A task, for instance, should not be too easy or too difficult and the levels of challenge and skills should be in harmony (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997) so that learners can enjoy it.

The original flow model shows that when challenges are above the level of available skills flow is replaced by anxiety (See Figure 1). If the level of skills is higher than the level of challenges, boredom occurs. According to this model in Figure 1, flow, the optimal experience, happens when challenge and skills are in balance. The model was elaborated in terms of the relationship between challenge and skills levels afterwards. In this elaborated version of the model proposed by Massimini and Carli (1988), there are different areas of feeling related to the different levels of challenge and skills. Other than anxiety, flow and boredom, the feelings in this eight-channel flow model includes: *arousal* that happens when challenge is high but skills are moderate, *control* that is felt when challenge is moderate, but skills are high, *relaxation* that occurs if challenge is low and skills are

moderate, *apathy* that occurs when both challenge and skills are low, and *worry* which is felt when challenge is moderate, but skills are low (See Figure 2).



*Figure 1.* The original flow model (Adopted from Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988)

The second precondition for flow is focused attention and intense concentration. In a flow state, one feels totally immersed in an activity and nothing around the person seems to be important. Individuals do not consider irrelevant things while in flow (Egbert, 2003; Jackson & Marsh, 1996; Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009) and they feel focused unintentionally (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Egbert, 2003).

As for the third precondition, interest is considered as one of the important aspects of flow. Since flow theory is directly related to intrinsic motivation (Bakker, 2007), the interest in what one is doing arouses flow states. Individuals do what they are doing for its own sake and they feel intrinsically rewarded. In addition, Abbott (2000) found out that there is a correlation between interest and enjoyment, engagement, and focused attention. The participants of the study were two fifth-

grade students, and Abbott (2000) focused on their intrinsic motivation for writing. Specifically, she examined children's ways of expressing flow experiences which are linked to writing. The findings of the study also showed that a sense of control is crucial to have flow experiences; namely, elementary students achieved flow states more in the context of writing when the researcher controlled some features of writing such as genre and style, and also the students could differentiate between flow and nonflow experiences.

Fourth, a sense of control is needed for flow. When individuals feel this sense of control, they feel more autonomous which, in return, promotes self-determination and intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). "What seems to critical to this dimension is that it is the potential for control, especially the sense of exercising control in difficult situations, that is the central to the flow experience" (Jackson & Marsh, 1996, p. 19).

Flow researchers stated that other conditions of flow might include:

- a) action-awareness merging
- b) clear goals
- c) immediate feedback
- d) loss of self-consciousness
- e) transformation of time
- f) autotelic experience
- g) a deep sense of enjoyment (Egbert, 2003; Jackson & Marsh, 1996; Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009).

## Measurement of Flow

Since flow is a complex phenomenon, empirical research on flow is challenging. Because of the inherently unstable, subjective aspect of flow, it was found difficult to operationalize and measure (Finneran & Zhang, 2005; Rodriguez-Sanchez, Schaufeli, Salanova & Cifre, 2008). Several different ways to measure flow experiences have been applied to flow studies since Csikszentmihalyi, as a pioneering flow researcher, first introduced the concept of flow in 1975. Some studies focused on the balance between challenge and skills so as to measure flow (Alperer, 2005). In some other studies, researchers preferred to use three core elements -absorption, enjoyment, intrinsic motivation- of flow to operationalize flow experiences (Bakker, 2005; Demerouti, 2006; Salanova, Bakker & Llorens, 2006). Early studies attempted to analyze flow in daily life experiences (Asakawa, 2004; Clarke & Haworth, 1994; Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 1993; Haworth & Evans, 1995; Lee, McCormick, & Pedersen, 2010). Some of these flow studies used the Flow Model (Ellis, Voelkl & Morris, 1994; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson, 1990; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Jackson, 1995; Jones, Hollenhorst & Perna, 2003; Perry, 1999), while some of them used the Experience Sampling Method (ESM) (Asakawa, 2004; Clarke & Haworth, 1994; Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 1975; Haworth & Evans, 1995), and some others used flow questionnaires (Egbert, 2003). Also, some studies explored flow by having interviews with participants. In order to measure such a rich and complex concept (i.e., flow), a multimethod approach by combining quantitative and qualitative data could be applied.

The Flow Model has been used in early studies to measure flow in daily life notably. In addition to this original Flow Model, the data of early flow studies relied

broadly on interviews and questionnaires (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988). The data were limited in those studies since they were based on self-reports having the risk of being inaccurate or incomplete (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988). Therefore, a more inclusive tool was needed. The name of this tool is the Experience Sampling Method (ESM), consisting of electronic pagers (i.e., telecommunication device, beeper) and a questionnaire (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). In this method, pagers are given to the participants or responders, and signals are sent to the pagers at random times of the day. The respondents fill out a questionnaire requiring the description of their emotional state after they receive the signals. The Flow Questionnaire presents respondents with “several passages describing the flow state and asks a) whether they have had the experience, b) how often, and c) in what activity contexts” (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988 as cited in Alperer, 2005, p. 246). According to Alperer (2005), the ESM provides more spontaneous, accurate and systematic data for research studies in flow. In this way, “the ESM makes subjective states accessible to systematic investigation” (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014, p. 214). Also, respondents are expected to join an *expositional interview* with the researcher, which helps identify the prominent characteristics of their experiences, namely, flow. Expositional interview is a type of interview in which participants give detailed information about their feelings and experiences at the time of signals sent to pagers or beepers (Hurlburt & Heavey, 2006). Expositional interviews are not made long after the signals (either later that day -day of the signals- or the next day) so that participants can remember how they feel and provide in-dept information.

Massimini and Carli (1988) elaborated on Csikszentmihalyi’s original flow model and proposed a new model with a new hypothesis. In this new model, they claimed that in order for a flow state to occur challenge and skills should not only be

in harmony but they also should be above a certain level. In other words, there should be a combination of high skills and high challenges. The combination of low challenge and low skills leads to apathy, not flow. The various ratios in Massimini and Carli's (1988) eight-channel flow model can be seen in Figure 2.

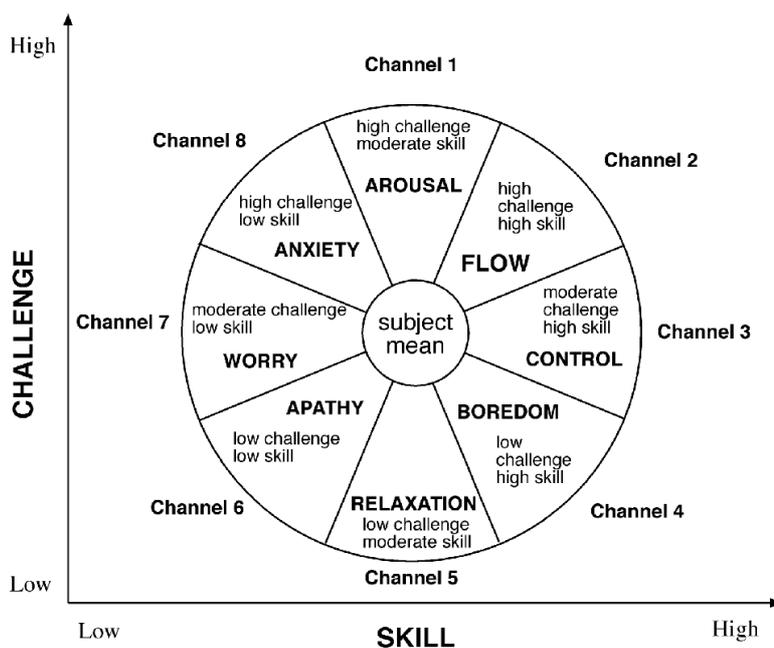


Figure 2. The eight-channel flow model (Adopted from Massimini & Carli, 1988)

In subsequent years, the Flow State Scale (FSS) was developed and validated by Jackson and Marsh (1996). It was a new measure of flow in sport and physical activity settings. They developed the items based on the data gathered previously from athletes' flow descriptions and qualitative content analysis (Jackson, 1995). The results showed good reliability and support for the hypothesized factor structure (Jackson & Marsh, 1996).

In 2008, Bakker developed the Work-related Flow Inventory (WOLF) in order to measure flow in work environments. Flow was operationalized through 13 items whose validity and reliability were measured and proved. WOLF measures

three basic dimensions of flow: absorption (4 items), work enjoyment (4 items), and intrinsic work motivation (5 items). Participants show how often they experience elements of flow on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = never, 2 = almost never, 3 = sometimes, 4 = regularly, 5 = often, 6 = very often, 7 = always) (Bakker, 2008, p. 403, 412). *Absorption* refers to “a state of deep attention and engagement -i.e., the individual is perceptually engrossed with the experience” (Agarwal & Karahanna, 2000, p. 667). *Work enjoyment* refers to the feeling of happiness and satisfaction at work. Lastly, *intrinsic work motivation* refers to doing work-related activities because of the inherent pleasure in the activity (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Overall, in respect of ways of operationalizing flow experience, several different methods utilizing qualitative and quantitative data were applied including the Flow Model, the Flow State Scale, the ESM or beepers/pagers studies (Csikszentmihalyi & Graef, 1980; Csikszentmihalyi & Kubey, 1981; Moneta & Csikszentmihalyi, 1996), questionnaires (Egbert, 2003), interviews, semi-structured interviews and the WOLF. Based on these efforts, flow could be defined as a state which can last for both a short and long time and where individuals are fully concentrated on what they are doing without thinking about anything else. In a flow state, individuals feel happy and satisfied, and enjoy the moment.

### **Motivation**

Deci and Ryan (2000) state that motivation is led by autonomy (managing one's own actions), competence (the ability to do something well) and relatedness (feeling safe and satisfied in social environments). These three “innate psychological needs” are significant in the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) since the satisfaction of any of them enhances motivation and people feel self-determined (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

In Self-Determination Theory, motivation is classified into two categories, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Intrinsic motivation means “doing of an activity for its inherent satisfactions rather than for some separable consequence” (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 56). In that sense, when people are intrinsically motivated, they are engaged in an activity for the enjoyment or fun or for having a challenge in the activity itself. There is a voluntary interest and inherent curiosity.

