

Ministry of National Education reward system: A holistic review based on educators' views

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ABSTRACT

Rewarding plays a crucial role in motivating employees, increasing productivity, and ensuring success in educational organizations. The Ministry of National Education's (MoNE) reward system consists of three stages: achievement certificates, superior achievement certificates, and rewards (salary awards). This study aims to reveal the views of employees of MoNE's provincial organizations, including teachers, school principals, branch managers, and district national education directors, on the current reward system. The study was designed as qualitative research with a basic qualitative research pattern. The study group consisted of 20 participants, including six teachers, six school principals, five branch managers, and three district national education directors, all working in Ordu province during the 2024–2025 academic year. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews using an interview form prepared by the researchers. The participants were selected based on the maximum variation sampling method, a purposive sampling technique, and the data were analysed through content analysis. The results indicated that while the MONE reward system positively affects the motivation of employees, there were differences in views between administrators and teachers regarding the fairness of evaluations. It was suggested that additional points should be awarded in certain cases, provided the certificates were earned justly. The current reward system was found to be deemed appropriate by administrators but not by teachers. Employees believed that achievement certificates were not granted based on objective criteria, and it would be more appropriate to increase the influence of school or district management in issuing these certificates. Furthermore, it was noted that there were different practices regarding achievement certificates and rewards across various provinces and districts, and standardization was needed in this regard. In conclusion, recommendations were made to align the reward system with the goals and personnel of the Ministry of National Education, ensuring that the process is carried out in an objective, fair, and transparent manner.

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Introduction

The most important element of social organizations is seen as human resources. One of the ways for organizations to achieve high efficiency from their personnel for many years is the reward system. At the same time, awards are one of the ways to thank the personnel with higher performance (Barutçugil, 2004). According to the Ministry of National Education Award Directive, various criteria must be fulfilled to receive a certificate of achievement, a certificate of excellence and an award (salary award). According to the relevant directive, teachers are in the group "receiving or waiting to receive an award", while school principals, branch directors and District Directors of National Education with the title of "administrator" are

in the group that directly affects the awarding process because they have the authority to score in the evaluation process (MONE, 2023).

According to the Directive on Awarding Achievement, Outstanding Achievement Certificates and Awards to MONE Personnel, among those who make extraordinary efforts and are more successful in their duties compared to their peers, employees who save significant public resources, contribute to the prevention or reduction of public damage, increase public benefits and revenues more than expected, or significantly increase the effectiveness and quality of the services provided, in line with concrete events and data. A Certificate of Achievement can be given because of inspections or determinations of disciplinary supervisors and competent authorities. Personnel who are entitled to receive a Certificate of Achievement three times are awarded with a Certificate of Outstanding Achievement, while the personnel who are ranked within the quota determined as a result of the evaluation made at the end of each financial year among the holders of the Certificate of Excellence are entitled to receive a salary award (MONE, 2023).

While a few months may be sufficient time for some personnel to receive an award (salary award), which is the ultimate goal starting from obtaining a certificate of achievement in the first stage of the award system implemented in Turkey, there may be personnel who cannot receive a salary award despite the passage of many years or even leave the system without receiving an award. In this process, it can be expected that a wide variety of positive or negative ideas will be formed in the minds of the personnel, from the adequacy of the evaluation criteria to whether the supervisors who make the evaluation act fairly. People's success and degree of satisfaction in their jobs are also related to the equality or inequality they perceive about the work environment (Luthans, 1997, Akt. Önderoğlu, 2010). In his study, Keskin (2010) concluded that although rewarding provides motivation for administrators and teachers, the MONE reward system does not provide a transparent and fair evaluation, and senior managers do not act impartially and fairly.

When the studies on the reward system in Turkey were examined, it was understood that these studies were limited to teachers and school administrators (Balçı, 1989; Çelikezen, 2015; Flower, 2002; Sabancı, 1999; Sarpkaya, 2001; Senufuk, 2004; Sharp, 2010; Tonbul, 2002; Yılmaz, 2019) it was determined that other stakeholders affecting the process were not included in any research. Among the people with these titles, District Directors of National Education influence the process with two separate scoring, both in the role of disciplinary supervisor and in the role of District Evaluation Commission Chairman. Persons with the title of Branch Manager also participate in the scoring with their roles as members of the Provincial/District Evaluation Commission. Therefore, branch directors and district directors of national education directly affect the award process, and at the same time, they are affected by the process in terms of their own evaluation by higher authorities (MONE, 2023). Revealing the perspectives of the evaluators (school principals, branch managers, national education directors) and the evaluated individuals (teachers, school principals, branch managers, national education directors) who affect the process related to the subject can provide a more holistic evaluation of the reward system. In this study, the opinions of both the evaluated individuals and the people who took an active role in the evaluation process were included simultaneously. Thus, it is not limited to one-way perspectives, but it is aimed to analyse the process in a multidimensional and healthier way. The data obtained by taking into account the opinions of all stakeholders who directly or indirectly affect the evaluation process are presented comparatively. This approach has contributed to a more objective presentation of the reflections of the practices in the field. In addition, the fact that the opinions of almost all of the personnel working within the Ministry of National Education have been reached has increased the representation and reliability of the study. The results obtained in this way reflect the general tendencies of the MoNE personnel, who represent not only a specific group but also a wide audience (MONE, 2025). In the light of this information, in this study, it is aimed to reveal the opinions of teachers, school principals, branch directors and district national education directors about the current award system. It is thought that this study, which will be carried out within the framework of the stated purpose, will contribute to the literature by filling the existing gap by including other stakeholders who directly affect the process.

Method

Research design

This study, which aims to reveal the opinions of provincial organization employees (teachers, school principals, branch managers, and district national education directors) on the MONE reward system, was designed as qualitative research. Qualitative research approaches natural phenomena with a realistic perspective and uses methods such as observation, interviews, and document analysis to reveal the current situation (Seale, 1999). The qualitative research method focuses on the feelings, experiences, and perceptions of participants regarding a central phenomenon (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). The study was conducted in accordance with the basic qualitative research design, which is a pattern of qualitative research

methods. According to Merriam (2013), researchers conducting basic qualitative research are concerned with how individuals interpret their experiences and the meanings they assign to those experiences. The overall aim is to understand how people make sense of their lives and experiences. In basic qualitative research, the primary goal is to uncover and interpret these meanings (Merriam, 2013).

