

Non-Academic Factors (De) Motivating Private School Teachers: A Case of EFL Teachers in the Nepalese Context

Laxmi Prasad Khanal

Teacher, Janata Secondary School, Khotang
Email: khanallaxmiprasad29@gmail.com

Abstract

Motivation plays a crucial role to regulate an individual for the exceptional performance in the workplace. Most importantly, it has drawn a grave attention of the people involved in the field of education in general and English language teaching in particular. This study discusses the fundamental factors, which are non-academic in nature, (de) motivating the secondary level EFL private teachers in the Nepalese context. For the conduction of this study, the narrative inquiry was employed as a research design. Four EFL male teachers teaching at institutional schools in Kathmandu Valley were selected as a sampling population of the study. The informants were chosen via purposive non-random sampling procedure. The data were obtained through in-depth teachers' narratives. The results show that the EFL institutional school teachers were found to be demotivated because of the non-academic factors, which include low social status, sore throat problem, nepotism and kinship, and improper schools' location. This study also suggests to the teacher educators, policy makers, environmentalists, and academic administrators that they take into account these non-academic factors that demotivate the EFL private school teachers so as to bring about a paradigm shift in the overall education system in general and English language teaching in particular in Nepal.

Keywords: EFL teachers, (de)motivation, institutional school teachers, paradigm shift, Nepal

Introduction

English language in Nepal is learnt and taught right from grade one to bachelor degree as a compulsory subject. Regarding the status of English in Nepal, Shrestha (1983) argues that English is not a second and/ or one of the official languages of the country.

English language teaching (ELT) requires a high level of motivation of the teachers, who teach English in particular. More specifically, English has been used as a medium of instruction in many private schools, colleges and universities in Nepal (Bista, 2011). As English in Nepal is learnt and taught as a foreign language, it is obvious that students do have problems with English—not only students, but the teachers as well. English, however, could be taught effectively if the ELT teachers are valued and motivated in a way that they feel recognized in and outside the classroom.

Motivation is a stimulant that drives individuals towards excellence. Motivation is that inner drive or force that makes us feel like doing something with willingness and enthusiasm. Moorhead and Griffin (2004, as cited in Monyastsi, 2006) define motivation as a set of forces that lead people to behave in particular ways. In other words, it is an inner state that energizes, moves, channels, and sustains behavior towards goal. Moreover, Han and Yin (2016) consider motivation a significant aspect in achieving a desired goal. Motivation encourages teachers to work on duty and helps to create a good morale and bring about cooperation in their work. Most significantly, Phyak et al. (2017) define motivation as teachers' attraction towards teaching profession and their long-term concentration and commitment in the profession. Thus, if teachers are to be sustained in teaching for a long time and if they are satisfied with the desired facilities, they are supposed to be teaching with high enthusiasm and dedication. Dornyei and Ushioda (2001) states that motivation explains why people decide to do something, how hard they are going to pursue it and how long they are willing to sustain the activity.

Sinclair (2008) defines teacher motivation in terms of attraction, retention and concentration as something that determines what attracts individuals to teaching, how long they remain in their initial teacher education courses and subsequently the teaching profession, and the extent to which they engage with their courses and teaching profession. It is essential to keep in mind that teacher motivation in matter of teaching and learning plays a vital role in giving the best to the students. This is what a motivated teacher can do, but if s/he is not made satisfied can feel demotivated in turn.

Teacher motivation is helpful for administrators to determine how to attract potential teachers and how to retain them in teaching. Similarly, Dornyei and Ushioda (2001) highlight two dimensions of teacher motivation viz., the motivation to teach and motivation to remain in the profession. This shows that the teachers should be motivated for making teaching effective, in turn; they can remain in teaching longer. Further, Nawaz and Yasin (2015) write that employees are motivated by handsome prompt salary, unbiased appraisals, positive behavior of students, presence of rooms, friendly environment, availability of learning resources, small class size, less distance from the school, selecting upper class as target market and autonomy given to school teachers. Moreover, Tambunan et al. (2018) reported that motivation as indicated by both teachers' commitment and satisfaction could have a significant impact on the competence and in achieving its predetermined goals, committed and satisfied human resources are therefore considered as the most critical assets. Teacher motivation is very critical in achieving academic excellence. Bishay (1996) argues that teaching profession ranks high on the success list of a society. Indeed, teachers are mentors, life shapers, destiny shapers, and they must be prepared to undertake the task put into their hands diligently.