In order to have a better image of the complex phenomenon of flow, it is crucial to understand intrinsic motivation and its close relationship with flow theory. According to Csikszentmihalyi (1990), intrinsic motivation is one of the most important components of flow and it emerges when challenge and skills are balanced. Intrinsic motivation leads to enjoyable, rewarding experiences like flow and it enhances performance (Pintrich, 1989). Intrinsic motivation is also closely related to interest that is one of the preconditions of flow. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), intrinsic motivation refers to “doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable” (p.55). Intrinsic motivation can exist in individuals only when activities hold interest for them (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

In terms of operationalization of intrinsic motivation, there have been various ways applied. “Free choice measure” is one of the mostly used ways to operationalize intrinsic motivation. This method is based on a behavioral measure. For instance, after being exposed to a task or activity, participants are left alone in an experimental room with the task or activity as well as some other distracting activities. This period is called “free choice period”. If the participants start doing the activity again without any extrinsic reason such as a reward, they have intrinsic motivation for that activity and the amount of intrinsic motivation is directly related

to how much time spend with the activity (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Another common approach is the use of self-reports of interest and enjoyment of the activity. One type of this approach is “domain” focused measures. In this type of operationalization of intrinsic motivation, there are self-report scales related to a specific domain such as school or sports (Harter, 1981). Bakker (2008), for instance, attempted to develop a reliable and valid flow survey related to work. In this survey, intrinsic work motivation is measured. Another type of using self-reports in operationalizing intrinsic motivation is task-specific measures. In this method, one type of task such as doing a series of hidden-figure puzzles (Harackiewicz, 1979) is chosen and given to the participants. After the task, intrinsic motivation of the participants is measured through self-reports.

According to Jesus and Lens (2005) teachers are the professional group suffering lack of work motivation most. Teacher motivation has got an important role in student motivation and they are interrelated. Moreover, Jesus and Lens (2005) stated:

Teacher motivation is also important for the advance of educational reforms. First, motivated teachers are more likely to work for educational reform and progressive legislation. Second – and perhaps more importantly – it is the motivated teacher who guarantees the implementation of reforms originating at the policy-making level. Finally, teacher motivation is important for the satisfaction and fulfilment of teachers themselves. (p. 120)

Therefore, it was important to measure teacher motivation and they developed an original self-report instrument with seven-point scale including intrinsic motivation items such as “teaching increases my self-esteem,” and “teaching contributes to my personal development” (Jesus & Lens, 2005, p. 128).

Extrinsic motivation is defined as a “construct that pertains whenever an activity is done in order to attain some separable outcome” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p.

60). This outcome could be social status, money, grade and other external rewards such as promotion at work. Ryan and Deci (2000) states, “extrinsically motivated behaviors are not typically interesting, the primary reason people initially perform such actions is because the behaviors are prompted, modeled, or valued by significant others to whom they feel (or want to feel) attached or related” (p. 73). Therefore, students who do their homework because of career goals and students who do their homework because of parental attitude are both extrinsically motivated. In that sense, extrinsic motivation, like intrinsic motivation, promotes teaching and learning.

### **Flow in Various Contexts**

Flow has been researched in many fields since it was first introduced in 1975. Early studies of flow focused on daily life of individuals, then the focus point expanded to sports (Huang, Pham, Wong, Chiu, Yang & Teng, 2018; Jackson, 1995, 1996; Kim & Ko, 2019), literary writing (Perry, 1999), art and science (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996), aesthetic experience (Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson, 1990), social activism (Colby & Damon, 1992), software design and computer-mediated communication (Trevino & Webster, 1992; Webster & Martocchio, 1993), shopping (Smith & Sivakumar, 2004), computer game play (Fang, Zhang, & Chan, 2013). According to Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi (2014), the flow experience is “the same across kinds of activity” (p. 241). Additionally, activities ranging from solitary to gregarious, from physical to cognitive, from obligatory to voluntary are able to produce intense involvement of the flow experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014).

Heo, Lee, Pedersen and McCormick (2010) investigated flow experience of older adults in daily life. The participants of the study were 19 older adults in a

Midwestern city in the United States. They focused on contextual and personal differences, leisure and location. As for the measurement of flow, they applied the Experience Sampling Method (ESM) so that they could collect data about participants' emotional states. The study included pagers with signals followed by self-report questionnaires and open-ended questions. The findings revealed that location and individual employment status such as retirement affect flow experiences of older adults. They also found that retirement affects flow negatively. However, there is not a significant relationship between leisure and flow.

Reynolds and Prior (2006) explored the extent to which women living with cancer experience flow in art-making. In this qualitative study, they applied the template approach by using a list of themes prepared previously to test the theory and current findings. The participants were 10 white women who were living in England and were diagnosed with cancer. They reflected upon their flow experiences during art-making (i.e., textile art, pottery, collage and painting) in semi-structured interviews. The results of the study showed that the women enjoyed the creative art work, and they clearly had experiences of flow. Flow during art-making ensured a positive sense of achievement and the participants reported many aspects of flow such as deep engagement, immersion and changed sense of time. Furthermore, they felt more confident due to the flow states in the processes of art-making and flow states made them perceive more quality of life and forget about their illness and symptoms.

In 2013, Wrigley and Emmerson conducted a study to examine the experience of the flow state in a live music performance context in Australia. They used the Flow State Scale-2 (FSS-2) as the tool to collect the data and it was administered to 236 students playing five different instruments such as piano, brass

and woodwind. The students were asked to fill out the survey right after their performance examinations. This study confirmed the validity and reliability of the flow model in live music performance. They also found out that the flow experience did not alter due to instrument type, year, level or gender. The results also revealed that most of the students did not experience a high level of flow during their performance examination.

Layous, Nelson, and Lyubomirsky (2013) examined the effects of writing about personal and meaningful experiences called “best possible selves” (BPS) once a week in terms of flow, mental and physical health. They also had a look at the differences between doing this positive activity online and doing it in person. The participants of the study were 131 students who were enrolled in introductory psychology course at a public university, and these participants had diverse ethnicities. The writing process took four weeks and each week, the students wrote about their different domains in life (social, academics, career, health). According to the results of the study, BPS activity increased positive affect and flow. However, there were not any differences between doing the writing task online and doing it in-person.

Stavrou, Jackson, Zervas, and Karteroliotis (2007) explored the relationship between flow experience and athletes’ performance. They also focused on the relationship between challenge, skills, and flow experience as well as the differences between four areas (apathy, anxiety, relaxation and flow) in the Flow State Scale (FSS). 220 athletes participated in the study. As for the instrumentation, the FSS, challenge and skills measure and a demographic questionnaire were used. The findings indicated that the athletes in the flow and relaxation states had the highest FSS factor scores, but the athletes in the apathy state had the lowest scores.

Furthermore, Trevino and Webster (1992) used flow as a construct to understand employees' evaluations of computer-mediated communication (CMC) technologies. They distributed surveys to 287 randomly-selected employees working at a health care firm. In the surveys, there were questions related to electronic mail usage and voice mail usage, and all survey items were 7-point Likert-type scales. The findings showed that flow could be accepted as an important characteristic of CMC technology. In addition, electronic mail interactions resulted in more flow than voice mail interactions, and flow was affected by ease of use positively.

In terms of computer-mediated environments, Smith and Sivakumar (2004) investigated the relationship between flow and online shopping behavior. They explored the conditions facilitating different Internet shopping behaviors (i.e., browsing, one-time purchases and repeat purchases) under different dimensions of flow. They also made 13 propositions related to consumer-related factors such as perceived risk, willingness to buy, consumer self-confidence, the nature of the product and the nature of the purchase occasion (planned vs. impulse). The results demonstrated that there are different types of flow meeting the expectations of varied consumer segments and consumption occasions.

### **Flow in Education**

Educational settings are utilized to apply flow theory. Kahn (2000), for example, applied it to Montessori schools, Whalen (1999) sought to create a learning environment fostering flow experiences in a public elementary and middle school. Next, flow was examined in digital game-based learning (Admiraal, Huizenga, Akkerman & Dam, 2011; Kiili, 2005), distance education and online learning (Ho & Kuo, 2010; Lee, Yoon & Lee, 2009; Liu, Liao & Peng, 2005; Millat, Martinez-

Lopez, Huertas-Garcia, Meseguer & Rodriguez-Ardura, 2014) and mobile augmented reality (Bressler & Bodzin, 2013).

Kiili (2005) introduced a gaming model depending on experiential learning theory, flow theory and game design. The study showed that providing the player with immediate feedback is highly important. Also, there should be clear goals and challenges in the games and the skill level of the player should be balanced. Furthermore, it was found that flow theory could be used as a framework to facilitate positive user experience in order to maximize the impact of educational games.

Admiraal et. al (2011) investigated the concept of flow in relation to student engagement in game-based learning. The participants of the study were 216 students of three schools for secondary education in Amsterdam. The researchers found out that these students showed flow with their game activities (1-day game about the medieval history of Amsterdam) and flow was shown to have an effect on game performance, but not on their learning outcome.

Ho and Kuo (2010) focused on self-perceived flow experience and learning outcomes of IT professionals' by investigating the effect of IT professionals' computer attitudes. They collected data from 50 technological companies in Taiwan (N = 239) and analyzed the data via structural equation modelling. They concluded that both computer attitude and flow experience generated positive and direct influence on learning outcome.

Bressler and Bodzin (2013) investigated flow theory in the context of mobile learning. Specifically, their study investigated factors related to students' engagement characterized by flow theory during a mobile augmented reality (AR) learning games. Mixed-method approach including pre- and post-surveys, field observations and group interviews was applied and that data were collected from 68

middle school students. According to the findings of this study, gender and interest in science are not important predictors of flow experience. However, 23% of the variance in flow experience is predicted by gaming attitude.