Study group

The study group consisted of teachers, school principals, branch managers, and district national education directors working in Ordu province during the 2024–2025 academic year. Participants were selected through maximum variation sampling, a purposive sampling technique. They were interviewed face-to-face using semi-structured interview forms to express their views on the MONE reward system. The demographic characteristics of the participants are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic information of participants

| Code | Age | Gender | Appellation | Branch | Institution | Seniority Year |
|------|-----|--------|------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| S1 | 32 | Woman | Teacher | Technology Design | Kindergarten | 11 |
| S2 | 33 | Woman | Teacher | English | High school | 12 |
| S3 | 39 | Male | Teacher | Classroom Teacher | Primary school | 15 |
| S4 | 45 | Woman | Teacher | Classroom Teacher | Primary school | 23 |
| S5 | 47 | Male | Teacher | Classroom Teacher | Primary school | 24 |
| S6 | 49 | Male | Teacher | Social Science | Secondary school | 27 |
| OM1 | 41 | Male | School Principal | Social Science | Secondary school | 18 |
| OM2 | 37 | Male | School Principal | Classroom Teacher | Primary school | 14 |
| OM3 | 48 | Male | School Principal | Physical Education Teacher | Secondary school | 26 |
| OM4 | 51 | Male | School Principal | Physical Education Teacher | High school | 30 |
| OM5 | 47 | Male | School Principal | Classroom Teacher | Primary school | 21 |
| OM6 | 50 | Male | School Principal | Turkish | Secondary school | 25 |
| SM1 | 47 | Male | Branch Manager | Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge | District MEM | 22 |
| SM2 | 46 | Male | Branch Manager | Mathematics | District MEM | 23 |
| SM3 | 55 | Male | Branch Manager | Classroom Teacher | District MEM | 29 |
| SM4 | 44 | Male | Branch Manager | Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge | District MEM | 22 |
| SM5 | 48 | Male | Branch Manager | Classroom Teacher | District MEM | 26 |
| IM1 | 54 | Male | District Manager | Classroom Teacher | District MEM | 30 |
| IM2 | 46 | Male | District Manager | Turkish | District MEM | 24 |
| IM3 | 57 | Male | District Manager | Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge | District MEM | 34 |

(s1..s6, teachers; om1..om6 includes school principals; sm1... sm5, branch managers; im1..im3 refers to district directors of national education)

The study group consists of six teachers and six school principals working at the preschool, primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary levels in the province of Ordu, as well as five branch managers and three district directors of national education working in district directorates of national education. The aim of maximum variation sampling is to form a relatively small sample and to reflect, to the highest possible degree, the diversity of individuals who may have a stake in the problem being studied (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013).

Data collection

Before starting the collection of data, necessary permissions were obtained from the Ordu University Educational Research Ethics Committee to examine the ethical suitability of the research, and then to carry out the study in the schools and institutions determined by the Provincial Directorate of National Education of the province where the study will be conducted. After the permission documents were obtained, the principals of the determined schools and institutions were visited and informed about the study, and all interviews of the study were carried out face-to-face by the researchers in the fall semester of the 2024–2025 academic year. The data used in the study were collected through face-to-face interviews using a semi-structured interview form. Expert opinions were obtained from seven specialists regarding the interview form, and the forms were finalized after necessary revisions based on their feedback. The interviews lasted between 18 and 41 minutes each, resulting in a total audio recording pool of 9 hours and 45 minutes. After transcription, a 98-page interview transcript was obtained.

Analysis of data

In this study, as suggested by Patton (2014) in the data analysis process, a deductive approach was adopted as an analytical structure suitable for the research questions and conceptual framework was used in the determination of the themes. However, an inductive method was also applied during the coding phase, as codes were generated directly from the data instead of a pre-prepared code guide. There are many different methods related to the data analysis process in the literature. However, in this study, to carry out the process in a more understandable and simple way, Straus and Corbin (1990, akt. Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013) preferred the content analysis method recommended for qualitative research.

Reliability and validity

In this study, rich and intensive descriptive technique was used to ensure transferability (reliability and validity). Rich description refers to the researcher's detailed description of a situation or theme. Detailed descriptions help the reader make decisions about the transferability of the findings (Creswell, 2013). In line with this strategy, a sufficient number of direct citations were included to support the findings and the data obtained were presented transparently to increase transferability.

Results

The answers obtained as a result of various questions asked to the participants about the MoNE reward system were analyzed and presented under this heading. When the findings were examined in terms of the titles of the participants (teacher, school principal, branch manager, district director of national education) and their roles in the reward system (evaluator/evaluated), it was seen that the opinions differed on some issues in the groups and there were common opinions on some issues. Data obtained are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Themes, categories and subcategories of research findings

| Themes | Categories | Subcategories |
|---------------|----------------------------|--|
| 1-Motivation | | |
| 2-Justice | Reviews | Fair It's Not Fair |
| | Advantage | |
| | Purpose | Fit for Purpose Not Fit for Purpose |
| | Process Effects | |
| 3-Legislation | Certificate of Achievement | Issuing Authority Subjectivity in the Process |
| | Prize | Issuance Process Quota, Appreciation and Quantity |
| | Types of Awards | Sufficient Additions Should Be Made |
| | Expectations | |
| | | |

MoNE reward system and motivation

Most of the participants see rewarding as an external incentive that increases the motivation of employees, and they state that the reward causes individuals to feel more valuable and increase their efforts towards their goals. The sample opinions of the participants on the theme of "Motivation" are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Participant opinions on motivation theme

| Categories | Sample Testimonials |
|------------|---|
| Motivation | The reward has a positive effect on motivation. (S1) (S2) (S5) (S6) (Om1) (Om2) (Om3) (Om4) (Om5) (Om6) (Sm2) (Sm3) (Sm4) (IM1) (IM2) |
| | The reward partially affects motivation in a positive way. (S4) (Sm1) (Sm5) (IM3) |
| | It's human nature to be appreciated. (S1) (S3) (S4) (S5) (S6) (Om1) (Om2) (Om3) (Om4) (Om6) (Sm1) (Sm2) (Sm3) (IM1) (IM2) |
| | I think the first condition to motivate is reward. (S6) (Om3) (Sm2) (Sm4) |
| | Ingenuity is subject to flattery (Om2) (Om3) (Sm2) (Sm4) (Im1) (Im2) |
| | Reward can sometimes have a negative effect on motivation. (Sm1) (Sm3) (Sm5) (IM3) |
| | The reward provides motivation to a certain extent. (S3) (Sm1) (Sm5) |

When Table 3 is examined, it is evident that the majority of the participants stated that the reward had a positive impact on motivation. Teacher Ö4, one of the participants, said, "I think the award provides a

positive motivation. Okay, we do our job, we make an effort, but when human labor is seen, it works with even more enthusiasm", teacher Ö1 said, "This document is really important in terms of motivation. I think that appreciating and encouraging what has been done will pave the way for other achievements." Other sample participant expressions who think that the award has a positive impact on motivation include the following;

Let me put it this way. I have been working for about 25 years of experience in my professional life. The award motivates many of our friends. That is, honoring the work they do. As in every profession, people like their work to be visible, supported by someone or their supervisors. So the award is really supportive overall. Incentives motivate employees (S5).

Being appreciated and rewarded is a human need at any age. No matter what age one is, one expects to be appreciated and rewarded. That's why I think it has a positive impact on motivation, especially for employees. Likewise for National Education employees as well as other employees. It applies to all employees in the public sector and to all employees in the private sector (Om1).