Demotivation of the teachers begins when they express dissatisfaction due to the problems with in and out factors. Monetary reward that the job offers is one factor of demotivation (Tziava, 2003). Teaching English is adversely affected by teacher demotivation. Teacher demotivation is a major obstacle in teaching and learning process. In this regard, Trang and Baldauf Jr. (2007) state that demotivation is a significant issue for EFL learning.

There may be a plethora of factors that demotivate the teachers. Aydin (2012) found that the problems were related to the teaching profession, curriculum, working conditions, students and their parents, colleagues and school administrators, and physical conditions. Furthermore, Hettiarachchi (2013) highlighted several key factors that served as major demotivators, such as inadequate teaching and learning facilities in schools, inefficiencies in school administration, challenges in securing teacher transfers, and mismatches between the English curriculum and students' needs. Khanal et al. (2021) also reported that teachers experience demotivation due to the academic factors - such as job insecurity, lack of continuing professional development, students' disruptive behaviors, and fewer holidays.

Some studies talk about the factors motivating teachers. Regarding this, the factors that motivate the teachers are, like satisfactory salary, administrative support, good rapport with the students and colleagues, incentives, and so forth. Conversely, some of the other studies talk about the factors that demotivate the teachers. Such factors include workload, lack of collegiality, and lack of supportive school environment. However, no any of these studies talk much about the non-academic factors that demotivate the EFL institutional school teachers neither at the national level nor at the international level. Therefore, the present study intends to explore the question that includes: What are the non- academic factors (de) motivating the EFL institutional teachers in Nepal?

Methods

The present study follows narrative research design as this very design helps the researcher get hands- on information about the selected participants and the data were collected by using in-depth teachers' interviews. Before having the interview, the consent form was distributed to align with ethical consideration. The population of this study was EFL secondary level private teachers of Kathmandu Valley. The sample of the study included 4 EFL male teachers teaching at private schools. The sample of the study was selected through purposive non- random procedure. The researcher employed both primary and secondary sources of data for the study. The primary data were collected from the 4 EFL private teachers teaching at private schools in Kathmandu Valley. The secondary information was derived from different printed and electronic materials like, books, articles and documents relating to the present study.

Results and Discussion

This section discusses non-academic factors which are responsible for demotivating the private EFL teachers. The teachers' narratives have been categorized under four specific themes- low social status, school's location, throat problem and nepotism and kinship. The teachers have been entitled teacher A, teacher B, teacher C, and teacher D.

Low Social Status

Social status is the relative level of social value a person is considered to possess. Sometimes a teacher is demotivated due to his low social status in the society. His contribution and hard work is not valued and respected. Regarding this, teacher A said:

I also believe the same idea.... yes.... definitely.... I have experienced the same thing so many times... you know...whenever we are in public. and there are people who know us.... they seem to be taking us lightly.... they seem to be ...you know like...taking as a person having very low prestigious work....so I believe ...people across the country... the people in our society. ..are not that educated as a result...they don't seem to be respecting the people involving in this sector...Well , I have already said ...Well....respect is the first thing that all the human beings deserve for better performance.....

The teacher A's story above states that he is demotivated for possessing low social status in the community. Regarding this, Khanal (2019) argues that the teachers are demotivated due to poor societal recognition - that the society does not value and respect him neither his profession. Likewise, Yaghoubinejad et al. (2017) have stated that junior high school English teachers are demotivated due to lack of social recognition and respect.

In the similar vein, teacher B commented:

Hmm.... ha.... it's a very funny question..... the main thing is that I am not much happy myself as a private teacher because the people in the society take us in an indifferent way... they say that the private teachers have gone teaching at private schools' jut for money...and they didn't get any job around they are working in a very low salary....so their perception is very sarcastic to the private teachers.... the society also does not accept us as an intellectual person.....

Teacher B's narrative shows the fact that he was also found to be demotivated due to the negative societal perceptions towards the private teachers. If the teachers are viewed positively with high value and respect, they are unlikely to be stressed and demotivated in teaching. In this regard, SC et. al. (2021) have also appealed to respect teachers and their teaching, which is a true act of humanity faith.