In addition, Smith (2005) explored the effect of flow theory in geography education, specifically the Geographic Information Systems (GIS). According to Smith (2005), GIS is valuable in education, and GIS revolutionized geography education when it first entered the curriculum. However, there was an absent aspect of the GIS education, and that was user engagement. Smith used flow theory and proposed a framework related to learning with a GIS to enhance student engagement in geography education. In the framework, Smith (2005) provided a GIS simulation project questionnaire for students to rank (from 1 to 5) themselves in terms of their engagement in projects. A link between interaction with GIS and a state of flow was found. In that sense, flow theory could be used as a useful framework for geography educators.

Shernoff, Csikszentmihalyi, Schneider, and Shernoff (2014) conducted a longitudinal study with 526 high school students and investigated how they spent their time at school and under which conditions they felt engaged in learning within the framework of flow theory. The participants were from different grades in high school and had different backgrounds in terms of geography, race, ethnicity, and economic stability. They applied the Experience Sampling Method in this study. Participants filled out an Experience Sampling Form (ESF) after they were signaled by an electronic pager. There were 45 items in the form, and these items consisted of open-ended questions about participants' location, thoughts, and activities in which they felt engaged. The items also consisted of Likert-type responses related to the perceptions of participants about activities. Participants also answered some items

related to their emotional states on a 7-point semantic differential scales (e.g., happy-sad, strong-weak). The findings demonstrated that students spent one-third of their time passively in the classes such as they only listened to a lecture or watch TV or a video. When the instruction was relevant and challenge and skills were high and in balance, they experienced more engagement. Also, they reported learning environment should be under their control. Participants also engaged in individual and group work more than listening to lectures, watching videos, or taking exams.

Liao (2006) examined flow theory perspective on learner motivation and behavior in distance education. Data were collected from 253 undergraduate distance learning students from Taiwan, and two models were constructed to test the students' flow states. The first model was used to examine the cause and effect of the flow experience in usage of distance learning systems. Structural Equation Model (SEM) was applied to examine the data gathered from the first model. The results showed that flow theory works well in a distance learning environment. The second model was prepared to explore the effect of different interaction types in flow experience. The results from the second model indicated that learner-instructor and learner-interface interaction types had a positive relationship with flow. However, there is not a significant relationship between learner-learner interaction and flow experience.

Lee (2005) conducted a study with 262 Korean undergraduate students and investigated the relationship between motivation, flow experience, and academic procrastination. The participants were from different academic majors, and they were enrolled in an educational psychology course. First, they filled out the Procrastination survey developed by Tuckman (1991) consisting of 16 4-point likert-scale items, and then, the Flow State Scale (Jackson & Marsh, 1996) was

administered. Finally, the Academic Motivation Scale (Vallerand, Pelletier, Blais, Briere, Senecal, & Vallieres, 1993) was applied. The analyses of the data gathered through all the questionnaires showed that there was a significant and negative correlation between procrastination and intrinsic motivation, and self-determined extrinsic motivation. Also, a significant and negative correlation was found between procrastination and flow.

### **Flow in Language Education**

Both empirical and theoretical research have been conducted in flow in foreign language education and they focused on finding out the quality of subjective experience (Alperer, 2005). Feelings of enjoyment, interest, satisfaction and pleasure were also examined in relation to the concept of flow (Abbott, 2000; Larson, 1988; Tardy & Snyder, 2004).

Studies on flow in language education show that flow does exist in language classrooms (Abbott, 2000; Egbert, 2003; Larson, 1988; Tardy & Snyder, 2004). Also, there are studies related to designing flow-promoting tasks (Ak Senturk, 2010; Egbert, 2003) and the role of the teacher in facilitating flow (Tardy & Snyder, 2004).

Abbott (2000) examined flow experiences of two fifth-grade students in writing. She found that flow occurred when the participants controlled important aspects of writing such as ownership, genre, style and length. Also, the description of flow experiences by the participants were similar to the experiences of adolescents and adults.

Egbert (2003) focused on the relationship between flow experiences and language learning. The researcher collected data from 13 secondary school Spanish language learners and their teacher in order to examine learner performance on seven tasks to determine whether flow occurs in the FL classroom and type of tasks that

might likely result in flow. Results of the study suggested that flow exists in the FL classroom and Flow Theory could be used as a useful framework for conceptualizing and evaluating language learning activities.

Tardy and Snyder (2004) conducted their study with 10 instructors of first-year English at a private university in Turkey. In this exploratory study, they made interviews with the participants in order to detect whether they had flow experiences in their EFL classes and explored some factors or key categories of flow experiences from instructors' descriptions. Those key categories are interest and involvement, authentic communication, spontaneity/unpredictability, teacher-student dialogue, and moments of learning.

Ak Senturk (2010) conducted a study at a state university in Turkey. She worked with 163 elementary level students and their eight instructors of English and collected data through a questionnaire, a survey and interviews for a two-week period. The study investigated the degree to which flow occurred in different kinds of tasks in speaking courses and also examined the perceptions of both teachers and students about flow experiences. She found out that class discussion activity produced more flow for both teachers and students and also the type of activity affects affective engagement.

Moreover, Azizi and Ghonsooly (2015) examined the flow experience of test takers in different genres of TOEFL texts. They focused on and chose Expository and Argumentative texts from a TOEFL test. Then, they conducted the study with 33 M.A. English students. After reading the texts, the participants filled out the Flow Perception Questionnaire (Egbert, 2003) in the Likert-scale format. The descriptive statistics and the mean scores showed that Expository genre created more flow than Argumentative genre.

Kirchhoff (2013) explored flow in L2 extensive reading with Japanese learners of English. Kirchhoff (2013) used flow theory as a psychological framework to check whether there is enhancement in motivation and engagement in terms of extensive reading classes. The participants were asked to fill out three different questionnaires after their extensive reading class once a week for 14 weeks. The study survey consisted of Extensive Reading Questionnaire, Follow-up Questionnaire and Flow Conditions questionnaire. The results indicated that learners often had flow experiences while they read graded readers. However, there was no relationship between greater frequency of flow-like experiences and greater amounts of time spent reading.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter, the literature on flow theory, conditions and measurement of flow, the relationship between flow and motivation, flow in various contexts, flow in education and flow in language education were reviewed. In the next chapter, the research methodology of the present study including the research design, setting, participants, instrument, data collection procedures and data analysis will be presented.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

This descriptive study aims to explore the flow experiences of EFL instructors in Turkey working at public and private universities in Turkey. In order to explore the flow experiences of the instructors, the following research questions are asked:

1. To what extent do EFL instructors in Turkey experience flow?
2. How well skills, activities and time of the day as a whole predict work-related flow?
3. How well work-related flow is predicted separately by
  - a. teaching different skills?
  - b. type of activities?
  - c. time of the day?
4. Are there any differences between different groups of EFL instructors in terms of flow experience in teaching EFL? These groups are:
  - a. age groups
  - b. ethnic groups
  - c. educational degree groups
  - d. gender groups
  - e. sexual orientation groups
  - f. years of experience groups

## Research Design

This study involves a quantitative approach and it is a descriptive, non-experimental study. First, it is a quantitative study since the purpose of the study is to explain flow as a phenomenon with its characteristics. According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007), descriptive research deals with the question of “what”, not “how” or “why”. The current study attempts to explain flow experiences of EFL instructors as they are. Second, this study is a descriptive study since there is information about frequency or amount related to the extent to which EFL instructors in Turkey experience flow in EFL classes. Third, the data were gathered through an adapted online survey in this study and the adapted survey tools were used to collect data (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). Next, the present study is non-experimental because the researcher does not have any control over the variables. In other words, “the researcher identifies variables and look for relationships among them but does not manipulate the variables” (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorensen, 2006, p. 29). Also, it can be stated that the study is comparative (Castellan, 2010) since the differences between different EFL instructor groups of age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, educational degree and years of experience in terms of flow experience in EFL teaching are presented. As for the sample, the participants of the study are 283 EFL instructors working at both public and private universities in Turkey. In that sense, the sample is a subset of the population and they are randomly selected (Jurs, 1998). It is difficult to include all members of the population that will be studied; therefore, the researcher has used the sample to summarize the characteristics of different groups. Furthermore, the survey data were analyzed quantitatively. In order to explain the relationships among different variables, certain statistical analyses including inferential statistics (e.g., ANOVA and Regression tests) and descriptive

statistics (e.g., frequencies, percentages, and averages) were utilized. In applying descriptive and inferential statistics, the researcher had a neutral role and objective stance.

### **Setting**

The study was conducted at 30 universities including both public and private ones in Turkey (Table 1). The online survey was implemented at the schools of foreign languages at all the universities that voluntarily agreed to participate. Before sending the survey to the universities, the researcher applied to the Ethics Committee of Bilkent University for obtaining permission to conduct the study. The application form which included sections requiring detailed information related to the research study and research design was filled in. In this way, the researcher provided information about the topic, title, research questions, setting, participants, and data collection procedure. Also, the consent form and the survey link that would be used in the study were attached. After sending the application form, the researcher received an e-mail from the Ethics Committee that was asking for an addition. In this regard, the statement of “The results of this study may be published as a thesis, an article, a report, or the results may be presented as a presentation at national and/or international conferences.” was added to the consent form at the front page of the online survey and the form was resent to the Committee. At the end of this process, the Ethics Committee of Bilkent University gave permission. In this way, the researcher started to send the survey link to the universities in Turkey. The data were collected in 2018-2019 academic year Spring semester. The detailed information about the setting of the study can be seen in the table below:

Table 1

*Information about the Context of Universities*

Regions	Public	Private	Total
Marmara	2	9	11
Central Anatolia	6	3	9
Aegean	4	1	5
Mediterranean	1	1	2
Eastern Anatolia	2	0	2
Black Sea	1	0	1

The current study was conducted at 16 public and 14 private universities (30 in total). These universities are located in six different geographical regions of Turkey; namely, Marmara, Central Anatolia, Aegean, Mediterranean, Eastern Anatolia and Black Sea regions. Marmara region had the highest number of universities that voluntarily agreed to participate in the study (2 public, 9 private, 11 universities in total). Central Anatolia region followed Marmara with 6 public, 3 private and 9 universities in total. Then, Aegean region included 4 public, 1 private, 5 universities in total. Next, there were 2 universities (1 public, 1 private) from Mediterranean region, and 2 universities (only public) from Eastern Anatolia region in Turkey. Finally, Black Sea region had the lowest number since only 1 public university participated in the study. In terms of the cities, the data of the present study were gathered from 11 different cities in Turkey. There were 1 city from Marmara, 2 cities from Central Anatolia, 3 cities from Aegean, 2 cities from Mediterranean, 2 cities from Eastern Anatolia, and 1 city from Black Sea regions.