In addition to those who think that the award has a positive impact on motivation; Sample participant statements stating that the reward as a source of motivation can take the employees to a certain point, that rewarding becomes routine and loses its function after a certain point, and that while the few people who are rewarded are motivated, especially in unfair distributions, the sense of justice of the majority who are not rewarded is damaged and the motivation of the employee is negatively affected include the following;

In order for the reward to provide motivation, it should not turn into a routine, it should be treated very carefully while rewarding, and it should be well distinguished between those who deserve it and those who do not. Otherwise, on the one hand, a small number of people who are given awards will be motivated, and on the other hand, the sense of justice of the majority who are not rewarded will be damaged, which will cause low motivation (Şm5).

In general, there is a perception about injustice. Once those awards are given, it turns into something negative. It turns into anti-motivation when it should be motivation. There seems to be such a problem. Everyone thinks they should get an award. However, due to the system, the fact that the award is given to someone reduces the motivation of the others (Im3).

MoNE reward system and justice

In this section, it was tried to reveal how the participants perceived the concept of "justice", which is thought to deeply affect the motivation and job satisfaction levels of the participants, and what they thought about the reward process. The theme of justice is discussed in the categories of "evaluations" and "advantages" and their subcategories.

Reviews

The vast majority of the managers in the research group who have evaluated and/or scored at least once, either as a disciplinary supervisor or as a member of the commission, describe themselves as fair in their evaluations or scoring. Conversely, all of the teachers in the group of "evaluated" for the certificate of achievement and "scored" for the award state that the disciplinary supervisors and commission members did not act fairly. Therefore, it can be stated that there is a differentiation between "evaluators" and "evaluated" from participant groups. In the category of evaluations, participant opinions were discussed in the sub-categories of "fair" and "not fair". Responses from respondents regarding the "evaluations" category, subcategories and sample opinions are given in Table 4.

Table 4. Participant opinions on the evaluations category

| Categories | Sample Testimonials |
|---------------|--|
| Fair | I think I'm being fair. (Om2) (Om3) (Om5) (Om6) (Sm4) (IM1) (IM3) |
| | I have tried to be as sensitive as I can. (Sm1) (Sm4) |
| | I think I'm being fair, but what matters is what the staff in the field thinks (Sm5) (Im2) |
| It's not fair | Previous experiences can come into play and affect the evaluation. (Om1) |
| | Stakeholders (District Principal, School Principal, Unions, etc.) are influencing. (S3) (S4) (S5) (S6) (Om4) |
| | There are times when we act emotionally. (Om1) |
| | I don't think disciplinary supervisors or commissioners are fair. (S1) (S2) (S3) (S4) (S5) (S6) (Sm2) |

When the "Fair" sub-category in Table 4 is examined, almost all of the participants in the research group with the roles of "evaluator or scorer" describe their individual evaluations as objective and fair. For example, Ö3, who is the school principal, said, "I think I am absolutely fair as the school principal. If a person tries to do different things outside of his own duty and shows this concretely to my student, teacher and me, of course I

will act fairly", while Om6, who is the school principal, expresses his approach to the issue by saying, "As the disciplinary supervisor, I think I am rational and fair in evaluating my own staff". Here are some other participant opinions on the subject.

I think I'm being fair. When I made an evaluation about this, I even gave full points to a friend with whom we had a one-on-one problem. Because I think I gave the students the score they deserved for their impact and hard work in the school. That's why I think I'm being fair here (Om2).

We try to be fair to the people we know as much as possible. We never evaluate people because of their position or belonging. They are all teachers for us. That is, in that sense, I believe that we give without paying attention to their belonging, focusing only on their professional success. That is, we have not had such a problem so far (Im3).

When the "Not fair" sub-category in Table 4 is examined, it is evident that the entire group of teachers in the "evaluated or scored" group of the participants are focused on the opinion that "I do not think that the disciplinary supervisors or commission members are fair". However, it is evident that some managers also state that the process is not fair. For example, Om1, who is the principal of the school, said, "Previous experiences can come into play and affect the grade you will give. We are flesh-and-blood people. Now, of course, we can be a little emotional in this type of scoring, grading and measuring work," said Sm2, who is the branch manager, adding, "I certainly don't think that I or anyone else is fair as a disciplinary supervisor or as a member of the commission. Because when it comes to the scoring stage, the names are announced", and teacher Ö2 expresses his thoughts on the subject by saying, "Everyone already gives to their own man, everyone gives to what they want". Here are some other participant opinions on the subject.

So I don't think it's concrete and fair. That is, I believe that where there is a person, there is a mistake. It's not supposed to be. Especially in such matters, it is necessary to be really objective. It should be given if people really deserve it, not because of their political opinion or whether they are close to you or not. But unfortunately, I don't think it's very fair (S4).

Based on bilateral relations, it is given. I don't think it meets the criteria, but it is given from time to time to people who really deserve it. A reward can be made according to the criteria by looking at it, but rewards can also be made based on bilateral relations. I also hear it from time to time. Unfortunately, I saw this (S6).

Advantage

The certificate of achievement, the certificate of excellence and the award received in various cases, for example; Illustrative participant views regarding the "advantage" category, which deals with the advantage of providing advantages with additional points in cases such as relocating for administrators or becoming managers for the first time, or choosing teachers for science and art centers, etc., are included in Table 5.

Table 5. Participant opinions on the benefit category

| Categories | Sample Testimonials |
|------------|--|
| Advantage | It must provide an advantage. (Om1) (Om2) (Om6) (Sm2) |
| | It should not be advantageous. (S1) (S3) (S4) |
| | Must provide partial/limited advantage (Om3) (Om5) (Km1) |
| | Must provide contingent advantage (S2) (S5) (S6) (Om4) (Sm3) (Sm4) (Sm5) (Im1) (Im2) (Im3) |

When Table 5 is examined, it is evident that the opinions of the participants are centered around the view that "it should provide an advantage depending on the condition", and the mentioned conditions are; It is seen that these documents are given to those who are objective and deserving, as well as the fact that the awards received are directly related to the work done by the people and have an effect for a certain period of time. On the subject, school principal Om4 said, "If he has received a certificate of achievement due to his work related to his job descriptions, he should have an advantage. It should have less advantage over others," said Sm3, who is the branch manager, "Of course it should be, but it should be fair. Such as awards in the last ten years or in the last five years. Because employees should be encouraged to receive new awards. That is, if the award has been used somewhere, it should not be used again." Other sample participant opinions are given below.

If you produce added value and make a difference in your work, I think it is right to have a reward. Therefore, I do not feel any discomfort with the advantage provided. If a person creates an added value related to his own work, I am definitely not against a positive, positive impact that will affect his life. I think it's true (Om6).

Of course, the documents received will definitely contribute. It will contribute in a positive way, and it is a natural event and an event that should be spread by friends who have an effort in this regard, who raise

awareness, who are ahead in terms of determination and effort compared to other colleagues, professional groups and colleagues. Of course, as we said, this process will be much more beneficial in an environment where the employee is seen concretely, and the employee is evaluated concretely (IM1).

Legislation in the MoNE award system

Under the heading of the legislative theme, whether the MONE reward system is suitable for its purpose, the thoughts of the employees about the process in the rewarding process and the effects of the process on the employees, the criteria for granting the certificate of achievement, the authorities issuing the certificate of achievement, the objective or subjective attitudes in the process, the award scoring and the awarding process, the percentage rate applied regarding the number of people to be awarded, how much discretion the award is, the amount of the salary award, Participants' opinions on whether the types of awards are sufficient or not and the expectations of the employees from the award directive were discussed. Legislative theme; Purpose, process effects, certificate of achievement, award, award types and expectations categories and related sub-categories.

