

What Motivates Law School Students? An Explanatory Study from Turkey

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Abstract

Law schools need to adopt innovative teaching methods in order to produce promising students with better career prospects. The present study aimed to address the ongoing debate about how legal education should be reformed. A total of 131 law students enrolled at the Faculty of Law of a competitive university in Turkey participated in the study. Data were collected by means of three different scales and focus group interviews. Findings of the study indicate that students' level of motivation, their learning approaches and their evaluations of the school climate decrease over the years; and students have concerns and suggestions regarding the education they have in law school. The study emphasizes the need for reform in legal education and suggests law schools to encourage active involvement of students to enhance learning opportunities.

Key words: Faculty of Law, Law students, academic motivation, learning approach, school climate, active learning

Introduction

Although historically slow to change, law schools have faced major pressure to rethink the given education and to assess the extent to which law students are educated according to expectations of the 21st century. There is a consensus that legal education should respond to changes in the legal services, align with current practices of effective higher education, and most importantly should better prepare students for an increasingly digitized, globalized and modernized world. The curriculum should address not only doctrinal law, but also commit to excellence in teaching that is practice-based, and ensure a balance of subject knowledge, legal expertise, and skills-based learning opportunities¹. However, many researchers claim that in a typical law school curriculum, students are

¹ Black-Branch, Jonathan. Modern Legal Education: Towards Practice-Ready Attitudes, Attributes and Professionalism. (2016).

generally not taught how to negotiate², how to work in a team³, how to think critically, how to engage with clients, how to manage projects and how to discuss in a professional sense⁴; all of these skills are regarded as core skills that define successful lawyers today and will increasingly define them tomorrow.

Over the past several years, there has been a variety of investigations in USA by law school administrators, faculty members, legal foundations, practicing lawyers, national, state, and city bar associations about the current situation in the nation's law schools^{5 6 7 8 9 10}. Reports have revealed that the educational model in most law schools owes mostly to tradition; they have become more and more part of the academy, distanced from the practice¹¹. Professors transfer information to students in classes, who in turn are expected to assemble the knowledge into an organized and usable form, thus failing to produce graduates ready for a professional work atmosphere¹². Many law schools rely almost exclusively on the case method and Socratic method which continue to this day as the dominant pedagogies for studying law¹³. However, both pedagogies, described as “legal education's signature pedagogies”¹⁴, do not adequately prepare students to practice law, even at the most minimally competent level¹². The case method yields graduates with no real exposure to day-to-day legal practice, and with perhaps a less complete grasp of existing legal rules than those force-fed doctrine⁴. The Socratic method in the large

² James Molitern. *A Way Forward for an Ailing Legal Education Model*. Chap. L. Rev., 17, 73(2013).

³ Neil J. Dillof. *Law school training: Bridging the gap between legal education and the practice of law*. Stan. L. & Pol'y Rev., 24, 425. (2013)

⁴ Ray W. Campbell, . *The end of law schools: Legal education in the era of legal service businesses*. Miss. LJ, 85,1.(2016)

⁵ Ray M. Casidy. *Beyond Practical Skills: Nine Steps for Improving Legal Education Now*. BCL Rev., 53, 1515.(2013)

⁶ Robert J. Derocher. *What's Going on in Legal Education-And What Should Bars Do about it*. B. Leader, 36, 6.(2012)

⁷ Sarah K. Rankin. *Tired of talking: A call for clear strategies for legal education reform: Moving beyond the discussion of good ideas to the real transformation of law schools*. Seattle J. Soc. Just., 10, 11 (2011).

⁸ Robert J. Rhee, . *On legal education and reform: One view formed from diverse perspectives*. Md. L. Rev., 70, 310. (2010)

⁹ David Segal. *Is law school a losing game*. New York Times, 8.(2011)

¹⁰ Deborah L. Rhode. *Legal Education: Rethinking the Problem, Reimagining the Reforms*. Pepp. L. Rev., 40, 437.(2012)

¹¹ Jack M. Balkin & Sanford Levinson. *Law & the humanities: an uneasy relationship*. Daedalus, 135(2), (2006)

¹² Jason M. Dolin. *Opportunity lost: How law school disappoints law students, the public, and the legal profession*. California Western Law Review , 44(1), 219-256.(2007)

¹³ Krannich, Holbrook and McAdams, *Beyond thinking like a lawyer and the traditional legal paradigm: Toward a comprehensive view of legal education*. Denv. UL Rev., 86, 381. (2008)

¹⁴ Sullivan, Colby, Wegner, Bond and Shulman, .*Educating lawyers: Preparation for the profession of law* (Vol. 2). John Wiley & Sons.(2007)

classroom is ill-suited to fostering “legal imagination,” which is what lawyers need most to become effective advocates¹⁵. Traditional law methodologies mainly concentrate on analytical skills while minimizing the development of interpersonal skills, such as building relationships and engendering others' confidence in you, moral reasoning and creativity which are all critical for law practice¹⁶.