### **Participants**

To begin with, the participants of this study were instructors teaching English at schools of foreign languages of several public and private universities in Turkey. Firstly, there were 396 participants who agreed to participate in the study and started taking the survey. However, 86 of these participants were observed that they only

clicked on the arrow to start the online survey but never answered a question or quit the survey before completing it. Therefore, the number of the participants declined to 310. Then, 21 of these instructors were detected to have answered only half of the survey, which caused the number of participants to fall to 289. Finally, five of the participants were removed because of their wrong degree information. In other words, they marked “Associate degree in college (2-year)” which is lower than Bachelor of Arts (4-year) for their last completed educational degrees. However, in Turkey, it is impossible to be an EFL instructor if one has not completed Bachelor of Arts (BA) at least. In terms of legislation, the Council of Higher Education (YOK) in Turkey does not allow those who do not have a BA degree to become EFL instructors. This requirement about being an instructor is stated explicitly in the seventh article of legislation (See the link for the changed seventh article that is stated in the fourth article: <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2018/06/20180607-15.htm>). Consequently, the response rate for this survey calculated after cleaning up the data is 71.4%.

The participants graduated from different departments such as English Language Teaching, English Language and Literature, American Culture and Literature, Linguistics and Translation and Interpreting. The information on their years of experience is very diverse. Moreover, their educational degrees ranged between B.A and Ph.D. One hundred and nineteen of the participants had B.A degree, 139 of the participants had M.A. degree, and 25 of the participants had Ph.D. degree. In terms of the age of participants, there are 5 instructors in the group of 18-24 years old, 134 instructors in the group of 25-34 years old, 100 instructors in the group of 35-44 years old, 38 instructors in the group of 45-54 years old, and 6 instructors in the group of 55-64 years old ( $N = 283$ ). As for the gender groups, 220

participants are females, 62 participants are males and 1 participant clicked on the “Other” option. Also, the present study includes participants from different years of experience groups. There are 35 people in 1-5 years group, 101 people in 6-10 years group, 52 people in 11-15 years group, 55 people in 16-20 years group, and 40 people in 21+ years group. With regard to ethnicity, 237 of the participants defined themselves as White, 7 of the participants defined themselves as Asian/Pacific Islander, 5 of the participants defined themselves as Non-Hispanic White, and 34 people clicked on the “Other” option. Finally, the participants answered a question related to their sexual orientation and the results showed that 237 of the participants are heterosexual (straight), 4 of the participants are bisexual, 3 people preferred to say “Other”, and 39 people “preferred not to say” their sexual orientation.

### **Instrumentation**

An Informed Consent Form (Appendix A) which gives an explanation of the research preceded an online survey consisting of three sections (See Appendix B). The online survey was used to measure flow experiences of Turkish EFL instructors and collect the data.

The first section of the survey was adapted from The Work-Related Flow Inventory (WOLF; Bakker, 2008). This section aimed at exploring to what extent instructors have experiences of flow in their EFL classes. There were 13 items on a 5-point Likert-scale (1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Always). The first four items in this section were related to absorption, the following four items were about work enjoyment, and the final five items were focused on intrinsic work motivation. The researcher preferred to use the WOLF as the medium to collect the data since the reliability and validity of the inventory were tested and proved before in some research studies (Bakker, 2008). In his study, Bakker (2008) showed

that absorption, work enjoyment, and intrinsic work motivation correlated with each other. Absorption displays 30% overlap with work enjoyment and intrinsic work motivation. Also, there was 50% overlap between work enjoyment and intrinsic work motivation. The reliability of the three dimensions of flow was good. The Cronbach's alpha levels for absorption, work enjoyment and intrinsic work motivation were .80, .90, and .75 respectively. The item reliability analysis of the survey in the current study was also conducted and Cronbach's alpha levels were found high and satisfactory in both pilot study and the actual study (See Table 2, Table 3, and Appendix C).

As for the adaptation of the WOLF into the survey used in this thesis, some modifications were made with respect to wording. Some examples of adaptation are provided below:

- When I am working, I think about nothing else. (Item 1 in WOLF)
- When I am teaching English, I think about nothing else. (Item 1 in the online survey)
- I do my work with a lot of enjoyment. (Item 6 in WOLF)
- I teach English with a lot of enjoyment. (Item 6 in the online survey)
- I would still do this work, even if I received less pay. (Item 9 in WOLF)
- I would still teach English, even if I received less pay. (Item 9 in the online survey)

In this way, the general expressions related to "work" were specified as the expressions related to "teaching English," and the survey became more relevant to the context of the present study. In other words, these changes regarding wording were needed since work of the participants of the study was teaching EFL. The

survey was made more detailed by stating their work, specifically EFL teaching, in the survey items explicitly.

For the second part of the survey, the researcher prepared items related to the research questions stated at the beginning of this chapter such as “I am totally immersed in teaching grammar and think about nothing else”, “I enjoy communicative activities (e.g., role play) most”, and “I feel immersed in teaching English when I have a noon class (11 a.m-2 p.m)”.

Before the pilot study, semi-structured interviews were made with randomly-selected EFL instructors from the institution where the researcher is working. During those interviews which were helpful to decide the field of the subsections in the second part of the survey, the instructors were asked to deliberate their flow experiences and their causes. Instructors stated that teaching different skills, activities and time of the day affected flow in their classes. Therefore, the researcher preferred to include items related to those areas in the survey and wanted to explore flow experiences of EFL instructors in this respect. In order to explore the possible relationship between teaching different language skills, activities, the time of the day and flow, 14 more items were added to the survey. The first seven of the items in the second section of the survey were related to teaching different skills, the following three items were about activities and the last four items included four different time slots of a day.

The third section of the survey was a demographic questionnaire and consisted of six subsections: age, ethnicity, the last completed educational degree, sex, sexual orientation, and years of experience. The aim of these subsections was to explore if there were differences between different age, ethnicity, the last completed educational degree, sex, sexual orientation, years of experience groups and flow

experience in teaching EFL. In this way, an inclusive image of flow experience in EFL teaching was presented.

### **Piloting the survey**

Following the adaptation of the survey, a brainstorming session was organized and 10 EFL instructors from the institution the researcher is working at were invited to share their opinions about the survey. At the end of the session, the original WOLF which is 7-point Likert-scale including *never*, *almost never*, *sometimes*, *regularly*, *often*, *very often*, and *always* was found confusing. It was stated that there was not much difference especially between *regularly* and *often*. Then, the survey was changed into 5-point Likert-scale ranging from *never (1)* to *always (5)*.

Following the brainstorming session, all the items in the survey were checked for content and face validity by two graduate school professors at a TEFL program. Although the Work-Related Flow Inventory (Bakker, 2008) was valid and reliable, it was decided that a pilot study would be valuable to prevent possible problems in the data collection process. According to Hill (1998), for pilot studies in Internet survey research, ten to thirty participants are acceptable. Therefore, 23 EFL instructors from the sample institution were selected randomly and the pilot study was designated.

For the pilot study, the data collected from 23 EFL instructors were analyzed using SPSS v.24.

Table 2

#### *Cronbach Alpha Levels for the Survey Used in Pilot Study*

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
1. Work Related Flow	.88
1a. Absorption	.85

Table 2 (cont'd)

*Cronbach Alpha Levels for the Survey Used in Pilot Study*

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
1b. Work enjoyment	.93
1c. Intrinsic work motivation	.83
2. Skills	.92
3. Type of activities	0.21 (without removing QID3_8: I enjoy mechanical activities (e.g., fill in the blank) most.) → corrected item total correlation: -.21  0.85 (after removing QID3_8)
4. Time of the day	0.65 questionable (without removing QID3_11: I feel immersed in teaching English when I have a morning class (8 a.m-11 a.m.)) → corrected item total correlation: -.07  0.84 (after removing QID3_11)

Firstly, the item reliability analysis of the survey was conducted after composite scores for each section were created, and the Cronbach alpha level of each part of the survey was found. They were .88, .85, .93, .83 and .92 respectively for the parts of work-related flow, absorption work enjoyment, intrinsic work motivation and skills (See Table 2). Also, the Cronbach alpha level for type of activities part including item 8 was  $.218 < .5$  and for the time of the day part including item 11 was .65 which were questionable. Afterwards, it was found that Corrected item total correlation for item 8 in the second section (I enjoy mechanical activities -e.g., fill in the blank- most.) was -.21 and for item 11 in the second section (I feel immersed in teaching English when I have a morning class -8 a.m-11 a.m) was -.75. After the removal of item 8 and 11 the Cronbach alpha level for type of activities and time of the day parts became .85 and .84 respectively (See Table 2). Although the Cronbach alpha levels for the parts of type of activities and time of the day were low, it was

preferred to keep item 8 and 11 in the main study in case there would not be any problem with the actual study participants. In addition, the items of the survey were also checked for the possibility of reverse coding. However, all of the items were found out in the same category in terms of meaning.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

When the final version of the survey was ready, it was converted to an online version on Qualtrics website. This is a reliable survey website whose license universities obtain for survey studies. The researcher sent e-mails to the administration of school of foreign languages of 30 universities including public and private universities in Turkey in order to obtain permission for the survey to be distributed. In the e-mail, brief information about the researcher and a short explanation of the purpose of the study were provided. Also, it was stated that the information would be kept strictly confidential and would be used only for research purposes. The researcher requested the administration staff in universities to share the survey link with the instructors. Some of the universities did not respond at all while some others forwarded the e-mail to the academic staff directly. Besides, some universities shared the survey link with the instructors after official processes such as a petition and ethics committee approvals. The data collection took six weeks.