Purpose

In the purpose category, the issues of whether the MONE award directive in force serves its purpose in accordance with its purpose, whether it motivates its personnel as such, and whether the evaluation criteria serve its purpose are discussed. Illustrative participant views on the purpose category are given in Table 6.

Table 6. Respondents' views on the purpose category

| Subcategories | Sample Testimonials |
|---------------------|---|
| Fit for Purpose | I think it serves its purpose. (Om3) (Om4) (Om6) (Sm3) (Sm4) (IM1) (IM2) |
| | I think it contributes to staff motivation. (Om3) (Om4) (Om6) (Sm3) (Sm4) (IM1) (IM2) |
| | Awardees have a positive view of their work. (Om3) (Om4) (Om6) (Sm3) (Sm4) (IM1) (IM2) |
| Not Fit for Purpose | I do not see it as sufficient to achieve its goals. (S1) (S2) (S3) (S4) (S5) (S6) (Om1) (Om2) (om5) (Sm1) (Sm2) (Sm5) (IM3) |
| | All employees are evaluated according to the same criteria. (S2) (S3) (S4) (S5) (Om1) (Om2) (Om5) (Sm1) (Sm2) (Sm5) |
| | There are those who receive rewards for needing points (Ö1) (Ö3) (Ö4) (Ö5) (Ö6) (Om1) (Om2) (Om5) (Sm1) (Sm2) |

When Table 6 is examined, it is evident that the number of those who think that the current award directive serves its purpose is higher than those who think that it does not serve its purpose. The fact that all employees are evaluated according to the same criteria is another issue that receives the most criticism. The purpose category is discussed in the subcategories of "fit for purpose" and "not fit for purpose".

When the opinions of the participants are examined, some of the participants find the MONE award directive suitable for its purpose. For example, Om4, who is the principal of the school, explained his approach to the subject by saying, "We have a saying, Ingenuity is subject to compliments. Every person wants to be rewarded for their work. When we think in this way, I think that the reward system of the Ministry of National Education makes a positive contribution and achieves its purpose because it aims to motivate the staff." Other exemplary participant opinions who find the MONE award directive suitable for its purpose include the following;

I think the MONE reward system has achieved its purpose. I have been the District Director of National Education for many years. There is a positive impact on the work they do in terms of motivation between the state of the award-winning personnel before and after they receive it. Because in the working systems of the award-winning friends, their approaches are very different in fulfilling what we want from them the next year. That is, we can say that the fact that they are aware of this makes our work even easier for us as a ministry in terms of our demands (IM1).

When the opinions are examined, it is evident that the number of those who do not find the MONE award directive suitable for the purpose is higher than those who find it appropriate. In particular, the fact that the evaluation criteria consist of the same items for all employees, and that common criteria are determined for everyone, not the criteria in the job descriptions of the employees, stands out as another issue that is criticized and not suitable for the purpose. Conversely, it is stated that in various cases, especially in becoming a manager or relocating managers, due to the additional point return, the certificate of achievement, the certificate of excellence or the award is prioritized for those who are in this regard, and therefore it does not achieve its purpose. For example, Ö1, who is a teacher, said, "When I looked at it within the scope of this award, the conditions did not seem very encouraging to me. In the following years, I saw myself as more inadequate because I could not get it because the system changed. That's why I don't see it as enough for their purposes," said Sm2, who is the branch manager, "I don't think it's reaching. Because of

the dude-sergeant relationships... Unfortunately, the current directive does not achieve its purpose as it considers civil servants and teachers in the same category." Other exemplary participant opinions that do not find the MONE award directive suitable for its purpose include the following;

I don't think it has achieved its purpose in its current form. The aim is to motivate the teacher, to do more work on this subject, maybe to ensure the development of the district in this regard, to ensure the development of schools, yes, but I do not think that it has achieved its purpose because there is no obvious system in the current system. If there were sharper lines, if there were clearer criteria, then I think maybe it would be more motivating (Ö2).

No, I don't think about it much. Especially in recent years, the ministry has been giving awards directly to everyone. This is a separate thing. Also, I don't think that the work that teachers have done only for awards, such as writing articles, writing books, etc., has achieved its goal. That is, I do not think that there is a reward system that is suitable for its purpose within the current system (IM3).

Process effects

In this category, the effects of the current award directive and related practices on employees have tried to be discussed. The findings revealed that some of the participants had a positive change in their perspectives towards their work and their supervisors after being rewarded, their motivation levels increased, and for some participants, there was no difference between the state before receiving the certificate and after receiving the certificate, especially during the pandemic period, giving awards to everyone without distinguishing between working and non-working left a negative impression on the award process, and had negative effects on the personnel who did not receive the award, It is stated that psychological expectations create unrest in cases where they are not adequately met, sometimes employees in the same institution are in court due to ratings, and therefore, the relationship between the defendant and the plaintiff is formed as well as the relationship between the supervisor and the officer, causing various unrest and negativities in the workplace. Illustrative participant views on the category of process effects are given in Table 7.

Table 7. Participant views on the process impacts category

| Categories | Sample Testimonials |
|-----------------|--|
| Process Effects | Those who do not receive it are adversely affected (Ö1) (Om2) (Im3) (Sm1) |
| | During the pandemic, it was given to everyone, real employees were adversely affected. (S1) (S5) (Om6) |
| | There is no difference between taking and after-taking. (S2) (S5) (S6) (Sm1) (Sm5) |
| | It has a triggering and motivating effect on employees. (S3) (S4) (S6) (Om1) (Om2) (Om3) (Om4) (Om6) (Sm2) (Sm3) (IM1) |

When Table 7 is examined, it is evident that although the current reward directive and related practices have some negative effects on the employees, there are quite a lot of participant opinions who see the process positively and state that it has a positive triggering and motivating effect on the employees. For example, Ö4, who is a teacher, said, "Success, I got outstanding success. I didn't get a salary award. I approach things conscientiously. Of course, when I do this and receive an award in return, yes, at least I am more motivated because others see it and I am appreciated. Of course, I was positively affected by this finding," said Om1, who is the principal of the school, and said, "Of course, I can say that the award has changed my perspective on those at the upper level or my job. I was more motivated. I am now more focused on my work, and I can say that I am more aware of the importance of my work. That is, it reflected positively on me." Other sample participant opinions include the following;

Frankly, I can't say that it triggered me a lot in terms of work. You know, let me continue this work, it didn't trigger it like this. Now, for example, we did a cleaning project in the project. After the project was done, our school principal offered it, and I was given a certificate of achievement from the district. The number of people doing educational projects in our school has increased. This means that it has a triggering and motivating effect on other people, albeit indirectly, in a positive way (S6).

As a result, when you make an effort, you understand that this effort is rewarded and that it is seen and appreciated by your supervisor with the certificate of achievement you receive. That you feel followed, that your love for work is seen, and that you receive this in relation to the work you do, inevitably motivates you in a positive way. You wake up happier to a new morning and come to work more efficiently and more willingly (Om2).