The traditional and widely used teaching methods in law are damaging to the emotional well-being of law students, as well¹⁷. Employing generally unsound teaching and testing methods^{18 19 20 21 22}, and emphasizing abstract theory rather than providing practical training^{23 24} explain the negative effects of the law school experience on student motivation and well-being. More recently, Sheldon and Krieger suggested that traditionally emphasizing theoretical scholarship and the teaching of legal theory in US law schools impair law students' sense of autonomy and engagement which predict improved well being. It is suggested that changes toward offering a balance of practical skills training, or providing more training might ultimately lead to enhanced learning and well being²⁵. The need for reform in law education is too far informed since the firmly entrenched pedagogies no longer appear to suffice in the current global marketplace. Law school requires a transition from sage-

¹⁵ Sturm, Susan, and Lani Guinier. "The law school matrix: Reforming legal education in a culture of competition and conformity." *Vand. L. Rev.* 60, 515. (2007)

¹⁶ Hess, Gerald F. "Heads and hearts: The teaching and learning environment in law school." *J. Legal Educ.* 52, 75. (2002)

¹⁷ Benjamin, G. Andrew H., et al. "The role of legal education in producing psychological distress among law students and lawyers." *American Bar Foundation Research Journal* 11(2), 225-252 (1986).

¹⁸ Floyd, Timothy W. "Legal education and the vision thing." *Ga. L. Rev.* 31, 853. (1996)

¹⁹ Hess, Gerald F. "Heads and hearts: The teaching and learning environment in law school." *J. Legal Educ.* 52, 75. (2002)

²⁰ McKinney, Ruth Ann. "Depression and anxiety in law students: Are we part of the problem and can we be part of the solution." *Legal Writing: J. Legal Writing Inst.* 8, 229. (2002)

²¹ Rapoport, Nancy B. "Rethinking US Legal Education: No More Same Old, Same Old." *Conn. L. rev.* 45, 1409 (2012).

²² Sheehy, Richard, and John J. Horan. "Effects of Stress Inoculation Training for 1st-Year Law Students." *International Journal of Stress Management* 11 (1), 41.(2004)

²³ Edwards, Harry T. "The growing disjunction between legal education and the legal profession." *Michigan Law Review* 91 (1), 34-78. (1992)

²⁴ Granfield, R. "The politics of decontextualized knowledge: Bringing context into ethics instruction in law school." *Ethical challenges to legal education and conduct*, 299-314. (1998)

²⁵ Sheldon, Kennon M., and Lawrence S. Krieger. "Does legal education have undermining effects on law students? Evaluating changes in motivation, values, and well-being." *Behavioral Sciences & the Law* 22 (2), 261-286. (2004)

like professors and teacher-centered learning environments toward adjusted, refined and renewed classrooms²⁶.

Law Education in 21st Century

While globalization and the 21st century law students clamor for a departure from traditionalism in legal education, there has been an ongoing debate about how legal education should be reformed in law schools^{27 28}. Two important reports in US outlined the practices in legal education, as well as what needed to be changed in law schools: In 1992, the MacCrate Report²⁹ by the American Bar Association's Section on Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar and in 2007, Carnegie Report by the Carnegie Foundation³⁰. Essentially advocating the same improvements, both reports made suggestions for enhancing the immediate value of legal education to the law graduates and their employers. Although not in a across-board manner, some changes have been adopted by law schools to respond to these criticisms in the reports reviewed above. They focused on the initiatives which extend students' range of skills and forms of knowledge such as offering basic legal research and writing training in the first year, ensuring small class sizes and group work among students³¹. The relevance of other disciplines to the study of law has been recognized and interdisciplinary subjects such as problem-solving strategies were incorporated into the curriculum³². Some law schools have offered practical skills training courses that teach students the skills they will need to have to practice law^{33 34}. There have also been efforts to encourage faculty to experiment with more student-centered, problem-oriented teaching methodologies so that students apply 'very well honed analytic skills'³⁵. However, despite the attention given to these issues and criticisms leveled at legal education over the past decade,

²⁶ Caron, Paul L., and Rafael Gely. "Taking back the law school classroom: Using technology to foster active student learning." *J. Legal Educ.* 54, 551 (2004)

²⁷ Susskind, Richard E. *Tomorrow's lawyers: An introduction to your future*. Oxford University Press. 2017.

²⁸ Binford, W. Warren H. "Envisioning a twenty-first century legal education." *Wash. UJL & Pol'y* 43, 157. (2013)

²⁹ MacCrate, R. A fresh look at lawyers' education. *U. Rich. L. Rev.*, 27, 21, (1992)

³⁰ Sullivan, Colby, Wegner, Bond and Shulman, . *Educating lawyers: Preparation for the profession of law (Vol.2)*. John Wiley & Sons. (2007)

³¹ Spencer, A. Benjamin. "The law school critique in historical perspective." *Wash. & Lee L. Rev.* 69, 1949. (2012)

³² Glater, Jonathan D. "Harvard Law Decides to Steep Students in 21st-Century Issues." *New York Times* (2006).

³³ Kagan, Elena. "The Harvard Law School Revisited." *GREEN BAG* 11, 475-478. (2008)

³⁴ Sturm, Susan, and Lani Guinier. "The law school matrix: Reforming legal education in a culture of competition and conformity." *Vand. L. Rev.* 60, 515. (2007)

³⁵ Rakoff, Todd D., and Martha Minow. "A case for another case method." *Vand. L. Rev.* 60, 597. (2007)

it has now been over ten years since the Carnegie Report's publication, there have been few changes. Proposed solutions regarding curriculum reforms, pedagogical approaches have not been embraced or implemented by the law school communities. They have not resulted in a comprehensive change in the practice-readiness of American law school graduates, as it was exactly reflected and explored in the 2007 Carnegie Report and other studies^{36 37}.