### **Data Analysis**

The data collected for this study were composed of only quantitative data gathered through an adapted online survey. The data collected from both the pilot and the actual study were statistically analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) v.24. In order to answer the research questions for this study, both descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized.

First, the data were transferred into SPSS to be analyzed quantitatively. Then, the data were organized and cleaned up. Next, reliability analyses were conducted for the items in each section. Also, the composite scores were calculated for each section. For the first research question, the averaged mean scores and percentages were calculated for absorption, work enjoyment and intrinsic work motivation. In addition, the mean scores of skills, activities and time of the day were examined. In order to answer the remaining research questions, regression results were calculated for the second section of the survey which consisted of skills, activities, and time of the day. Then, the regression scores were calculated for the subsections of skills, activities and time of the day separately. For the research questions about the third section of the survey which consisted of items related to age, ethnicity, educational degree, gender, sexual orientation, and years of experience, inferential statistics (independent *t*-test and One-Way ANOVA) were conducted.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter, information about the research design was covered with reference to the research questions. The chapter presented information about the setting, participants of the study, instrument used, data collection procedures, and data analysis. The next chapter explains the data analysis procedures and displays the results of the data analysis.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

### Introduction

The present study aimed to explore the flow experiences of EFL instructors working at public and private universities in Turkey. Specifically, the researcher investigated flow experiences of the instructors in terms of absorption, work enjoyment and intrinsic work motivation. Also, the researcher examined if there are differences among language skills, activities and time of the day in affecting the degree of flow in EFL classes from the point of instructors. In this respect, the study addressed the following research questions:

1. To what extent do EFL instructors in Turkey experience flow?
2. How well skills, activities and time of the day as a whole predict work-related flow?
3. How well work-related flow is predicted separately by
  - a) teaching different skills
  - b) type of activities
  - c) time of the day
4. Are there any differences between different groups of EFL instructors in terms of flow experience in teaching EFL
  - a) age groups
  - b) ethnic groups
  - c) educational degree groups
  - d) gender groups
  - e) sexual orientation groups
  - f) years of experience groups

In this study, flow experiences of 283 EFL instructors were examined based on the research questions above. The data were gathered through an online adapted survey (Bakker, 2008) consisting of three sections. An Informed Consent Form (See Appendix A) that explains the research in a detailed way preceded the sections of the survey. The first of which include items related to absorption, work enjoyment and intrinsic work motivation, The second section included items related to skills, activities and time of the day (See the link: [https://ucf.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_9BPINVVAS9q9Gqp](https://ucf.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9BPINVVAS9q9Gqp)). Additionally, these sections of the survey were followed by different parts about age, ethnicity, last completed educational degree, sex, sexual orientation, and years of experience which comprise the third section of the survey (See Appendix B for three sections of the survey). In compliance with a quantitative non-experimental research design, the data collected from the survey were analyzed using SPSS v.24.

This chapter presents findings on the overall flow experiences of EFL instructors in Turkey. The analyses of the quantitative data obtained from the online survey will be discussed in detailed under the sub-sections below.

### **Analysis of the Survey**

The process of analyzing the quantitative data obtained from the online survey started with finding the Cronbach alpha levels for each section of the survey (Table 3). In order to start the main analyses, the researcher checked the reliability of the items in the survey; then, cleaned up the data. Table 3 shows the Cronbach alpha levels for all sections of the survey and this part of the chapter presents the process of item-reliability analysis of the survey in detailed.

Table 3

*Cronbach Alpha Levels for the Survey Used in the Main Study*

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
1. Work Related Flow	.88
1a. Absorption	.85
1b. Work enjoyment	.93
1c. Intrinsic work motivation	.83
2. Skills	.92
3. Type of activities	.21 (without removing QID3_8: I enjoy mechanical activities (e.g., fill in the blank) most.) → corrected item total correlation: -.21 .85 (after removing QID3_8)
4. Time of the day	.65 questionable (without removing QID3_11: I feel immersed in teaching English when I have a morning class (8 a.m-11 a.m).) → corrected item total correlation: -.07 .84 (after removing QID3_11)

Firstly, the item reliability analysis of the survey was made and the Cronbach alpha level for each part of the survey was found. They were .89, .83, .91, .80 and .92 respectively for the parts of work related flow, absorption work enjoyment, intrinsic work motivation and skills. Afterwards, one item from the type of activities part another item from the time of the day part had to be removed. It was found that Corrected item total correlation for item 8 in the second section (I enjoy mechanical activities -e.g., fill in the blank- most.) was -.06 and for item 11 in the second section (I feel immersed in teaching English when I have a morning class -8 a.m-11 a.m) was -.73. Also, the Cronbach alpha level for type of activities part including item 8 was .5>.238 and for the time of the day part including item 11 was .5>.485 which were unacceptable because of being less than .5. After the removal of item 8 and 11 the Cronbach alpha level for type of activities and time of the day parts became .75

and .72 respectively. The items of the survey were also checked for the possibility of reverse coding. However, all of the items were found out in the same category in terms of meaning.

After the reliability analyses of the items and cleaning up the data, the main analyses were conducted. The results are presented below per research question:

### **1. To what extent do EFL instructors in Turkey experience flow?**

To answer the first research question, descriptive statistics was conducted to find out the degree of flow in EFL classes in Turkey from the point of EFL instructors. Table 4 shows the means for the first section of the online survey. The means for the first section which consists of absorption, work enjoyment and intrinsic work motivation were 3.68, 4.09 and 3.17 respectively. Namely, work enjoyment had the highest score and intrinsic work motivation had the lowest score. In other words, there is a feeling of enjoyment, followed by feeling absorbed and being intrinsically motivated at work. As for the overall work-related flow which was predicted by absorption, work enjoyment and intrinsic work motivation, the mean score was 3.61 (See Appendix D).

As for the percentages of work-related flow consisting of absorption, work enjoyment and intrinsic work motivation, Table 4 shows that more than half of the instructors (68%) stated they feel absorbed when they are teaching English, and they think about nothing else (Item 1). In terms of work enjoyment, Item 5 “My work gives me a good feeling” was reported having the highest percentages, as 85% of the participants stated their work give them a good feeling. In addition, no one preferred to say “never” for the seventh item that is “I feel happy during my work”. This means that every instructor feels happy at work by any means. Also, more than half of the participant feel intrinsically motivated at their work. Item 11 which is “I teach

English because I enjoy it” is reported as 69.6% (total percentage of often and always). In addition, the data related to overall work-related flow and the data separately related to absorption, work enjoyment, and intrinsic work motivation are a little skewed and kurtotic, but they do not differ significantly from normality. It can be assumed that the data are normally distributed in terms of skewness and kurtosis (See Appendix D for skewness and kurtosis scores, Appendix E for histograms).

Table 4

*Percentages of Absorption, Work Enjoyment and Intrinsic Work Motivation*

	Items	N	R	Percentages			M	SD
				S	O	A		
Absorption	1. When I am teaching English, I think about nothing else.	1.4	9.5	20.8	51.2	17.0	3.73	0.90
	2. I get carried away by my work (teaching English).	.4	4.2	32.5	47.7	15.2	3.73	0.78
	3. When I am teaching English, I forget everything else around me.	2.5	12.0	29.7	41.7	14.1	3.53	0.96
	4. I am totally immersed in my work (teaching English).	.7	4.9	30.7	47.0	16.6	3.74	0.81
Work Enjoyment	5. My work gives me a good feeling.	.4	1.1	13.8	51.9	32.9	4.16	0.71
	6. I teach English with a lot of enjoyment.	.4	2.1	19.1	47.0	31.4	4.07	0.78
	7. I feel happy during my work.	.0	1.4	17.0	55.5	26.1	4.06	0.69
	8. I feel cheerful when I am teaching English.	.4	.7	17.7	51.6	29.7	4.10	0.72
	9. I would still teach English, even if I received less payment.	7.4	23.0	32.9	23.7	13.1	3.12	1.13

Table 4 (cont'd)

*Percentages of Absorption, Work Enjoyment and Intrinsic Work Motivation*

	Items	Percentages					<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
		N	R	S	O	A		
Intrinsic Work Motivation	10. I find that I also want to teach English in my free time.	21.9	38.5	24.4	11.3	3.9	2.37	1.06
	11. I teach English because I enjoy it.	2.1	6.0	22.3	41.7	27.9	3.87	0.95
	12. When I am teaching English, I am doing it for myself.	8.8	21.6	39.9	21.2	8.5	2.99	1.06
	13. I get my motivation from the work (teaching English) itself, and not from the reward for it.	2.8	10.2	36.0	35.7	15.2	3.50	0.96

(N: Never; R: Rarely; S: Sometimes; O: Often; A: Always)

## 2. How well skills, activities and the time of the day as a whole predict work-related flow?

Table 5

*Regression Results*

Predicted construct	Predicting Constructs	<i>F</i>	<i>df 1</i>	<i>df 2</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>
	teaching different skills, activities and the time of the day	34.009	3	282	.000	.26
Work Related Flow	teaching different skills	7.041	7	282	.000	.15
	type of activities	22.622	2	282	.000	.13
	time of the day	17.044	3	282	.000	.15

Multiple regression was run to analyze how well skills, activities and the time of the day predict work related flow, and the results indicated that work related flow can be predicted by skills, activities, and the time of the day ( $F(3, 282) = 34.00, p <$

.001; see Table 5). In addition, almost 27% (26.8%) of variance can be accounted for by skills, activities, and time of the day in predicting work related flow ( $R^2 = .26$ ). Additionally, the means for the second section of the survey which is composed of skills, activities and time of the day were 3.12, 4.20 and 2.71 respectively. In other words, activities had the highest score and time of the day had the lowest score (See Appendix D).