Certificate of achievement

Participants; In addition to the participants who stated that the local administration supervisors do not have the opportunity to directly know or observe the individual performances of the employees, especially in large districts, and that the certificates of achievement given under the direction of various people lead to

the perception of injustice in the eyes of the employees, the participants who found it more appropriate to give the certificates of achievement by people who have the opportunity to closely observe the performance of the employees, such as school principals or district directors of national education. Conversely, they state that certificates of achievement should be given by a commission, so that this can reduce the subjective impact of individual decisions, thus ensuring transparency in the process and making a fairer evaluation. Conversely, the participants; It states that there are no clear, measurable and universally accepted concrete criteria for the issuance of certificates of achievement, that the process is not carried out fairly, and that in some cases, the bilateral relations of employees and managers are decisive in the issuance of certificates of achievement. The category of Certificate of Achievement and the relevant sample participant opinions are given in Table 8.

Table 8. Participant opinions about the certificate of achievement category

| Subcategories | Sample Testimonials |
|-------------------|--|
| Issuing Authority | I think it is most appropriate to give it by the local authorities. (S1) (S3) (S6) (IM2) (IM3) |
| | School Principals and/or District Principals should give (S2) (S4) (S5) (Om1) |
| | The proposal should be submitted to the District Governor after the approval of the District Mem. (om1) (Om2) (Om3) (om4) (om5) (Sm1) (Sm4) |
| | It should be given by a commission rather than individuals (Ö6) (Om2) (Om3) (Om6) (Sm5) |
| Subjectivity | The District Governor and the Governor do not have a chance to know/see the work and/or employees. (Om1) (Om2) (Om3) (Om4) (Om5) (Om6) (Sm1) |
| | I do not think that certificates of achievement are given according to objective criteria. (S2) (S3) (S4) (Om3) (om5) (om6) (Sm1) (Sm2) (Sm3) (Sm4) (Sm5) (IM2) |
| | Bilateral relations are more effective. (S3) (Om1) (Om2) (Om3) (Om6) |
| | I think it's arbitrary. (S4) (Om3) (Om5) (Om6) (IM2) |
| | While some district governors give certificates of achievement very easily, some district governors do not give them at all. (Om2) (Sm1) (Sm2) (Sm3) (Sm4) (Sm5) (IM1) (IM2) (IM3) |

Issuing authority

When Table 8 is examined, it is evident that there are those who state that it is correct to give the certificate of achievement by the local administration supervisors. However, it is stated that the majority of the participants stated that school principals and district directors of national education should take a more active part in the process, and the main reason for this is that the local administration supervisors do not have the opportunity to know, see, and evaluate, the work or employees carried out in the school. In addition, there are also participants who state that the evaluations made individually by school principals, district directors of national education and district governors cannot be objective, so the process should be carried out through the commissions to be established. For example, one of the participants, the teacher S3, "... As this authority goes down to the grassroots, the subjectivity increases. For this reason, I think it is more appropriate for the district governor, the governor and the ministry to give," said the teacher Ö2 and said, "I think the school principals should give it. After all, they are the ones who see our work up close. I think the principal of the school is the first to blame for that. Then, of course, the District Director of National Education", the school principal Om3 said, "Let a joint decision be made, this process should not be monopolized by one person. Let it pass through the filter of at least a few people."

Subjectivity in the process

When Table 8 is examined, it is evident that the participants stated that the subjective decisions of those who influenced the process were effective in the process of awarding the certificate of achievement, such as bilateral relations and arbitrariness, rather than objective criteria. For example, Ö3, who is a teacher, said, "That is, I don't think that the criteria determined here are based on concrete data because they are not very concrete. The general effort in the school or their closeness and communication with the proposing administration... these are currently effective in the success criteria", school principal Om1 says, "I am aware that it is given to people who work in harmony with them or believe that they are trying a little more, rather than the concrete criteria there", and expresses the subjectivity of the administrators who affect the process. Another sample participant opinion is as follows;

The criteria for granting a certificate of achievement are far from objectivity due to the nature of the work. From time to time, I have witnessed this. Some District Governors tried to ensure justice by creating criteria and scoring these criteria at length before issuing certificates of achievement. However, these forms were eventually scored by school principals or district principals, who are also disciplinary supervisors. Therefore, a situation far from objectivity has emerged again... In addition, I have seen personnel who have been given certificates of achievement on the instructions of the district governors, or I have witnessed the efforts of the unions to intervene in the list of certificates of achievement. Now it turns out something like this. The school principal wants his favourite staff to get a certificate and makes an offer

accordingly. There are personnel who are requested by the district directorate of national education, the district governor and the unions to be given a "certificate of achievement". Is it possible to talk about a process based on concrete data and objectivity in such a picture? Of course not. In fact, the incident seems to be at an impasse in itself. Because no matter who gives the certificate of achievement, no matter how much he tries to act fairly, he will definitely be criticized or it can be claimed that he has done incomplete or unfair (Şm5).

Reward process

When the opinions of the participants regarding the salary rewarding process, which can be called the final target in the MONE reward system, are examined; that the scoring made during the awarding process is not objective, that the commission members do not have enough information about the subjects they score during the scoring process, that the return of additional points such as articles, books, etc. leads to injustices, that the employees are not evaluated about the work they do in the process, that the scoring should be done by the commissions, that the amount given as a salary award is not satisfactory, that the amount of awards given differs from province to province or from year to year. It is stated that it leads to a perception of injustice among the Ministry of Education and that the rate of personnel allocated to the Ministry of Education that can be awarded is insufficient. When we look at the answers given, it is evident that there is no significant differentiation between the study groups on this issue. The award category is discussed in the sub-categories of "awarding process" and "quota, appreciation and amount". Relevant sample participant opinions are given in Table 9.

Table 9. Participant opinions on the award category

| Subcategories | Sample Testimonials |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Issuance Process | I think the scoring in the process is not objective. (S1) (S3) (S4) (S5) (S6) (Om2) (Om6) (Sm1) (Sm5) (Im1) (Im2) |
| | The commissioners are not experts in the scoring process. (S2) (Om4) (Sm5) |
| | Additional points for articles, books, etc., are unfair (Om1) (Om4) (Sm1) (Im3) |
| | In the process, each employee should be evaluated in their own lane (Om1) (Om4) (Km5) (Im1) (Im2) |
| | Evaluations should be through a commission, not a single person (Om2) (om6) (Im2) |
| Quota, Appreciation and Quantity | Amount given is very small/funny (S1) (S3) (S4) (S5) (S6) (Om1) (Om2) (Om3) |
| | The assessed ratio should be equal and therefore fair throughout the country (S3) (S5) (S6) (Om1) (Om2) (Om3) (Om4) (Om5) (Om6) (Sm1) (Sm2) (Sm3) (Sm4) (Sm5) (Im1) (Im2) |
| | There should be a quota to a greater or lesser extent. (S1) (S2) (S4) (Im3) |
| | The quota of 20 per thousand should be removed/increased (Ö3) (Ö5) (Ö6) (Om1) (Om2) (Om3) (Om4) (Om5) (Sm1) (Sm2) (Sm3) (Sm4) (Sm5) (Im1) (Im2) |