Likewise, teacher D narrates:

Well ...ah ...I don't likely like the socio- political system of Nepallike teachers at private schools are viewed as someone having no prestige and good knowledge in having a government job.....and the society views the private teachers in way that it does not value them....like if someone has got a government job at government sector, they get lots of posts of congratulations on Facebook, if we get a job at private schools, they don't pay any attention.....not only that , the school administrators are always found to be dominating us this way or the other...

From teacher D's utterance, it can be revealed that he was also found to be demotivated to teach as a private teacher because of socio- political structures. People who receive enough social care are less stressed than those who do not (SC et. al. (2021).

Regarding the societal status of the teachers, teacher C has stated in the following way:

Well, I used to be a highly motivated teacher in the beginning of my teacher career; however, over the course of time I have lost my interest in teaching because of the way I am viewed as a private teacher...I think I should try to be a permanent government teacher or should think of changing the profession....to be honest....

From teacher C's response, it is understood that he experienced demotivation due to the way he is perceived as a private teacher. In this regard, Kiziltepe (2008) has stated that a demotivated teacher is a teacher who is once motivated but loses interest for some reason.

To sum up, based on the narratives of all the teachers the institutional teachers were found to be frustrated, disappointed and demotivated due to the fact that some people in the society have indifferent attitude and perceive the private teachers as unconcerned and less appealing citizens in the community.

School's Location

The location of school plays a vital role in promoting teaching and learning activities. This theme expresses the idea that the EFL private teachers were demotivated due to improper location of schools. They feel annoyed due to different forms of pollution while teaching in the classroom. Regarding this, teacher B said:

Hum.....actually, our school is located past the busy road.....so there is a bit sound pollution...which disturbs the teaching and learning processbecause the vehicles they are quite disturbing.....so.... school is trying to create compatible environment....

It is noticed that he is demotivated due to the improper site of the school – by the busy roads. In support of this, Okunola (1985) states that well sited school buildings with

aesthetic conditions, laboratory and playground often improve the performance in the school system (Bulunuz, 2021). Such school facilities contribute for the teacher motivation. The noise phenomenon at school is one of the factors that may negatively affect school climate.

Regarding this teacher D has stated:

umm...well...the school where I teach is located by the highway at Kausaltar.....it's so risky to cross the roads to be here ...because it's one of the busiest roads in Nepal... due to the vehicles running all the time, the class where I teach is badly and adversely disturbed...this truly frustrates me....

From teacher D's narrative, he is completely demotivated due to the indecorous location of the school. Aryal (2022) reported that constant movement of heavy vehicles through school areas causes distress and anxiety among students, teachers and parents. As a result, teachers are unable to focus on what they are teaching in the classroom.

To wrap up, based on the narratives of the teachers above, it can be said that private teachers were found to be demotivated and disappointed due to the improper location of the schools. This is supported by Hettiarchchi (2013) when he/she reports teachers are demotivated due to lack of facilities they have in their schools.

Throat Problem

Teacher's health is of paramount significance. In this regard, Sugino (2010) states that health condition is a factor that demotivates the teachers in teaching. This theme is reflected from teacher D's narratives below:

Well...Unfortunately, ...I am so frustrated at the moment ...because I have recently completed masters investing over 8 lakhs from the central department of English Education, it's now time for me to start earning by teaching...I am very sorry to share with you the fact that I have had sore throat problem ... I consulted the doctor...got my throat x-rayed...the report showed that I have had a throat nodule.....this means I should not teach now. the doctor has advised me to have a complete voice rest still for many days...this has truly frustrated me.... there is going to have been a turning point in my life ...you know in private schools, we have to speak a lot, especially English teachers because we have to teach over 7 periods a day...there are 50 plus students in one class...somewhere more as well...

Teacher D's story is really heart- touching. Voice disorders are frequent among teachers on the onset of their career (Nerriere, et al., 2009). SC et al. (2021) further state that teachers, as the professional voice users, are at particular risk of voice disorders. Similarly. Scheuch et al. (2015, p.347) state that teachers' health has a defining effect on

quality of teaching and thereby on the success of students learning in particular, burnout among teachers reduces quality of teaching.

Nepotism and Kinship

Nepotism is practiced especially while providing a job and/ or favors to the relatives. This theme is derived from teacher C's and D's narratives which expresses the idea that even at the private schools, there is politics in matter of recruiting the teachers, due to which the teachers are demotivated. Regarding this, teacher C said:

.... well.... ah...I have the feeling of demotivation if the junior teachers try to dominate the seniors just because of the relatives of administrators..... because of that the private teachers leave their job...and I am not an exception....