The criticisms about the legal education practices in Turkey have strong similarities to that in the US. The quality of the given education has been discussed for years and the need for reforms has been suggested on different platforms by representatives of higher judicial bodies, the Union of Turkish Bar Associations, and scholars^{38 39 40}. Given the discussions, there is a general opinion that the quality of undergraduate legal education is 'mediocre'. Law school graduates cannot make use of their abstract, theoretical information when they face real cases and a disconnection between theory and practice shows up⁴¹. However, change in legal education seems to be remarkably little over a century.

As of today, there are about 86 faculties of law in Turkey with around 75.000 students in total⁴². Despite the prestige of the faculty, written reports or studies written specifically on the quality of legal education are scarce. For example, Akıncı (2001) claimed that one of the major factors affecting the quality of education in law schools is the large class size; in many courses lecturing to hundreds of students in the lecture hall is still the predominant teaching approach⁴³. His proposed structural reforms included reduced class size and a smaller student faculty ratio. Only in such classes will it be possible to offer any opportunities for interaction or discussions. According to him students need to be encouraged to be actively involved in learning and this can not be possible in only theory

³⁶ Stuckey, Roy. "Best Practices or Not, It Is Time to Re-Think Legal Education." *Clinical L. Rev.* 16, 307. (2009)

³⁷ Susskind, Richard E. *Tomorrow's lawyers: An introduction to your future.* Oxford University Press, 2017.

³⁸ AKYOL, Mehmet. "TÜRKİYE'DE HUKUK EĞİTİMİNİN SORUNLARI VE ÇAĞDAŞ GELİŞMELER KARŞISINDAKİ DURUMU." *Türkiye Adalet Akademisi Dergisi* 1 (42), 89-120 (2020)

³⁹ AYDIN, Oğuz Gökhan. "GELENEKTEN GELECEĞE TÜRKİYE'DE HUKUK EĞİTİMİ." *Türkiye Adalet Akademisi Dergisi* 21, 621-657.(2015)

⁴⁰ Demirağ, Fahrettin, and Hasan Çiftçi. "Türkiye'de hukuk fakülteleri ve hukuk eğitimi." *Türkiye Barolar Birliği Dergisi* 91 (1), 257-290. (2010)

⁴¹ Uyumaz, Alper, and Kemal Erdoğan. "Karşılaştırmalı Hukukta ve Türk Hukukunda hukuk eğitimi ve hukuk kliniği." *Ankara Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi* 64 (2), 459-506. (2015)

⁴² Yükseköğretim Kurulu. *Yükseköğretim Bilgi Sistemi Birim İstatistikleri.* Erişim Adresi <https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr/>. (2020)

⁴³ AKINCI, Şahin. "Hukuk eğitimi üzerine düşünceler." *Selçuk Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi* 9.1-2, 9-48. (2001)

based classes. Moreover, Uyumaz and Erdogan (2015) have advocated that techniques of creative thinking, reasoning, producing ideas in law education should be taught to students instead of having students memorize⁴¹. “Legal clinic applications”, which can be defined as a method of practical teaching which allows students to actively work on real cases and involving them in legal aid projects⁴⁴, would advance generating solutions and techniques over real legal disputes. In Turkey, however, the aspects of legal clinics such as undergraduate internships, virtual trials, adjudication analyses and visits to courts are rarely organized in the undergraduate period⁴¹. Undoubtedly, this will become fact by means of actualization of legal clinics in the body of all law faculties as an institution.

21st Century Students

Born to an immense number of online resources, the average law student can be viewed as a ‘digital native’⁴⁵, aware of the mediums which help him interact remotely through technology and intrinsically attuned to the instantaneous nature of communication⁴⁶. As digital natives are beyond the stage of infatuation with access to sources globally, globalization is what they live and breathe, not an external concept⁴⁷. Students in law schools are digital natives who reasonably anticipate that the law school will educate them using teaching methods, resources and tools commonplace in both the legal industry and society at large⁴⁸ and increasingly, these expectations about technology will continue to evolve as Generation Z students start filling law school seats⁴⁹. Thus, technology use may also provide an opportunity to respond to the criticisms and to make legal education more relevant to the legal practice.

Law schools need to distinguish themselves and one way of doing this is to adopt innovative teaching methods in order to produce promising students with better career prospects. Current skills-sets required for modern legal practice have been under scrutiny for a long time and there have been many attempts to pose new approaches to the delivery of legal education. The learning environment, an important factor influencing

⁴⁴ Martinez, George A. "Foreword: Theory, Practice, and Clinical Legal Education." *SMUL Rev.* 51, 1419. (1997).

⁴⁵ Prensky, Marc. "The emerging online life of the digital native.", 253-263. (2004)

⁴⁶ Dunham, Catherine, and Steven I. Friedland. "Portable learning for the 21st century law school: Designing a new pedagogy for the modern global context." *J. maRshall J. computeR & info.* 1. 26, 371. (2008)

⁴⁷ Sullivan, William M., et al. *Educating lawyers: Preparation for the profession of law.* Vol. 2. John Wiley & Sons. (2007)

⁴⁸ Binford, W. Warren H. "Envisioning a twenty-first century legal education." *Wash. UJL & Pol'y* 43, 157. (2013)

⁴⁹ Murray, Kristen E. "Take Note: Teaching Law Students to Be Responsible Stewards of Technology." *Cath. UL Rev.* 70, 201. (2021)

both the quantity and quality of learning^{50 51}, should reflect the goals related to theory, practice, and professionalism. Thus, new learning environments need to be created by using available and accessible technology or by refocusing the use of technology from an administrative aid for faculty to a tool for teaching⁵². This new technology connects better to 21st century law students and their modes of learning, including their expectations about where learning can occur⁵³. Pedagogical research also confirms that the more senses we engage, the more likely our students will learn and remember⁵⁴. Educational environments that support autonomy contribute to not only active and deeper information processing but high motivation; improved academic performance, creativity, competence and engagement⁵⁵. The new learning environment, accordingly, should depend on the active involvement of students in the learning process⁵⁶.