### **3. How well work-related flow is predicted by**

#### ***a) teaching different skills:***

The regression results showed that work related flow can be predicted by teaching different skills ( $F(7, 282) = 7.04, p < .001$ ; see Table 5). In addition, 15.2% of variance can be accounted for by teaching different skills in predicting work related flow ( $R^2 = .15$ ).

#### ***b) type of activities:***

The regression results for the type of activities indicated that work related flow can be predicted by the type of activities ( $F(2, 282) = 22.62, p < .001$ ; see Table 5). In addition, 13.9% of variance can be accounted for by the type of activities in predicting work related flow ( $R^2 = .13$ ).

#### ***c) time of the day:***

The regression results for the time of the day indicated that work related flow can be predicted by the time of the day ( $F(3, 282) = 17.04, p < .001$ ; see Table 5). In addition, almost 16% of variance can be accounted for by the time of the day in predicting work related flow ( $R^2 = .15$ ).

For the purpose of the analysis of the study results, Table 6 will be used to answer the sub-sections of the last research question:

Table 6

*ANOVA Results*

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	<i>df</i> 1	<i>df</i> 2	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>
Work Related Flow	Age	4	278	6.06	.000	.08
	Ethnicity	3	279	.45	.717	.00
	Educational Degree	2	280	4.95	.008	.03
	Gender	2	280	.10	.903	.00
	Sexual Orientation	3	279	.70	.547	.00
	Years of Experience	4	278	8.58	.000	.11

**4. Are there any differences between different groups of EFL instructors in terms of flow experience in teaching EFL?**

***a) age groups:***

Table 7

*Mean Scores for Different Age Groups*

Dependent Variable: Work Related Flow			
What is your age?	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
18-24 years old	3.53	0.40	5
25-34 years old	3.45	0.59	134
35-44 years old	3.70	0.57	100
45-54 years old	3.84	0.56	38
55-64 years old	4.21	0.48	6
Total	3.61	0.60	283

One-Way ANOVA test was conducted to find out if there were statistically significant differences between different age groups in terms of work-related flow experience that the instructors experience. First, Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances (homogeneity of variances) table was checked ( $p = .819$ ), and then, it was proceeded with Tests of between-Subjects Effects Table. According to the results, there was a statistically significant difference ( $F(4,278) = 6.06, p = .080$ ; see Table 6) among different age groups. Only 8% of the variance in score can be accounted for by age groups. To find out which age groups differed from each other, multiple comparisons table was checked (see Table 7). According to the Bonferroni results, the first age group (18-24 years old) did not differ from any other groups ( $M = 3.53, SD = .40$ ). The second group (25-34 years old;  $M = 3.45, SD = .59$ ) was different from the third (35-44 years old;  $M = 3.70, SD = .57$ ), the fourth group (45-54 years old;  $M = 3.84, SD = .56$ ), and the fifth group (55-64 years old;  $M = 4.21, SD = .48$ ). The researcher preferred to use Bonferroni as the post hoc test since it is simple and easy to do. Also, it can be applied to any set of multiple inferences because of its flexibility. Furthermore, Bonferroni lowers the alpha value so that the data do not appear incorrectly significant, which provides the researcher to be certain about the results (Simes, 1986).

***b) ethnic groups:***

Table 8

*Mean Scores for Different Ethnic Groups*

Dependent Variable: Work Related Flow			
Please specify your ethnicity. - Selected Choice	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
White	36.28	0.60	237
Asian / Pacific Islander	34.06	0.51	7

Table 8 (cont'd)

*Mean Scores for Different Ethnic Groups*

Dependent Variable: Work Related Flow			
Please specify your ethnicity. - Selected Choice	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Non-Hispanic White	35.07	0.20	5
Other (please write below)	35.63	0.65	34
Total	36.12	0.60	283

One-Way ANOVA test was conducted to find out if there were statistically significant differences between different ethnicity groups (See Table 8) in terms of work-related flow experience that the instructors experience. First, Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances (homogeneity of variances) table was checked ( $p = .272$ ), and then, it was proceeded with Tests of between-Subjects Effects Table. According to the results, there was not a statistically significant difference ( $F(3,279) = .45, p = .717$ ; see Table 6) among different ethnicity groups. Only .5% of the variance in score can be accounted for by ethnicity groups.

***c) educational degree groups:***

Table 9

*Mean Scores for Different Educational Degree Groups*

Dependent Variable: Work Related Flow			
What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)	3.54	0.55	119
Master's degree	3.60	0.62	139
Doctoral degree	3.96	0.61	25
Total	3.61	0.60	283

One-Way ANOVA test was conducted to find out if there were statistically significant differences between different groups with different educational degrees in terms of work-related flow experience. First, Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances (homogeneity of variances) table was checked ( $p = .542$ ), and then, it was proceeded with Tests of between-Subjects Effects Table. According to the results, there was a statistically significant difference ( $F(2, 280) = 4.95, p = .008$ ; see Table 6) among different education groups. In addition, 3.4% of the variance in score can be accounted for by different groups with bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees. To find out which educational degree groups differed from each other, multiple comparisons table in post hoc tests was checked (see Table 9). According to the Bonferroni results, participants with bachelor's degree ( $M = 3.54, SD = .55$ ) did not differ from the participants with master's degrees ( $M = 3.60, SD = .62$ ). However, participants with doctoral degrees ( $M = 3.96, SD = .61$ ) significantly differed from the participants with bachelor's and with master's degrees.

***d) gender groups:***

Table 10

*Mean Scores for Different Gender Groups*

Dependent Variable: Work Related Flow			
What is your sex?	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Male	36.42	0.60	62
Female	36.04	0.60	220
Other	35.38	.0	1
Total	36.13	0.60	283

One-Way ANOVA test was conducted to find out if there were statistically significant differences between different gender groups (See Table 10) in terms of

work-related flow experience that the instructors experience. First, Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances (homogeneity of variances) table was checked ( $p = .394$ ), and then, it was proceeded with Tests of between-Subjects Effects Table. According to the results, there was not a statistically significant difference ( $F(2,280) = .10, p = .903$ ; see Table 6) among different gender groups. Gender groups can account for only .1% of the variance in score.

***e) sexual orientation groups:***

Table 11

*Mean Scores for Different Sexual Orientation Groups*

Dependent Variable: Work Related Flow			
Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Heterosexual (straight)	3.62	0.61	237
Bisexual	3.25	0.45	4
Other	3.87	0.23	3
Prefer not to say	3.58	0.55	39
Total	3.61	0.60	283

One-Way ANOVA test was conducted to find out if there were statistically significant differences between different sexual orientation groups (See Table 11) in terms of work-related flow experience. First, Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances (homogeneity of variances) table was checked ( $p = .456$ ), and then, it was proceeded with Tests of between-Subjects Effects Table. According to the results, there was not a statistically significant difference ( $F(3,279) = .70, p = .547$ ; see Table 6) among different sexual orientation groups. Sexual orientation groups can account for only .8% of the variance in score.

*f) years of experience groups:*

Table 12

*Mean Scores for Different Years of Experience Groups*

Dependent Variable: Work Related Flow			
Please indicate your years of experience in teaching English.	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
1-5 years	3.45	0.47	35
6-10 years	3.46	0.61	101
11-15 years	3.48	0.60	52
16-20 years	3.89	0.53	55
21+ years	3.89	0.54	40
Total	3.61	0.60	283

One-Way ANOVA test was conducted to find out if there were statistically significant differences in terms of work-related flow experience between different groups with different years of experience in teaching EFL. First, Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances (homogeneity of variances) table was checked ( $p = .913$ ), and then, it was proceeded with Tests of between-Subjects Effects Table. According to the results, there was a statistically significant difference ( $F(4, 278) = 8.58, p = .000$ ; see Table 6) among the groups with different years of experience. In addition, 11% of the variance in score can be accounted for by the groups with different years of experience. To find out which groups differed from each other, multiple comparisons table was checked (see Table 12). According to the Bonferroni results, participants with one to five years of experience ( $M = 3.45, SD = .47$ ) did not differ from the participants with six to 10 years of experience ( $M = 3.46, SD = .61$ ) and the participants with 11 to 15 years of experience ( $M = 3.48, SD = .60$ ). However, the participants with six to 10 years of experience and the participants with

11 to 15 years of experience differed from the participants with 16 to 20 years of experience ( $M = 3.89, SD = .53$ ) and the participants with 21+ years of experience ( $M = 3.89, SD = .54$ ). Lastly, the participants with 16 to 20 years of experience differed from all but 21+ years of experience.

### **Conclusion**

The aim of this study was to explore flow experiences of EFL instructors in Turkey. The findings based on quantitative data gathered through an online survey were presented in this chapter. The next chapter is the conclusions chapter in which the findings will be discussed, and pedagogical implications, limitations of the study, and suggestions for further research will be provided.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, first, an overview of the research study is given. Then, the major findings regarding flow experiences of EFL instructors in Turkey are discussed in view of the relevant literature. Next, the implications for practice and the limitations of the study are deliberated. Finally, suggestions for further research are provided.

### **Overview of the Study**

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the flow experiences of EFL instructors in Turkey in terms of work-related flow which includes absorption, work enjoyment and intrinsic motivation, teaching skills, different activities, time of the day, age, ethnicity, educational degree, sex, sexual orientation, and years of experience. Therefore, the following research questions are addressed in the study:

1. To what extent do EFL instructors in Turkey experience flow?
2. How well skills, activities and time of the day as a whole predict work-related flow?
3. How well work-related flow is predicted separately by
  - a) teaching different skills
  - b) type of activities
  - c) time of the day
4. Are there any differences between different groups of EFL instructors in terms of flow experience in teaching EF

- a) age groups
- b) ethnic groups
- c) educational degree groups
- d) gender groups
- e) sexual orientation groups
- f) years of experience groups

Data were collected via an online survey consisting of three parts. The first part of the survey that included three subsections of absorption, work enjoyment, and intrinsic work motivation was adapted from Bakker (2008). The second part was designed to collect data about the relationship between flow and teaching different skills, activities and time of the day. The third part of the survey consisted of questions related to age, ethnicity, educational degree, sex, sexual orientation, and years of experience. The quantitative data gathered through the survey were analyzed using SPSS v.24, and the data from each section of the survey, namely; absorption, work enjoyment, intrinsic work motivation, skills, activities, time of the day, age, ethnicity, educational degree level, gender, sexual orientation, and years of experience were classified accordingly.