The teacher C's story shows that he is demotivated due to the favoritism. Nepotism brings about negative attitudes of personnel towards the organization and decreases their devotion to their jobs, which handicaps the productivity and success of an organization (Abdalla et al.,1998). Similarly, Kim (2004) says that favoritism is a major reason for lack of productivity.

In the similar line, teacher D stated:

...and nepotismdue to which even the less qualified teachers teach at private schools with the senior ranks who try to be over- smart in front of teachers, including me ...and sometimes what I notice is even if they do wrongs, they are not taken any actions against...the school administrators try to save themfavor them.... but if we do any wrongs or speak against the school, we are now kept in a list of most wanted.....

From teacher D's story, it is found that there is a trend of practicing kinship system in the private schools. In fact, favoritism harms justice as it gives advantages to undeserving people and damages people's good intentions. (Aydogan, 2009).

Conclusion and Implications

Teaching profession is a manufacturer of all the professions we come across. The results of this study reveal that the non- academic factors viz., low societal perception, improper school location, sore throat problem, and nepotism and kinship are the key contributors of EFL institutional teachers' demotivation. A demotivated teacher cannot do and give the best to the students. Therefore, the teachers should be pleased with incentives and required supports no matter what types of schools and what levels they teach. But unfortunately, there is discrepancy regarding everything like salary, societal perception, between the private and the community schools in Nepal.

The findings of this study are expected to contribute to formulation of better policies and programs, as they make various stakeholders aware, including environmentalists, teacher educators, prospective researchers, teachers, and leaders. Frankly speaking, there is going to be a huge shortage of teachers in a decade in Nepal, which aligns with Watt et al. (2012). They have stressed that research interest in teachers' motivation to teach and to remain teaching in the past decade has highlighted possible causes of the existing and potential teacher shortages due to teacher attrition, teaching force ageing, imbalance of high demand with less reward, limited career opportunities, less job security and low prestige.

Teacher demotivation has a crucial role to play. The demotivated teachers can be motivated by taking into account the factors aforementioned. Firstly, while establishing the schools, the inverters have to think of pollution free location so that teaching and learning process could be advanced smoothly in a sound environment. Indeed, school's location matters as it is witnessed that teachers feel distracted while they are teaching. Secondly, teachers' health should also be of utmost importance as without healthy body and mind, the shared goal cannot be achieved. Furthermore, nepotism and kinship should be discouraged in the workplace as favoritism in terms of proximity could lead to educational catastrophe. Thirdly, the people concerned, including principals, (school) administrators, policy makers and civil society are to be grave in safeguarding the social status of the teachers. If done so, the teachers could feel valued and motivated, who will, in turn, contribute for the betterment of society as a whole.

References

- Abdalla, H. F., Maghrabi, A. S., & Raggad, B. G. (1998). Assessing the perceptions of human resource managers toward nepotism: A cross-cultural study. *International Journal of Manpower*, 19(8), 554–570. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/01437729810242235>
- Aydin, S. (2012). Factors causing demotivation in EFL teaching process: A case study. *Qualitative Report*, 17(101), 1-13. <http://dx.doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2012.1696>
- Aydogan, I. (2009). Favoritism in the Turkish Educational System: Nepotism, Cronyism, and Patronage. *Educational Policy Analysis and Strategic Research*, 4(1).
- Bishay, A. (1996). Teacher motivation and job satisfaction: A study employing the experience sampling method. *A Journal of Undergraduate Science*, 3, 147-155. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Teacher-Motivation-and-Job-Satisfaction%3A-A-Study-Bishay/de4632f611ca43f38213aebb954afcc0554f2e48>
- Bista, K. (2011). Teaching English as a foreign/second language in Nepal: Past and present. *English for Specific Purposes World*, 11(32), 1-9. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED530898.pdf>