The obvious question is: Why, despite the pervasiveness of the problem, have law schools remained tied to their traditional approaches to legal education and failed to respond to the criticism of legal education pedagogy and the requirements of the 21st century? Perhaps it is because there has been no inquiry on the students' side to inspire such a change. Law admissions are highly competitive, admitting a small select group of tried and tested academically-capable students; there was little need to worry about students, notwithstanding the problems and criticism. Research shows that the dominant practices in legal education thwart natural human needs for growth, personality integration, and internally based motivation, potentially explaining many of the negatives noted in legal education, and later, in the legal profession⁵⁷. Autonomy-supportive

⁵⁰Baeten, Marlies, et al. "Using student-centred learning environments to stimulate deep approaches to learning: Factors encouraging or discouraging their effectiveness." *Educational research review* 5 (3), 243-260. (2010)

⁵¹Lizzio, Alf, Keithia Wilson, and Roland Simons. "University students' perceptions of the learning environment and academic outcomes: implications for theory and practice." *Studies in Higher education* 27 (1), 27-52. (2002)

⁵²Weimer, Maryellen. *Learner-centered teaching: Five key changes to practice*. John Wiley & Son., (2002).

⁵³Donahoe, Diana R. "www. teachinglaw. com-Bridging the Digital Divide between Law Professor and Law Student." *Va. JL & Tech.* 5, 1. (2000)

⁵⁴Boyle, James T., and David J. Nicol. "Using classroom communication systems to support interaction and discussion in large class settings." *ALT-J* 11 (3), 43-57 (2003).

⁵⁵Sheldon, Kennon M., and Lawrence S. Krieger. "Does legal education have undermining effects on law students? Evaluating changes in motivation, values, and well-being." *Behavioral Sciences & the Law* 22 (2), 261-286. (2004)

⁵⁶Dunham, Catherine, and Steven I. Friedland. "Portable learning for the 21st century law school: Designing a new pedagogy for the modern global context." *J. maRshall J. computeR & info.* 1. 26, 371. (2008)

⁵⁷Krieger, Lawrence S. "What we're not telling law students-and lawyers-that they really need to know: Some thoughts-in-action toward revitalizing the profession from its roots." *JL & Health* 13, 1. (1998)

instruction has the potential to alleviate the negative effects of legal education on law student motivation which extend beyond graduation. In this sense, law schools must investigate the factors which are relevant to students' motivation and rethink the teaching practices that contribute to the increase in law students' motivation.

The present study was conducted by researchers of Law and Educational Sciences faculties. The impetus came from the concerns of Law Faculty academicians who were looking for an opportunity to revitalize and modernize legal education and to make it more individualized, relevant, human, and accessible. The questions they had in mind were as follows: "Does the legal education meet the needs of today's students? To what extent do the faculty members utilize modern teaching techniques? Which 21st century skills should the faculty integrate into the curriculum and how? What are the effective teaching methods that can be used in large size classes? What kind of training would the faculty members need to upgrade how they deliver legal education to current students?"

Educational psychology research about effective instruction suggests that collaborating with students is the most effective way to help them succeed in law school. Thus, in order to find out answers for these questions and to be able to suggest instructional methods, we decided to collect data first from the students. Three variables were selected for purposes of the study: students' level of motivation, their learning approaches and their attitudes toward the school climate. This data along with students' views about and expectations from the law school would be of great value in gaining a general understanding and suggesting a roadmap for the faculty.

The study

Participants and setting

One-hundred thirty students (83 female and 48 male) out of 600 who were requested to join voluntarily participated in this study. All of the students are Turkish, enrolled at the Faculty of Law of a foundation university in Istanbul, Turkey. 42 of the participants were freshmen, 35 sophomores, 24 juniors, and 30 seniors. Before the scales were given, students were asked about their daily study time and the time they spent on the internet. Accordingly, 22.1% of the students stated that they studied less than 1 hour each day, 50.4% between 1-3 hours, 22.1% between 4-6 hours and 5.3% between 7-9 hours.

Data Collection Tools

In line with the variables of interest, data for the present study come from three different scales: a school climate scale for university students, an

academic motivation scale and a learning approaches scale, and focus group interviews.

High motivation is an important factor in law schools as motivated students tend to have an internal locus of control, are driven to accomplish, seek intellectual stimulation and are enthusiastic about learning new things. In the context of classroom learning environments, motivational behavior implies that students must choose to study over other perhaps more desirable activities. They dedicate themselves to the learning task and put in the necessary time to learn both in and out of the classroom. To determine law students' academic motivation levels, the Turkish version of the Academic Motivation Scale (AMS) (Karagüven, 2012) was used. The scale was originally developed by Vallerand et al., (1993) and consists of three subdimensions with a total of 28 items. The intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation sub-dimensions consists of 12 items each and amotivation consists of 4 items. Example items for Intrinsic Motivation sub-dimension included: *"Because I experience pleasure and satisfaction while learning new things"* and *"For the satisfaction I feel when I am in the process of accomplishing difficult academic activities."* Sample items for Extrinsic Motivation were as follows: *"For the pleasure that I experience when I feel completely absorbed by what certain authors have written."* and *"Because I believe that a few additional years of education will improve my competence as a worker."* Examples of the amotivation sub-dimension were as follows: *"Honestly, I don't know; I really feel that I am wasting my time in school."* and *"I can't see why I go to college and frankly, I couldn't care less."*