### **Discussion of Major Findings**

Depending upon the overall results of the descriptive and inferential statistics, considerable assumptions could be made with regard to the flow experiences of EFL instructors in Turkey.

#### **Work-related flow of EFL instructors**

The first research question was to explore the degree to which EFL instructors experience flow in their classes. According to the results of the analyzed

data, flow exists in EFL classes and instructors experience flow. Overall, results of the first section of the survey showed that EFL instructors in Turkey feel absorbed in their work, enjoy their work and have intrinsic work motivation with differing frequencies. The findings of this study align with the findings of the study by Tardy and Snyder (2004) which explored qualitatively whether EFL instructors had flow experiences in their professional lives in the context of Turkey. Tardy and Snyder (2004) conducted this study with 10 teachers of English at a private university in Turkey and found out that all the teachers were experiencing flow. Also, they reported that interest is one of the key points in flow experiences of EFL instructors in Turkey. The findings related to the first research question of the present study also align with the previous research findings regarding flow in foreign language (FL) classroom (Egbert, 2003). Egbert (2003) conducted this study with 13 students of secondary school Spanish language learners and their teacher, and investigated whether participants had experiences of flow via class observations, questionnaires, and interviews. Egbert (2003) found that flow does exist in foreign language classes. However, this research study was done from the perspective of students, not instructors. It differs from the present study in terms of focusing on the relationship between flow experiences and language learning, not language teaching. Still, by taking what Csikszentmihalyi (1996) suggested into consideration, it is important to note that *positive* or *peak* moments, namely flow, in a classroom are highly motivating in both teaching and learning practice. The motivation and flow of students and instructors are interrelated.

### **Skills, activities and time of the day**

Regarding the time of the day, the findings of this study are consistent with the study by Tardy and Snyder (2004). Tardy and Snyder (2004) conducted this

study with 10 teachers of first-year English at a private university in Turkey. In this exploratory interview study, all teachers reported experiencing flow, and also the researchers found some key categories related to occurrence of flow such as interest, involvement, authentic communication, spontaneity, teacher-student dialogue and moments of learning. In terms of the time of the day, teachers reported that it is difficult to achieve flow in the morning and afternoon classes. According to the results of the present study, flow occurs at noon (11 a.m-2 p.m) classes most and at evening classes (5 p.m-8 p.m) least. Therefore, the results of the current study suggest that it is more difficult to achieve flow states in the morning and afternoon.

Considering the data, an important finding of the present study is that type of activities influences flow. Both communicative and interactive activities are helpful for experiencing flow, but still interactive activities such as games still lead to more flow. Therefore, in terms of the type of activities, the findings of this study align with the conclusions from Franciosi's study (2011). In the article, Franciosi (2011) compares Digital Game-Based Learning (DGBL) with Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in terms of flow theory. In this comparison, it is concluded that games are intrinsically more motivating, which directly promotes flow experiences. Also, game design is important to create flow. For instance, there should be concrete and explicit goals in the game. Outcomes should be quantifiable and objective. Moreover, in order to support flow, it is crucial to have a form of feedback in the game.

Interactive flow is also highlighted in the study by Walker (2010). Walker (2010) used one 7-point Likert-type survey to test whether social flow is more enjoyable than solitary flow. Ninety-five college students participated in the study and they were asked to write two descriptions of their recent flow experiences. One

of the flow experiences was alone, and the second was with others. Then, the participants rated their experiences on the scale. The results showed that 44.2% of the flow examples were experienced interactively with others. Some of the stated social flow experiences are playing a soccer on a great team, exchanging funny stories and laughing with friends, and singing in a choir. These results related to social flow comply with the results of the current study. EFL instructors experience more flow in interactive activities in EFL classes. In Walker's study (2010), only 16.3% of the flow experiences were co-active as in watching TV with buddies, listening to music with friends, just sitting at the mall with friends watching people, and competing at a swimming meet. In that sense, if there is no interaction in any kind of activity, the possibility of having flow decreases.

The findings of the current study also comply with the findings of the study by Csikszentmihalyi and Hunter (2003). In both studies, the participants reported that they did not have flow experiences in the first part of the day. However, two studies differ from each other regarding the flow time of the day. While participants of the present study had the most flow experiences at noon (11 a.m-2 p.m), in Csikszentmihalyi and Hunter's study (2003), the participants had flow experiences most in the afternoon.

### **Age, ethnic group, gender, and sexual orientation**

Regarding gender and ethnicity, the results of the current study is consistent with the study by Busch, Hofer, Chasiotis and Campos (2013). In this study, they worked with participants from Cameroon, Costa Rica, and Germany and found out that gender did not relate to the achievement flow motive. Also, the hypothesis that the achievement flow motive should be predictive of a long-term goal pursuit such as educational attainment is tested cross-culturally. The findings of this study showed

the universality of flow and ethnicity did not have any effect on flow experiences. Furthermore, Shin (2006) investigated individual differences such as gender with regard to the flow theory. Shin (2006) conducted the study with 525 undergraduate students that are engaged in online learning. The data were collected through a virtual-course flow (VEM) measure developed by the researcher. The findings of this study related to the gender variable are in accordance with the findings of the current study. Shin (2006) found out that there is not significant correlation between gender variable and flow. Gender does not have any effect on flow and overall flow experience. Another research study that investigated whether flow can be predicted by gender was conducted by Bressler and Bodzin (2013). They assessed 68 middle school students' flow experiences during a mobile augmented reality science game by including surveys, observations and group interviews. They found that there is not a significant relationship between flow and gender.

In terms of ethnic group, Moneta (2004) reviews three articles related to flow. The first one is by Asakawa employing the ESM to test the flow model on Japanese college students, the second article is by Bassi and Delle Fave employing the ESM to address the historical and societal changes in Italian adolescents optimal daily experiences, and the last article is by Moneta employing the ESM to test the flow model on Hong Kong Chinese college students. All found out that the flow experience appeared to be universal.

In terms of age, the findings of the current study differ from the previous research on the relationship between personality traits and flow experience (Heller, Bullerjahn & Georgi, 2015). They conducted a study with 120 amateur vocal students and investigated their flow experiences via the Practice Flow Inventory. The results of the study revealed that older singers have less flow experiences than

younger singers. However, in the current study, EFL instructors who are 55-64 years old are the group experiencing flow most. It is surprising that the younger instructors who are 25-24 years old are the group experiencing flow at the minimum level among other age groups.

### **Educational degree and years of experience**

Regarding educational degree, this study is in accord with Busch et.al (2013). In this study, it is found out that educational level has an effect on flow and the achievement of flow is closely related to academic success and long-term academic success is predicted by the achievement of flow motive. In the current study, also, the higher the educational degree is, the more likely one experience flow. Educational level is also explored in the field of self-regulation. Hashempour, Ghonsooly, and Ghanizadeh (2015) investigated if there were significant differences between educational level and self-regulation via one questionnaire. The participants of the study were 230 M.A and B.A English translation students in Iran and they were asked to complete the questionnaire of Self-regulation Trait (SRT). The findings showed that there were no significant differences between educational level and self-regulation. However, this finding is not consistent with the present study. In the present study, educational degree affected the level of flow experiences of the participants. Moreover, further educational degrees such as M.A and PhD led to more flow experiences.

### **Implications for Practice**

The results of the present study are consistent with the suggestions of flow theory concerning the effect of absorption, work enjoyment and intrinsic work motivation on work-related flow. In that sense, this study provides significant pedagogical implications for practice. First, the participants stated that the type of

skills they are teaching affect their flow in their classes. Teaching vocabulary ensures EFL instructors to have flow experiences most. Therefore, instructors could combine it with teaching other skills in a class. Integrating vocabulary with other skills, specifically grammar, pronunciation and reading promoting flow the least could be a good idea so that the level of flow in a class could be enhanced.

Secondly, instructors revealed that interactive activities (e.g. audio-visual games, songs) promotes flow more than communicative activities. Therefore, instructors should prefer more interactive activities in their lesson plans. Also, it would be helpful to combine those kinds of activities with communicative and mechanical ones.

Third, instructors stated that they feel flow in their noon classes (11 a.m. - 2 p.m.) more than the other times of the day such as afternoon or evening. Therefore, the schedules could be prepared by the administration of the institutions in consideration of this. Another implication of the study is that age has an effect on flow experiences of EFL instructors in Turkey. Administration staff should contemplate the reasons why the age group of 25-34 has flow at the minimum level among other age groups of instructors and find ways to enhance flow in their classes. It could be useful to have interviews with instructors who are 55-64, the group who have flow experiences most in their classes and to ask questions concerning their flow experiences to explore the factors of flow more. In that way, a new course of action could be set for the younger instructors, especially in employing certain age groups.

Similarly, it was found in the study that the instructors who have 1-5 years of experience were the group who have the least flow experiences and the instructors who have 21+ years of experience had the most flow experiences in EFL classes. In

order to enhance the flow of the younger and less experienced instructors, the administration should prepare orientation programs or workshops, and should motivate them since teacher motivation is closely related to flow.

Lastly, it is revealed in the study that the higher the educational level is, the more likely it is that participants would perceive flow in their classes. Hence, further education, specifically M.A. and Ph.D. degrees should be encouraged and supported by the administration.