Issuance process

When Table 9 is examined, it is evident that the majority of the participants emphasize that the awarding process should be based on a more fair and scientific basis, they think that the current evaluations are not objective enough, in the current practice, the scoring process is far from objectivity as a result of the evaluation of the commission members on issues that are not related to their fields of expertise, and the reliability of the process is that the employees are not evaluated in accordance with their job descriptions. It is stated that it is harmful, which leads to a loss of motivation in the employees, and that it may be more accurate for a commission with more than one member to make an evaluation instead of individual evaluations, in other words, the subjectivity in the process should be reduced. For example, branch manager Şm2 said, "The ratings are absolutely not objective. Because there are several criteria, but these are not document-based criteria. I think it should be clear by whom and how the points given should be given, and the points given should be documented," said the branch manager Şm5, "A driver or assistant attendant and a teacher or school principal should be compared according to the same items. In this case, neither the school principal nor the county commissions choose to give everyone full points so as not to confront their staff. In this case, if people do not have a document where they can get additional points, there is a ranking according to seniority, in short, wherever you hold it, it remains in your hands." Other sample participant opinions include the following;

I think there is a lot of room for comment on this. Is it correct to rank people who have received 3 certificates of achievement first and then have been given outstanding achievement by scoring them again? I don't think that's the right thing to do. If an employee has received three certificates of achievement and has proven to be successful, why shouldn't an employee be rewarded with a salary? How adequate are the school principals, who are the disciplinary supervisors in the school who will carry out the scoring process, or the people who take part in the commissions established in the District Directorate of National Education? So what I'm trying to say is. If a person has written an article or a book or a musical work, do

they have the competence to understand and measure how good this work is? I don't think so. That is, there is not much that disciplinary supervisors or commissions can do in these evaluations (Sm5).

Quota, appreciation and quantity

The opinions of the respondents regarding the 2% rate applied in the MoNE award directive in line with the provisions of the DMK No. 657, the discretionary rights of the governors regarding the amount of the salary award to be paid and their thoughts on the amount paid as an award are discussed under this heading. When Table 4.8 is examined, it is evident that the amount given as a reward is very low by the participants. Almost all of the participants in the participant groups agree that the appreciated rate does not differ according to the provinces. That is, it is related to the fact that the amount to be paid as a reward should be equal throughout the country and the rate should not vary according to the years. In addition to those who think that the applied quota application should be continued, it is evident that the majority of the participants are in favor of increasing the 2% quota proportionally or abolishing the quota completely. For example, Om1, who is the principal of the school, said, "Now this should not be discretionary. Because while some provinces give 200 percent, why should personnel working in the same ministry in another province receive 100 percent? Equality is essential in the state, justice is essential. Whatever the teacher working in Istanbul gets, the teacher working in Hakkari should get the same amount. I don't think this is a matter to be left to discretion," said Sm5, who is the branch manager, adding, "I don't think it is right for the Governors to appreciate the rate of reward to be given. That is, it seems to be the fairest approach to have a standard. Conversely, certain year limits may be imposed on a staff member who will receive an award, but I think it is not right to subject it to any quota." Other sample participant opinions include the following;

The amount paid as a salary award is very small. The salary award is in the name, and the salary award is given in full. That is, awarding an award equal to the entire amount of a salary. I also find it wrong that it is squeezed into 20 per thousand. Because, okay, there are better ones, but those better ones can also be in the majority. So I don't think it should be that criterion. Anyone who thinks they really deserve it should be able to get it (S4).

In some provinces, 100% is given, while in some provinces 200% is given. Even when the same province is with the same governor, the area can get 200% a year ago. Or after a year, the field can get 100%. You deserve a prize, but you don't know how much money you're going to get. It's kind of funny; it makes me funny. Then this also definitely needs to be changed or fixed. So, at first, I think that this 2% should definitely be changed and the coefficient should also be constant (Om2).

Types of prizes

The opinions of the participants about whether the certificate of achievement, certificate of excellence and salary in the award directive of the Ministry of National Education are sufficient in terms of the type of award, and what kind of additions should be made to the award types were discussed under this heading. It is seen that there is no significant difference in the opinions of the participant groups belonging to this category, however, the opinions on making additions to the award types are more common. Illustrative participant views about the Award Types category are given in Table 10.

Table 10. Participant opinions on the types of awards categories

| Categories | Sample Testimonials |
|------------------------|--|
| Sufficient | I see enough. (S2) (S3) (S6) (Sm2) (Sm4) (Sm5) |
| | I think it should be sufficient or even reduced. (S5) (Sm1) |
| Additions must be made | It may be a domestic/international holiday. (S1) (S4) |
| | A certificate of Thanks, Appreciation and Honor can be given. (S3) (Om1) (Om2) (Om3) (Om4) (Om5) (Om6) (Sm3) (im1) (IM3) |
| | Additional annual leave/grade/grade may be granted. (S1) (Om6) (IM1) (IM2) |

When Table 10 is examined, it is evident that some of the participants whose opinions were consulted considered the current variety of rewards in the directive to be sufficient, while others stated that the existing award types should be simplified, that is, reduced, and there were also those who stated that the reward system should be completely abolished. For example, Ö2, who is a teacher, said, "I see enough. That is, I think there is not much difference between a certificate of achievement and a certificate of excellence. You know, maybe because it is a document, it is also material", and teacher Ö3 said, "You know, we should not turn too many documents into garbage. Because as the number increases, the criterion will decrease towards the bottom. That is, what is the criterion below the certificate of achievement? This time, there will be one who gets rewarded with very little at work. I think the reward with a higher salary is enough", and the teacher Ö5 said, "I even see it as too much, frankly, it will be added. There is no need to diversify further. I think it would be useful to reduce such things." Other sample participant opinions include the following;

I think it's enough. So, no teacher is doing his job for the reward. But of course, when the teacher receives an award, he is very honoured. In my opinion, there is no need to diversify. But the important thing is who gave the award, why it gave it and to whom it was given. If the merit principle is to be taken as a basis here, I think even an award would be sufficient for the teacher (Ö6).

When the "additions should be made" sub-category in Table 10 is examined; It is seen that there are those who state that additions can be made to existing awards, that personnel can be sent on domestic and international vacations as a reward, as well as those who state that additional annual leave, degree or grade advancement can be among the award types. In this regard, where there is no significant separation between the participant groups, it is evident that there are a lot of people who state that documents such as thanks, appreciation, etc. should be given by school principals and district directors of national education. For example, Ö4, who is a teacher, said, "So I think it could be a holiday. At least the ministry has a lot of facilities. He can be sent there free of charge, with his family or individually," said Im1, who is the district director of national education, adding, "Additions can definitely be made. Because nothing is complete in itself. They definitely have a shortcoming. And that's about it. Permission, relocation, sir, extra additions can be made in areas similar to this. My own opinion is in that direction", and Im2, who is the district manager, expresses his views on the subject by saying, "Issues such as providing travel and vacation opportunities to public employees who are entitled to receive awards for their high-level outstanding services and efforts, granting additional annual leave/grade/grade, and presenting awards at ceremonies to be held at the Ministry level should definitely be discussed by making an agenda". Other sample participant opinions include the following;

Such a teacher comes out and does a very, very good job. It does a very, very good job in the international arena. Even if the number of these people is small, it can be evaluated in a different way under the name of a separate savings and another reward for those people. For example, a certificate of outstanding award. You know, there is a certificate of excellence. It can also be a certificate of outstanding award. People with this superior certificate can also be given a small privilege if they have attended any project schools or anything. Again, if there is a document, it will be documented on the name. This certification is like that. I think that when he applies to a school such as a project school or a different style, not every school, he should be given an additional advantage (Om3).