The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient for the overall scale was found .67 and .95 in the Turkish version while it was found between .83 and .86 in the original scale. The items are rated on a five-point scale (1=does not correspond at all, 5=corresponds exactly). Intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation sub-dimensions consist of twelve items; thus sub-dimension scores can range from 12 to 60. Amotivation sub-dimension consists of four items, scores ranging from 4 to 28. A high score on a sub-dimension indicates high endorsement of that particular aspect of academic motivation.

Understanding exactly how students approach learning has been widely investigated and has been conceptualized as deep and surface learning approaches. Students with a deep learning approach are aiming towards understanding the material, while students with a surface learning approach are mainly aiming to reproduce the material⁵⁸. High-quality learning outcomes, such as analytical and conceptual thinking skills, may

⁵⁸ Biggs, J. "Enhancing Learning: A Matter of Style or Approach." Perspectives on Thinking, Learning and Cognitive Styles. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 73-102. (2001).

not be achieved unless students are encouraged to adopt deep approaches to learning via effective instructional methods⁵⁹.

Learning approaches of law students were measured by means of the Learning Approach scale translated into Turkish by⁶⁰ Batı, Tetik and Gürpınar (2010) from the original scale developed by⁶¹ Biggs (1984). The scale consists of a total of 20 items, representing 10 items for each sub-dimension, i.e. deep and surface approach. The total scale score that can be taken for each approach ranges from 10 to 50. Example items for Deep Approach dimension included: “*Studying academic subjects can be as exciting as a good novel or a movie*” and “*I spend most of my free time finding more information about interesting topics discussed in different lectures*”. Sample items for Surface Approach included: “*I don't find the lessons very interesting so I keep my study to a minimum*” and “*I find it useless to study topics in depth. Studying this way is confusing and a waste of time, as all that is required is enough knowledge to pass the exams*”. The items on a 5-point Likert scale ranged from (1) definitely disagree to (5) definitely agree. In the scale, the total scale score that can be taken for each approach ranges from 10 to 50. The Cronbach Alpha value was calculated as 0.772 for Deep Approach and 0.800 for Surface Approach in the Turkish version of the scale.

The school climate, the third variable, represents individuals' evaluation of the broad environment of their social context and structure in school, which reflects school norms, values, and relationships. Research has shown that the quality of the learning environments are closely related to student success.

The School Climate Scale for University Students developed by Terzi (2015) was used to measure law students' views toward the school climate in the present study⁶². The scale consists of 17 items answered on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) never to (5) always. The School climate scale consists of 17 items with three sub-dimension. The scale has three sub-dimensions: commitment to school, communication and learning environment. Communication and learning environment has 6 items and commitment has 5 items. Example items of commitment to school included “*It is a privilege to be a student in the school I study.*” “*Faculty members are willing to listen to me.*” and “*High-order thinking*

⁵⁹ Hall, Matthew, Alan Ramsay, and John Raven. "Changing the learning environment to promote deep learning approaches in first-year accounting students." *Accounting Education* 13 (4), 489-505, (2004)

⁶⁰ BATI, AYŞE, Cihat Tetik, and EROL GÜRPINAR. "Assessment of the validity and reliability of the Turkish adaptation of the study process questionnaire (R-SPQ-2F)." *TURKIYE KLINIKLERI TIP BILIMLERI DERGISI* 30.5 (2010).

⁶¹ Biggs, J. B. Learning strategies, student motivation patterns, and subjectively perceived success. *Cognitive strategies and educational performance*, 111-134. (1984)

⁶² TERZİ, Ali Rıza. "School Climate Perceptions of University Students." *Education in the 21st Century: Theory and Practice*, 61-68. (2015)

is emphasized in the courses.”. Sample items of communication sub-dimension included “When I have a problem, I don't hesitate to consult the instructors.” and “I can adequately convey my thoughts about the practices to the dean of faculty.”. Example items of learning environment sub-dimension included “My faculty provides sufficient knowledge and skills related to my profession.” and “As long as I want to learn. I will definitely find an opportunity in my faculty.”. Significant value for the 1st subdimension was determined as .75, for the 2nd subdimension as .86 and for the 3rd subdimension as .81. Reliability for the overall scale was calculated as .90. Arithmetic mean of the scores obtained from the scale (both for each dimension and the total of the scale) indicate that the arithmetic average of 1.00 - 2.60 represents a negative climate, 2.61- 3.40 represents a moderate climate, and the arithmetic average of 3.41- 5.00 represents a positive climate.

After quantitative analysis, a focus group interview with seven students was conducted. A focus group interview is based on understanding people's thoughts on the subject in a social environment where the participants can hear each other's views and make additions when they feel necessary⁶³. Evidence suggests that mixed gender groups tend to improve the quality of discussions and its outcomes⁶⁴. 11 Turkish students from the faculty of law (3 female, 4 male) voluntarily joined the focus group interview. The focus group interview in this study was conducted on Zoom, and the interview was recorded with the consent of the participants. The focus-group moderators, authors of the current paper, probed participants' experiences, asking them to share their experiences and views about what they expect from law education⁶⁵ (Breen, 2006). The moderators facilitated the discussion on the topic of interest, ensuring that each participant is able to contribute fully to the developing discussion.