### **Limitations**

The study has several limitations in exploring the flow experiences of EFL instructors in Turkey. One of these limitations is that the data of the study were collected through only an online survey, which means there is only quantitative data. They are not enough to investigate the flow experiences of the instructors in depth. Analyzing flow experiences of EFL instructors in Turkey by synthesis of qualitative and quantitative data would provide better explanations for their flow experiences in EFL classes. Adding semi-structured interviews would also be helpful to have a better understanding of flow experiences.

Another limitation of the study is that the data were collected from only instructors. Since there is no data collected from learners about their flow experiences, the study is limited regarding the content. It would be better to include flow experiences of EFL learners in Turkey and compare their experiences with the instructors' experiences. Additionally, having class observations and semi-structured interviews with students would provide more reliable results and the results would not be one-sided.

One other limitation results from the number of participants. The study was conducted with 283 instructors for a 6-week period. It would be better to have more

participants in order to generalize the findings. Also, it should be noted that the results could differ across different settings and time.

### **Implications for Further Research**

Drawing on the findings and limitations of the present study, several suggestions can be made for further research. First, this study can be replicated in other settings, namely other countries to explore flow experiences of EFL instructors in those countries. The current study could also be repeated in Turkey in the future to see if there is any change in flow experiences of EFL instructors in Turkey based on time.

In addition, the study could be conducted with EFL learners to investigate flow experiences from the point of learners in Turkey. Also, further research can focus on the comparison of flow experiences of both learners and instructors.

Future research could also be directed toward a qualitative design, a longitudinal investigation of both learners' and instructors' flow experiences including interviews, semi-structured interviews, self-reflections, and class observations. Furthermore, further research can focus on the relationship between flow and teaching and learning specific skills, doing specific tasks and activities.

### **Conclusion**

This quantitative descriptive study investigated the flow experiences of EFL instructors in Turkey. The purposes of the study were: to explore EFL instructors' overall flow experiences in EFL classes in Turkey in terms of absorption, work enjoyment, intrinsic work motivation, skills, activities and time of the day. The study also examined the differences between different age, ethnicity, educational level, gender, sexual orientation, years of experience groups with regard to flow experiences of EFL instructors in Turkey. The findings indicated that absorption,

work enjoyment, intrinsic work motivation, skills, activities, time of the day, age, educational degree and years of experience predict flow. However, gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation do not affect the overall flow level of EFL instructors in Turkey.

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## Appendix A

### Informed Consent Form

#### Flow Experiences of Turkish EFL Instructors

#### EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH

**Principal Investigator:** Omur Belce, B.A.

**Faculty Supervisor:** Hilal Peker, Ph.D.

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Although your participation is voluntary, your responses, if you do take part, are extremely important to the outcomes of the study.

- The purpose of this study is to investigate your flow experiences in your EFL classes.
- You will be asked to take an online, anonymous survey that includes 27 items on a 5-point Likert Scale. There are also a few demographic questions that we would like you to answer about your gender, age, and ethnicity as well as your educational background. Faculty records are not going to be used. Names will be used. You will rate your level of agreement with each statement. The questions you will be asked in this survey are simply about your opinions, and do not measure anything else.
- Participation in this study will require approximately 10 minutes of your time.
- The results of this study may be published as a thesis, an article, a report, or the results may be presented as a presentation at national and/or international conferences.

You must be **an English** instructor/teacher to take part in this research study.

**Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem:** If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, please contact Omur Belce (obelce@anadolu.edu.tr) or Hilal Peker ([hilalpeker@utexas.edu](mailto:hilalpeker@utexas.edu)).

Clicking on the arrow below means agreeing to participate in this study. If you agree to participate in this study, please click on the arrow. If you do not want to participate in this study, you may quit any time by leaving the webpage.

Thank you for your participation.

## Appendix B

### Survey Form

#### PART – 1

Please read the statement below and click on only one option for each statement.					
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1 - When I am teaching English, I think about nothing else.					
2 - I get carried away by my work (teaching English).					
3 - When I am teaching English, I forget everything else around me.					
4 - I am totally immersed in my work (teaching English).					
5 - My work gives me a good feeling.					
6 - I teach English with a lot of enjoyment.					
7 - I feel happy during my work.					
8 - I feel cheerful when I am teaching English.					
9 - I would still teach English, even if I received less pay.					
10 - I find that I also want to teach English in my free time.					
11 - I teach English because I enjoy it.					
12 - When I am teaching English, I am doing it for myself.					
13 - I get my motivation from the work (teaching English) itself, and not from the reward for it.					

## PART – 2

Please read the statement below and click on only one option for each statement.					
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1 - I am totally immersed in teaching grammar and think about nothing else.					
2 - I am totally immersed in teaching pronunciation and think about nothing else.					
3 - I am totally immersed in teaching reading and think about nothing else.					
4 - I am totally immersed in teaching writing and think about nothing else.					
5 - I am totally immersed in teaching listening and think about nothing else.					
6 - I am totally immersed in teaching speaking and think about nothing else.					
7 - I am totally immersed in teaching vocabulary and think about nothing else.					
8 - I enjoy mechanical activities (e.g., fill in the blank) most.					
9 - I enjoy communicative activities (e.g., role play) most.					
10 - I enjoy interactive activities (e.g., audio visual games, songs) most.					
11 - I feel immersed in teaching English when I have a morning class (8 a.m-11 a.m).					
12 - I feel immersed in teaching English when I have a noon class (11 a.m-2 p.m).					
13 - I feel immersed in teaching English when I have an afternoon class (2 p.m-5 p.m).					
14 - I feel immersed in teaching English when I have an evening class (5 p.m-8 p.m).					

## PART – 3: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please choose the appropriate response for each item.			
1 - What is your age?			
18-24 years old		55-64 years old	
25-34 years old		65-74 years old	
35-44 years old		75 years or older	
45-54 years old			
2 - Please specify your ethnicity.			

White	
Hispanic or Latino	
Black or African American	
Native American or American Indian	
Asian / Pacific Islander	
Non-Hispanic White	
Other (please write)	
3 - What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?	
Less than high school degree	
High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED)	
Some college but no degree	
Associate degree in college (2-year)	
Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)	
Master's degree	
Doctoral degree	
Professional degree (JD, MD)	
4 - What is your sex?	
Male	
Female	
Other	
5 - Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?	
Bisexual	Other
Homosexual (gay)	Prefer not to say
Heterosexual (straight)	
6 - Please indicate your years of experience in teaching English.	
1-5	16-20
6-10	21+
11-15	

## Appendix C

### Item Reliability Analysis

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Please read the statement below and click on only one option for each statement. - When I am teaching English, I think about nothing else.	43.24	54.460	.455	.896
Please read the statement below and click on only one option for each statement. - I get carried away by my work (teaching English).	43.24	54.486	.542	.892
Please read the statement below and click on only one option for each statement. - When I am teaching English, I forget everything else around me.	43.44	52.949	.534	.893
Please read the statement below and click on only one option for each statement. - I am totally immersed in my work (teaching English).	43.23	53.305	.616	.889
Please read the statement below and click on only one option for each statement. - My work gives me a good feeling.	42.81	53.751	.670	.887
Please read the statement below and click on only one option for each statement. - I teach English with a lot of enjoyment.	42.90	52.213	.748	.883
Please read the statement below and click on only one option for each statement. - I feel happy during my work.	42.90	53.356	.736	.885
Please read the statement below and click on only one option for each statement. - I feel cheerful when I am teaching English.	42.87	53.402	.699	.886
Please read the statement below and click on only one option for each statement. - I would still teach English, even if I received less pay.	43.85	49.987	.630	.889
Please read the statement below and click on only one option for each statement. - I find that I also want to teach English in my free time.	44.60	51.638	.560	.892
Please read the statement below and click on only one option for each statement. - I teach English because I enjoy it.	43.10	50.760	.706	.884
Please read the statement below	43.98	53.978	.400	.900

and click on only one option for each statement. - When I am teaching English, I am doing it for myself.				
Please read the statement below and click on only one option for each statement. - I get my motivation from the work (teaching English) itself, and not from the reward for it.	43.47	50.959	.685	.885
Please consider English classes you are teaching while reading the statements below. - I am totally immersed in teaching grammar and think about nothing else.	18.93	30.704	.662	.924
Please consider English classes you are teaching while reading the statements below. - I am totally immersed in teaching pronunciation and think about nothing else.	19.08	29.787	.723	.918
Please consider English classes you are teaching while reading the statements below. - I am totally immersed in teaching reading and think about nothing else.	18.81	29.318	.825	.908
Please consider English classes you are teaching while reading the statements below. - I am totally immersed in teaching writing and think about nothing else.	18.79	29.444	.766	.914

**Appendix D**  
**Work-Related Flow Table**

		WRF	S	A	T	AB	WE	IWM
N	Valid	283	283	283	283	283	283	283
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		36.129	31.262	42.032	27.138	36.820	40.972	31.703
Std. Error of Mean		.03581	.05361	.04197	.05436	.04231	.03885	.04629
Median		36.154	31.429	40.000	26.667	37.500	40.000	32.000
Std. Deviation		.60244	.90179	.70602	.91445	.71180	.65356	.77878
Variance		.363	.813	.498	.836	.507	.427	.606
Skewness		-.089	-.458	-.953	.348	-.163	-.453	.128
Std. Error of Skewness		.145	.145	.145	.145	.145	.145	.145
Kurtosis		.281	.194	1.303	-.265	-.138	.057	.121
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.289	.289	.289	.289	.289	.289	.289
Range		3.23	4.00	3.50	4.00	3.50	3.00	4.00
Minimum		1.77	1.00	1.50	1.00	1.50	2.00	1.00
Maximum		5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Percentiles	25	32.308	27.143	40.000	20.000	32.500	37.500	26.000
	50	36.154	31.429	40.000	26.667	37.500	40.000	32.000
	75	40.000	37.143	50.000	33.333	40.000	47.500	36.000

(WRF: Work Related Flow; S: Skills; A: Activities; T: Times of the Day; AB: Absorption; WE: Work Enjoyment; IWM: Intrinsic Work Motivation)

## Appendix E

### Histograms