For example, a certificate of honour can also be developed. If the work done by the person will not necessarily give a certificate of achievement, I did not consider it worthy of giving a certificate of achievement. But this person did something, worked, did. As a sub-document, there may be a new study that will make this happy. That is, it can be above or below the current system. But the current system is not enough. A certificate of honor or a document that will please the heart of those who are successful and who are successful other than those who have been awarded can also be brought (Om4).

Prospects on the reward system

Under this heading, the opinions of the participants were discussed about the MONE reward system and especially the change requests related to the current directive. In addition to the opinions that the participants should concretize the certificate of achievement and award criteria, make the scoring objective, arrange the criteria to cover all employees, evaluate each employee regarding their job description, make the process transparent, not give awards to the same people before certain periods have passed, and remove the local administration supervisors from the process, there are also participants who stated that the award system should be abolished is seen. Illustrative participant views about the "Expectations" category are given in Table 11.

Table 11. Respondents' views on the expectations category

| Categories | Sample Testimonials |
|--------------|---|
| Expectations | Certificate of achievement and award criteria should be concretized. (S1) (S2) (S6) (Om5) (Sm1) (Sm5) |
| | Scoring should be objective and should be done by commissions. (S2) (S3) (S4) (S5) (S6) (Om2) (Om3) (Om6) (Sm1) (Sm5) |
| | The criteria should cover all employees, each employee should be evaluated in their own category, and the conditions should be equal. (Om1) (Om2) (Om4) (Om5) (Sm5) (IM1) |
| | The process should be made transparent. (S1) (S2) (S3) (S4) (S6) (Sm5) |
| | The reward system should be abolished. (S5) (Sm1) (Sm5) |
| | It should not be given to the same people before certain periods of time have passed. (Sm1) (Sm3) (Sm4) (Sm5) (IM3) |
| | Civil authorities should be removed from the process (Ö2) (Ö4) (Ö5) (Om1) (Om5) (Om6) (Sm5) |

When Table 11 is examined; In this context, it is stated that the certificate of achievement and award process should be away from subjective interpretations, it is important to define the criteria in a concrete and measurable way, the criteria evaluating employee performance should be clearly expressed, and subjective

decisions should be prevented. It is stated that the scoring process should be at a standard that can measure employee performance in a transparent and objective manner, and that the decision-making process should take on a multi-person structure by establishing commissions to ensure the impartiality of the scoring. Evaluation of the existing evaluation criteria in their own categories according to the duties and responsibilities of individuals in a way that covers all employees, conducting the award and certificate of achievement processes transparently at all stages, preventing the perception of unfair competition by sharing the process with the interlocutors, not giving awards to the same employee again within a certain period of time, removing the local supervisors from the process in the award and certificate of achievement processes are among the expectations are seen as expressions. For example, Ö2, who is a teacher, said, "I would like the boundaries to be sharpened. It should be concretized in a nutshell. Everyone should know the answer to the question of what criteria I can get a certificate of achievement. In this regard, do not think that everyone is given a certificate of achievement to whoever they want. This person was suggested, he did this and that, he took it based on that. Then it should be possible to say that the one who deserves it got what he deserved", said Ö6, who is a teacher, "More transparent, more by asking and consulting the field. Here, an award should be given by the directors of National Education, district governors, etc., not by what they hear from the right and left, but by researching a little more and talking to the teachers. And every teacher who does not receive an award should also be notified of their score," said the school principal Om5, adding, "The opinions of the disciplinary supervisor closest to the staff should be taken into account and come to the fore a little more. Because he is the one who can closely follow and see the work of the person," said the branch manager Şm3, "That is, the same people should be prevented from taking it all the time. I can make a change in that direction. 20 per thousand, maybe a little increase in this, 30 per thousand, changes can be made in that direction." Other sample participant opinions include the following;

There should be no other scoring other than standard scoring such as writing articles and books. A school principal and a teacher should not be evaluated on the same criteria. That is, arrangements can be made according to the person's job description. Additions and subtractions can also be made while editing. For example, schools that accept students with an exam in the school principal's own school should be scored with the student they are placed in the LGS exam (Om4).

I would have thought of disabling the award legislation, that is, the civil authority processes. I would like to change it. However, for a large-scale change, I think it would definitely be more beneficial to get feedback from the wider field, to meet with teachers, to collect demands and to come up with a regulation as a result of an evaluation. For the moment, all I can think of is to ignore the direct influence of the civil authorities (Om6).

Discussion and conclusion

When the motivation theme was evaluated in terms of the thoughts of the participating groups (teachers, school principals, branch directors and district directors of national education); It reveals that the vast majority of respondents agree that the need for recognition is inherent in human nature, that rewards positively affect motivation and are an important tool in improving the performance of employees (Herzberg, 1968; Findikci, 2009). It is emphasized that the presentation of awards in a fair, transparent and sustainable structure has positive impacts on employee motivation and that the awards should include not only material but also moral elements (Luthans & Stajkovic, 2000; Şenufuk, 2004). There is no significant difference of opinion among the participants, and it is stated that proper rewarding will increase motivation. However, unfair reward distribution and subjective evaluations can negatively affect motivation (Adams, 1965). It is important for the continuity of motivation that reward systems support employees, recognize their achievements, and encourage their participation in the process (Serinkan & Yurtseven, 2021; Yego, 2013; Yildirim, 2008).

It reveals that the majority of the administrators participating in the evaluation process see their own ratings and evaluations as fair, while the entire group of teachers find these evaluations unfair. Teachers; He stated that union structures, political thoughts and personal relations affected the process, and stated that objectivity could not be achieved in the evaluations. This situation coincides with the findings of Sabancı (1999), who draws attention to the fact that effort and performance are not measured objectively in the evaluation process, Yıldırım's (2008) that rewards are made with political and nepotistic influences, Tonbul's (2002) that teachers' perceptions of openness and fairness are low, and Yılmaz's (2019) that draws attention to trust problems in the MONE reward system. In addition, it is emphasized that a fair reward system contributes positively to organizational commitment and performance (Küçükçene, 2017), and that the effective use of rewards is critical in terms of motivation and commitment (Budak et al., 2017). In this context, organizing in-service trainings for managers (Yardibi, 2018) and conducting the evaluation system by multi-person commissions can make positive contributions to the process.