Data Analysis

SPSS 24 package program was used to analyze quantitative data. As the first step of descriptive statistics, the means and standard deviations of the total and each dimension in each scale were determined . The data was then analyzed according to the students' years, and the found data was tabulated and graphed.

⁶³ Büyüköztürk, Şener, Kılıç Çakmak, Ebru, Akgün, Özcan Erkan, Karadeniz Şirin and Demirel, Funda. Bilimsel Araştırma Yöntemleri. Pegem Yayıncılık. (2016)

⁶⁴ Freitas H, Oliveira M, Jenkins M and Popjoy O. The Focus Group, a qualitative research method. Journal of Education, 1(1), 1-22. (1998)

⁶⁵ Breen, Rosanna L. "A practical guide to focus-group research." Journal of geography in higher education 30 (3), 463-475. (2006)

Data from the focus group study were analyzed by means of pattern coding⁶⁶. Transcriptions of group interviews were developed and the emerging themes were identified and coded by two researchers autonomously⁶⁷. In the case of inconsistency of coding, consensus was utilized to decide on a final code.

Findings

Table 1 presents the mean scores and the standard deviations on the academic motivation scale' sub-dimensions. The academic motivation scale is divided into three sub-dimensions. For Intrinsic and extrinsic sub-dimension, the lowest score students can collect is 12, while the highest score is 60. The sub-dimension of amotivation provides the lowest 4 highest 20 points. Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviations for the sub-dimensions of the academic motivation scale.

Table 1. Mean and standard deviation of academic motivation scale

		Mean	Std. Deviation
Academic Motivation Scale	Intrinsic Motivation	46.34	9.20
	Extrinsic Motivation	43.90	9.92
	Amotivation	6.18	2.89

A further analysis was conducted on the means according to participants' classes of the students and the graphics were created.

Table 2. Mean and standard deviations of the sub-dimensions of the academic motivation scale by class

⁶⁶ Miles, Matthew B., and A. Michael Huberman. *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. sage, 1994.

⁶⁷ Harper, David, and Andrew R. Thompson, eds. *Qualitative research methods in mental health and psychotherapy: A guide for students and practitioners*. John Wiley & Sons, 2011.

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Intrinsic Motivation	1	42	48.45	7.075
	2	35	46.80	8.874
	3	24	44.21	8.257
	4	30	44.53	12.204
	Total	131	46.34	9.207
Extrinsic Motivation	1	42	44.81	8.326
	2	35	43.86	10.146
	3	24	43.83	10.745
	4	30	42.73	11.338
	Total	131	43.90	9.923
Amotivation	1	42	5.43	1.684
	2	35	6.34	3.429
	3	24	6.13	2.787
	4	30	7.07	3.453
	Total	131	6.18	2.894

Figure 1. Intrinsic motivation sub-dimension according to class

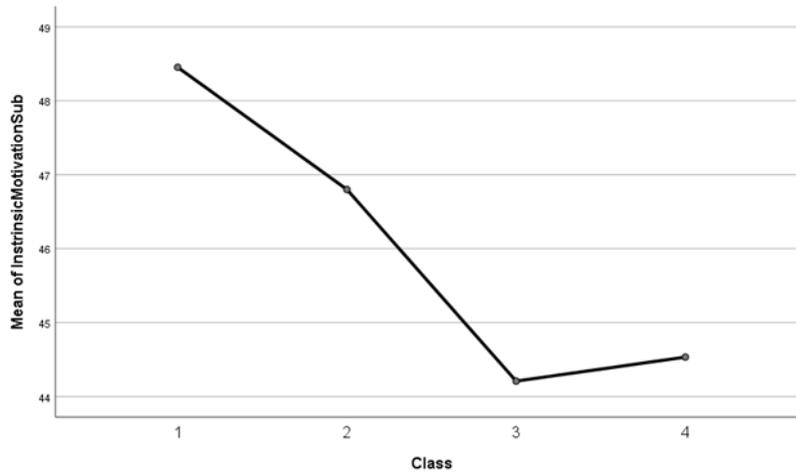


Figure 2. Extrinsic motivation sub-dimension according to class

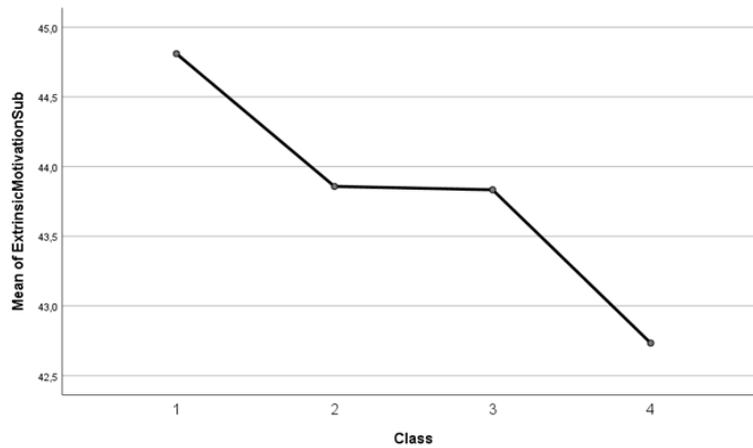
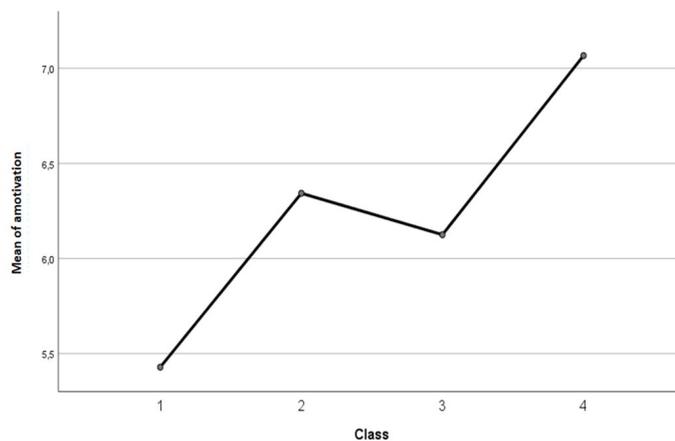