- Bulunuz, N., Coşkun Onan, B., & Bulunuz, M. (2021). Teachers' Noise Sensitivity and Efforts to Prevent Noise Pollution in School. *Journal of Qualitative Research in Education*, 26, 171-197. <https://doi.org/10.14689/enad.26.8>
- Dornyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (2001). *Teaching and researching motivation* (2nd Ed.). Longman.
- Han, J., & Yin, H. (2016). Teacher Motivation: Definition, research development and implications for teachers. *Cogent Education*, 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2016.1217819>
- Hettiarachchi, S. (2013). English Language teacher's motivation in Sri Lankan public schools. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 4(1), 1-11. <http://www.academypublication.com/issues/past/jltr/vol04/01/01.pdf>
- Khanal, L. P. (2019). *EFL teacher motivation for professional development: A narrative inquiry*. [Unpublished master's thesis]. Tribhuvan University.
- Khanal, L. P., Bidari, S., & Nadif, B. (2021). Teachers' (de)motivation during COVID-19 pandemic: A case study from Nepal. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation*, 4(6), 82-88. <https://doi.org/10.32996/ijllt.2021.4.6.10>
- Kim, K-ho. (2004). *Favoritism and reverse discrimination*. Economics. <http://www.economics.adelaide.edu.au/staff/kim/favoritism.pdf>.
- Kiziltepe, Z. (2008). Motivation and demotivation of university teachers. *Teachers and Technology*, 14, 515-530. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540600802571361>
- Monyatsi, P. P. (2006). Motivating the motivators with developmental teacher appraisal. *Journal of Social Science*, 13(2), 101-107. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09718923.2006.11892538>
- Nawaz, N., & Yasin, H. (2015). Determinants of motivation in teachers: A study of institutional secondary school's chain networks in Bahawalpur. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(4), 55-59. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1083768.pdf>
- Nerrière, E., Vercambre, M. N., Gilbert, F., Kovess-Masfety, V. (2009). Voice disorders and mental health in teachers: A cross-sectional nationwide study. *BMC Public Health*, 9(370). <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-9-370>
- Phyak, P., Gurung, Y., Khanal, P., Mabuhang, B. K., & Neupane, M. (2017). *Situational Analysis of teacher motivation and professional development: Save the Children; Center for Alternative Development Studies (ECADS)*. Lalitpur.
- Asha, S. C., Mahesh, T. R., Vivek, V., & Suresh, M. (2021). The Importance of Teacher's Mental Health and Wellness for Quality Learning in Classrooms during COVID-19 Pandemic. *Social Science Research Network*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3837304>

- Scheuch, K., Haufe, E., & Seibt, R. (2015). Teachers' Health. *Deutsches Arzteblatt international*, 112(20), 347–356. <https://doi.org/10.3238/arztebl.2015.0347>
- Sinclair, C. (2008). Initial and changing student teacher motivation and commitment to teaching. *Asia Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 36, 79-104. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13598660.801971658>
- Shrestha, R. (1983). English as a second language/English as a foreign distinction: Its pedagogy & the Nepalese context. *Contribution to Nepalese Studies*, 11(1), 45-59. https://himalaya.socanth.cam.ac.uk/collections/journals/contributions/pdf/CNAS_11_01_03.pdf
- Sugino, T. (2010). Teacher demotivational factors in the Japanese language teaching context. *Procedia-Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 3, 216-226. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.07.036>
- Tambunan, A. R. S., Hamied, F. A., & Sundayana, W. (2018). EFL teachers' motivation and competence in an Indonesian context as assessed within the framework of Maslow's and Herberg's theories. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 8(1), 68-78. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v8i1.11481>
- Trang, T. T. T., & Baldauf Jr, R. B. (2007). Demotivation: Understanding resistance to English language learning- The case of Vietnamese students. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, 4(1), 79-105.
- Tziava, K. (2003). *Factors that motivate and demotivate Greek EFL teachers*. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. The University of Edinburgh.
- Watt, H. M. G., Richardson, P. W., Klusmann, U., Kunter, M., Beyer, B., Trautwein, U., & Baumert, J. (2012). Motivations for choosing teaching as a career: An international comparison using the FIT-Choice scale. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 28(6), 791-805. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2012.03.003>
- Yaghoubinejad, H., Zarrinabadi, N., & Nejadansari, D. (2017). Culture-Specificity of teacher demotivation: Iranian junior high school teachers caught in the newly-introduced CLT trap! *Teachers and Teaching Theory and Practice*, 23, 127-140. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2016.1205015>
- Aryal, M. (2022, March 12). Noise pollution affecting in Palpa schools. *The Kathmandu Post*. <https://kathmandupost.com/province-no-5/2022/03/12/noise-pollutionaffecting-children-in-palpa-schools>