In this study, the certificate of achievement, the certificate of excellence and the advantages of the award in various situations within the scope of the award system were examined in line with the opinions of the participants. While some of the participants argue that these documents should provide advantages in cases such as task changes and appointment processes; Some have stated that it should not bring any advantage, while others have stated that it should offer limited advantages. In particular, it was emphasized that the way the documents were received and whether they were fair or not were decisive. It has been stated that the fact that the well-deserved awards offer a certain amount of advantage can increase motivation and employee performance. However, the view that it is not appropriate to use the documents unlimitedly during the civil service, that they should be limited to a certain period or that it should be re-awarded for different situations has come to the fore (Keskin, 2010). As a result, most of the participants, regardless of title, believe that award documents will also contribute to the perception of organizational justice if they provide an advantage in a way that serves the purpose. In this context, it is considered that it would be an appropriate approach to determine the level of advantage to be provided by the documents based on the opinions of the employees in the field.

When the opinions of the participants on the suitability of the MONE reward system for its purpose, its contribution to employee motivation and whether the evaluation criteria serve these purposes are examined; It shows that there is a difference of opinion between administrators (school principals, branch managers, district directors of national education) and teachers. While the administrators find the system suitable for its purpose, the teachers think that the system is not fair and motivating due to the abstractness of the evaluation criteria, subjectivity, political and union influences. In particular, it has been stated that some items in the evaluation criteria cause unfair competition among employees with different job descriptions. This situation supports the view that the reward system should be at an equal distance to all employees. It has been stated that a well-designed and fair reward system can increase employee motivation and organizational efficiency (Armstrong et al., 2003; Armstrong & Cummins, 2011). The findings coincide with similar inferences in the studies of Çelikezen (2015) and Yılmaz (2019).

In this study, the psychological effects of the participants who received at least one certificate of achievement, certificate of excellence or award on the award process were examined. It has been found that rewarding increases the motivation of employees and positively changes their perspective on the work done (Sarpkaya et al., 2016; Bansal et al., 2001). The vast majority of respondents stated that they had a more positive attitude towards their work and supervisors after receiving an award. However, some participants stated that receiving an award did not change their perspectives, and it was observed that those who did not receive an award were negatively affected by the process. Especially during the pandemic period, certificates of achievement given equally to all personnel were criticized for not distinguishing between hardworking and non-working personnel, and it was stated that this finding did not serve the purpose of the award and reduced motivation. In addition, it has been stated that unfair reward distribution disrupts peace within the organization, leading to trust problems and psychological negativities between managers and employees, which reduces work efficiency (Kohn, 1993; Erdemir, 2012). It is important for the process to be operated in a fair, equal and sustainable manner in terms of motivation and sense of justice; In the distribution of awards, it is emphasized that the distinction between employees and non-employees should be made correctly. It is also seen that there is no significant differentiation between teachers, school principals, branch directors and district directors of national education.

Although the certificate of achievement does not seem as important as the certificate of excellence and award in the first place, it is similarly important because it constitutes the first step in reaching these certificates. However, the lack of concrete criteria in the process of issuing certificates, the fact that the process is mostly based on the discretion of school principals, district directors of national education or local administration supervisors, and that this finding leads to subjectivity are among the most criticized issues. The fact that those who work in the certificate of achievement processes often do not know the work directly reveals the necessity of carrying out this process by commissions (Çelik, 2006). In addition, in practice, there are serious differences between provinces and districts, and in some places, no documents are given, while in some places they are given frequently, indicating arbitrariness. This situation damages the perception of justice among teachers and leads to negative effects on motivation (Çelebi et al., 2015; Lavy, 2007; Argon, 2016). To make the process more objective, fair and transparent, it is recommended to switch to a commission-based evaluation system by collecting data from multiple sources.

According to the findings of the research, there is a strong participatory consensus that the rewarding process should be carried out on fair, objective and scientific grounds. Participants stated that the current system operates under the influence of subjective factors such as political views and lifestyles, that the evaluation criteria are not in accordance with the job descriptions, and that the uniform application of all titles creates injustice. In particular, the fact that the members of the scoring commission do not have sufficient knowledge in the areas they evaluate undermines the reliability of the process (MONE, 2023).

Çelikezen (2015) and Şenufuk (2004) drew attention to the problems of justice in reward practices, the prioritization of managers over their own environment, and the subjectivity of the process. In addition, it is evident that all personnel, especially teachers, should be evaluated in their own lane and by experts, and that there are common expectations that the amount of awards should be increased according to economic conditions and equalized among provinces (Keskin, 2010; Çelebi et al., 2015). In this context, it is thought that the quota of 20 per thousand should be abolished and the award process should be made more transparent, fair and inclusive.

In the current award system, there are certificates of achievement, certificates of excellence and awards, and according to the opinions of the participants, this variety of awards is found sufficient by some participants, while some argue that the types of awards should be simplified, and some argue that the system should be completely abolished. The basis of these thoughts is the perception that the process is not operated fairly (Çelebi et al., 2015). Among the suggestions regarding the types of awards, options such as domestic and international holiday opportunities, additional leave days, and grade/grade progression stand out, and these findings are in line with the results of the studies of Sarpkaya (2001), Keskin (2010), Şenufuk (2004) and Sabancı (1999). In addition, it has been stated that the ability of school principals and district directors of national education to give certificates of appreciation and appreciation to the employees can increase the motivation of the administrators by establishing a closer relationship with the employees (Şenufuk, 2004). In general, there is no significant difference in approaches to the reward system among teachers, administrators, and other participant groups; It is emphasized that enriching the system with spiritual rewards as well as material rewards can increase motivation.

According to the findings of the research, the participants state that measurable, concrete and clear criteria should be determined in the MONE reward system and the current directive, the evaluation process should be removed from subjectivity and made into an objective structure, and the evaluations should be made through commissions. In addition, it is emphasized that the rewarding process should be carried out transparently, fair arrangements should be made to cover all employees, and the same people should not be rewarded again at regular intervals (Küçükçene, 2017; Armstrong et al., 2003; Yılmaz, 2019; Çelikezen, 2015; Sabancı, 1999). It is stated that compliance with the principle of equality can be ensured by regulations such as limiting or abolishing the role of local administration chiefs in the process and preventing the rewarding of personnel with the same criteria at different rates in different provinces. It is thought that all these suggestions reflect the common expectations among teachers and administrators and will contribute positively to employee motivation by strengthening the perception of justice in the award process.

Recommendations for practitioners and researchers include the following: It is emphasized that the reward system should be diversified in a way that will increase motivation, and alternative rewards such as thanks, appreciation and honor certificates should be offered, as well as promotion, vacation and leave opportunities. It is recommended that the criteria for granting the certificate of achievement should be based on concrete and measurable data, subjective practices should be prevented and standardized to cover all employees. In addition, the awards should be distributed equally to all those who deserve them, regardless of quota and regional differences. For researchers, it is recommended to conduct data-oriented studies examining the reasons for differences in the perception of justice, and to expand the scope to include other personnel of the Ministry of National Education and district governors and governors with the authority to award awards.

Declarations

Competing interests

No potential conflicts of interest have been reported by the authors.

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