Figure 3. Amotivation sub-dimension according to class



As shown in the tables, although the mean of intrinsic motivation is high, its rate goes down as the class levels get higher. In this sense, it is possible to say that students' intrinsic motivations decreased over the years. Regarding students' extrinsic motivation, we can see that the highest mean is again achieved in the first class (mean=44.81). Similarly, the rate of extrinsic motivation drops as the students get to higher classes. Amotivation, on the other hand, increases over the years, from an average rate of 5.43 to 7.07 in four years.

The Learning Approach is divided into two sub-dimensions. In both sub-dimensions, the total scale score that students can get is a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 50. Table 3 shows mean and standard deviations of the sub-dimensions of the learning approach scale.

Table 3. Mean and standard deviation of learning approach scale

		Mean	Std. Deviation
Learning Approach Scale	Deep	34.02	6.59
	Surface	22.48	7.58

The data were further analyzed according to the class levels of students (Table 4).

Table 4. Mean and standard deviations of the sub-dimensions of the learning approach scale by class

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Deep	1	42	35.67	6.03
	2	35	35.86	6.97
	3	24	31.88	7.06
	4	30	31.30	9.51
	Total	131	34.02	7.58
Surface	1	42	20.38	5.16
	2	35	22.83	7.22
	3	24	24.54	7.50
	4	30	23.37	6.37
	Total	131	22.48	6.59

As can be seen, as students' class levels change, the deep learning approach decreases while the surface learning approach gets higher. Looking at the deep learning approach according to the classes, it was found that the students reached the deep learning approach at the highest level in the second grade, and as the grade level progressed, the level of deep learning decreased. When looking at surface learning approaches, students' surface learning levels are lower at the beginning of the university, while it shows the highest level of surface learning before the last year.

The School Climate scale is divided into three sub-dimensions. The total scale score that students can get from the sub-dimensions to the school is a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 25. In the communication and learning environment sub-dimension, students can collect a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 30 scale points. Table 5 shows the mean and standard deviations of the sub-dimensions. As can be seen, commitment to school has a lower score than the other two.

Table 5. Mean and standard deviation of school climate scale

		Mean	Std. Deviation
School Climate Scale	Commitment	18.75	4.58
	Communication	23.28	5.20
	Learning Environment	22.58	5.69

The mean score of each sub dimension according to the class levels can be seen in Table 6. As can be seen, students' commitment to school, their rating of communication in the faculty and the learning environment decreased over the year.

Table 6. Mean and standard deviations of the sub-dimensions of the school climate scale by class

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Commitment to School	1	42	21.14	3.197
	2	35	17.63	5.076
	3	24	18.21	3.671
	4	30	17.13	5.097
	Total	131	18.75	4.581
Communication	1	42	25.24	3.553
	2	35	24.14	5.123
	3	24	22.04	4.814
	4	30	20.53	6.230
	Total	131	23.28	5.202
Learning Environment	1	42	25.33	3.545
	2	35	22.94	5.693
	3	24	21.50	4.700
	4	30	19.17	6.929
	Total	131	22.58	5.696

Students' levels of commitment to school have a high value when they start school. It has been determined that this commitment begins to decrease as the grade progresses. Although a small increase was observed in students' commitment to school while they were in the third grade, it was determined that they moved away from school again at the last grade level. Communication sub-dimension differs as grade levels change, as do students' school engagement. When students start university, their communication skills have a high value, but when they reach senior year, a great decrease in communication skills has been detected.

Looking at the learning environment sub-dimension according to the classes, it has been determined that the students start to move away from the learning environment as they skip classes. When they started the first grade, the value they gave to feel more belonging to the learning environment was also high, and it was determined that this situation was at the lowest value when they came to the 4th grade.

Focus group interview results

Volunteer students were contacted primarily via e-mail and the meeting link was shared. During the meeting, the conversation was initiated by asking one of the first open-ended questions. During the interview, the students made additions to each other's thoughts by asking for the right to

speak. In addition, the students gave direction to the topic of the agenda with the thoughts they shared.

Analyses of the interview transcripts revealed participating students' concerns and suggestions regarding the education they have in law school. All students indicated their wish for more active learning as can be seen in the following quotes:

"We want to be encouraged to think more and to practice more guidance to more materials that we will use in the future"

"One of the profs in the dept gives us information that we cannot find in the books this is what I want"

"Instructors will shape us OK- but without imposing one idea; they need to lead us to resources and we will work out the necessary info on our own"

Another theme that students focused on was their need for more "discussion" in their courses. Students all indicated that they needed more time to express themselves and underlined the importance of the ability of "self-expression". Some students indicated that the Socratic approach to case method teaching is premised on the assumption that law students are actively engaged; however, especially in large classes this was true only for a "handful of students" while the majority listened to the "same students leading the discussions". The following quotes illustrate students' views clearly:

"A person in law is a 'jeweler' of words; we need more and equal time for expressing ourselves"

"Most of our classes are based totally on theory; we really need more practice"

Related to active learning and self-expression, students shared their views about instructors' role in education. Students indicated that instructors should do more than present what they "can read in the books anyhow"; instructors should share their "experiences from the field" and make students "think and react". Two students indicated that any "instructional change should start with freshman students" as it becomes very hard to make students adapt to a new system afterwards.

There were a number of students who mentioned the importance of collaboration. Three students noted that it is also important to experience teamwork before they embark on a professional life.

“We need working in a group; tolerating others’ views, justifying our points - these are the skills we need”

“I feel that it is very hard for most of us to solve a case in a group; we need more practice”

All students emphasized the importance of technology integration in their lessons. Some underlined that an alternative teaching method such as flipped learning would let them have more time for in-class discussions, since it enables them to spend less time on theoretical issues during class time. Some argued that they would like to learn what technology could offer to law education: *“It would be nice to integrate our lessons with technology and learn about the benefits of technology for our field.”* Some stated that practice-oriented implementations could be integrated into the law lessons with the help of technology: *“We can use virtual courts for some of our lessons.”*

Result and Discussion

The need for reform in legal education has been emphasized in the legal community. Law schools and law professors should take steps to maximize the learning experiences for students.

The present study was conducted to explore the academic motivations, learning approaches and school climate attitudes of law faculty students with the aim of proposing appropriate, innovative teaching methods. According to the data collected through three different scales, it was revealed that the motivation levels, learning approaches and school climate evaluations of Turkish law faculty students were high at the stage they first started school, according to the measurements of the scales. However, further analysis of the data showed that the rates decreased over the years. It is observed that students become less motivated over the years and their level of amotivation increases. Similarly their deep learning approach and commitment to school decline. Students’ suggestions about the instructional methods underlined the necessity of a reform initiative in the law school.

A reform in legal education should start with the integration of technology to meet the changing demands of the 21st century and to respond to the criticisms regarding legal education. Sonsteng et al., (2007) suggest that a system-wide reform of legal education requires open minds and innovative thinking, and it is possible by making use of available tools and techniques⁶⁸. With the help of technology, law schools could develop meaningful and relevant pedagogical tools to teach their students more effectively, efficiently, and affordably. The modes of delivery of

⁶⁸ Sonsteng, John O., et al. "A legal Education renaissance: A practical approach for the twenty-first century." *Wm. Mitchell L. Rev.* 34, 303. (2007)

education by means of different online tools such as video feeds, podcasts, discussion forums, dialogs/chats, blogs, wikis, Learning Management Systems (LMS) or Internet-based Course Management Systems (CMS) can change the way information is disseminated, in line with the learning habits and learning preferences of modern students^{69 70 71}. Through such tools, lectures can be made available for student review at any time, leaving more time for more projects and active learning. As students spend more class time on hands-on legal research, they become more active and responsible learners engaging in their own studies. More time could be allocated to ‘analyzing complex hypotheticals and crafting effective research strategies’ which in turn helped students’ deep learning experience⁷¹.

To make law students practice ready, most legal professors would agree that law school students should develop competencies such as critical thinking, collaborative problem solving, legal analysis and communication^{71 69}. Research suggests that putting students at the recipient end of information does not promote critical thinking at all. Instead, as ‘there is a direct link between independent learning and critical thinking’⁷³. Therefore, the freed-up classroom time allows teachers to engage their students in higher-order learning. Higher-order learning activities are of particular importance for law classrooms as they enable students to foster critical thinking skills and practice the skills they acquired through viewing the videos⁷².

To conclude, law faculty needs learning environments in which students actively engage and take responsibility for their own learning and the dependence on teachers for knowledge acquisition is reduced. Active learning will promote higher level thinking and develop skills, both of which are prominent goals of law school^{73 74 69}. Innovations in teaching and learning will permit the legal education system to finally do what it promises to do--educate lawyers to practice law by engaging and

⁶⁹ Matthew, Anne, and Richard Evans. "Managing distraction in 21st century learning environments." Proceedings of the 15th International First Year in Higher Education Conference. Queensland University of Technology Events, 2012.

⁷⁰ Wolff, Lutz-Christian, and Jenny Chan. "Case Study: Flipped Classrooms for ‘The Law of International Business Transactions II’." *Flipped Classrooms for Legal Education*. Springer, Singapore, 81-107. (2016)

⁷¹ Appleby, Gabrielle, Peter Burdon, and Alexander Reilly. "Critical thinking in legal education: our journey." *Legal Educ. Rev.* 23, 345 (2013)

⁷² Larrington, Jane M., and Judith Lihosit. "Flipping the legal research classroom." (2013)

⁷³ Caron, Paul L., and Rafael Gely. "Taking back the law school classroom: Using technology to foster active student learning." *J. Legal Educ.* 54, 551. (2004)

⁷⁴ Cicero, June. "Piercing the socratic veil: adding an active learning alternative in legal education." *Wm. Mitchell L. Rev.* 15, 1011. (1989)

preparing law students to work with complex and difficult legal issues that they will face in their careers.