

## The Impact of Student and Peer Behaviour On EFL Teachers' Motivation and Job Satisfaction in a Saudi Arabian Context

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### Abstract

This article investigates the effect that students and peers, their behaviours, and the way classes are practically and physically taught affect teachers' motivation and job satisfaction in a Saudi Arabian context. A lack of trained teachers, unawareness of the cultural differences between their home country and that of Saudi Arabia, and the lack of training and induction in their working life, means it may be difficult to integrate into the workplace and, indeed, society. This has a knock on effect on their personal and professional lives, and added to the somewhat perplexing attitudes of some students and peer teachers, who for reasons including non-compliance, unwillingness and demotivation among students, as well as peer teachers who were perceived as poor, untrained and uncooperative, can make time at work within the Kingdom difficult, unrewarding and lonely. This results in many teachers feeling unappreciated, demotivated and demoralised, and they have little satisfaction in the job they are doing.

### Keywords

Teacher job satisfaction, teacher motivation, student teacher relationships, Saudi Arabia

### The Teacher's Role, and the Relationship Challenge with Peers and Students

Saudi Arabia has long understood the importance of education and the fact that business across the planet is mainly conducted in English (Moskovsky & Picard, 2018). This has been the case for quite some time; the Kingdom's Ministry of Education implemented English language classes as a staple helping of the educational diet for its schools as far back as the 1950s (Al-Ghamdi & Al-Sadaat, 2015), and if the country is to diversify from its oil revenue and succeed on the world stage, as has been the plan instigated by the Government, as well as having the brightest students representing its future, they must also be able to converse and communicate in English (Rao, 2019). The Kingdom incentivises educational workers into the country by offering some of the best paid positions on the market for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers, and along with a very low cost of living, this makes for an extremely lucrative proposition for English language education professionals to spend a number of years in the Kingdom.

That said, there has been a steady flow of teachers who fail to stick out the job on a long-term basis, and this is due to a number of reasons; the conservatism of the country, institutional problems that make progress and promotion difficult thereby inhibiting the progress of the teachers, and then there is the case that many teachers view working in Saudi as a means of topping up their bank balance and then moving on to what they see as an easier lifestyle in a

different country. This is hardly conducive to keeping a steady ship as far as continuity of teacher and levels of professionalism is concerned.

To cope with this transitory nature of native English speaking teachers (NESTs), Saudi's Ministry of Education (MoE) continues to employ many non-native English speaking teachers (NNESTs) throughout the education system to prop up the English language syllabi, and although they are qualified, they are viewed by some parents, students and institutions as second best, which means the NESTs will usually receive preferential treatment in terms of wages, the promotional pecking order and, indeed, employment. This kind of treatment can cause divisions and conflict within the institution, and 'us versus them' situations between NNESTs and NESTs (Alshammari, 2020).

Littlewood reported that a NNEST's anxiety of using English affects their teaching skills and amounts to limited use of English conversation with students (2007), and so it is possible that this is one reason it may seem as though students and their parents, and in some cases, employers, have a preference for a native English speaking teacher. However, since Chakma's study on the myth of the native speaker, this theory has been dispelled among experts (2020). Even having said that, there has been no significant change in this belief among either employers or learners, and it has continued to have an impact on conditions and pay structures as well as the received perception of NNESTs (Chakma, 2020).

Across the board, teachers have complained about a lack of resources, poor management and poor facilities (Alenezi, 2018) adding to their woes, and making their working life more difficult than it could or should be. The poor culture of studying, teaching, and learning is not beneficial to either the learning or in bringing the best out of students (Al Ahdal, 2020).

This research investigates the levels of motivation and job satisfaction of teaching within the Kingdom; essentially focussing on the treatment of teachers by their students, and how they are perceived and received by their peers. This study revealed concerns regarding these areas, with a majority of teachers, both NEST and NNEST, who were left with a feeling of demotivation and dissatisfaction with their work and working conditions due to both student and peer behaviour. This paper aims to scrutinise these areas in order to highlight concerns and offer possible solutions to the problem. The information herein is based on evidence collected from teachers who were employed at 12 higher education institutions across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

### **Significance**

Teachers within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia may face many challenges, not only within their working environment, but also in their day to day lives outside of work. If the Kingdom is to move forward with objectives for future world trade and cooperation, its youth must be prepared for a life in global commerce, which includes being conversant in the English language.

The weakest aspects of a foreign English speaker are found generally in deciphering and using idioms, collocations, phrasal verbs: the nuances of language (Aloglah, 2018), and while this may be true, the ability to communicate effectively rather than with precision is more important in a business sphere (Kurniawati & Rizki, 2018). However, in order to accomplish that, education standards must be reached and maintained, and in order for that to happen effectively, teachers need to be motivated and satisfied with their own positions and promise of fulfilment in their profession. The Saudi Government has set its stall out by promising further huge sums

of investment in education; however, there still lie a number of problematic sectors within the EFL industry.

This study intends to research the following areas: firstly, to discover areas and levels of dissatisfaction and demotivation arising from treatment of teachers by their students and their peer teachers, and secondly to suggest where these problems could be improved upon by offering proposals to address them.

### **Related Literature**

There is a plethora of research into student motivation and the differences in how it takes shape both in and out of the classroom (Moskovsky & Picard, 2018), however, little literature exists on how student behaviour affects the morale, job satisfaction or the motivation of teachers, and this is certainly the case in a Saudi Arabian context. This paper will investigate how student and peer behaviour, and how the physical act of teaching affects the job satisfaction and motivation to continue in their profession in a Saudi Arabian context. Behaviours include the way teachers are treated and viewed by both their students and peers, and management provision of material and resources, facilities and technology, staff development and career progression. These factors, and the way teachers perceive how they are treated and made to feel by their institution, have a detrimental effect on NNEST's working life and can affect motivation, job satisfaction and lead to demoralisation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2010).

While the Kingdom provides her English teachers with high income rewards and low cost of living (Nurunnab, 2017), and this does indeed encourage many teachers to migrate to the Kingdom, once there, however, many teachers, certainly NNESTs, recognise there are discrepancies between them and their native English speaking teacher (NEST) counterparts in monetary compensation and the treatment they receive from their peers and students (Pacino & Qureshi, 2021).

It has long been established that English is the business world's lingua Franca (Roshid, et al., 2018), and vast amounts of money have been pumped into the Saudi education system to ensure that the country produces businessmen and women who are capable of dealing with the world's industry leaders on a level playing field (Barnawi, 2018) by being able to converse in English. In order to facilitate this, the Kingdom has employed large numbers of English language teachers (Elyas & Picard, 2018). It has also been suggested that there are, in the main, three types of migrant EFL teacher working within the Kingdom (Stainton, 2017; Ahmad et al., 2017). Making up the first category are those who work solely for the money in order to either travel or set themselves up with savings to live off while they look for other work or enough money to purchase a home in their native country (Stainton, 2017; Ahmad et al., 2017).

The second type move for religious purposes, and they tend to be native English speaking converts (Stainton, 2017; Ahmad et al., 2017). These first two categories are, in the main, native English speakers (NESTs) who have TEFL or CELTA, and do not necessarily see the job as a vocation, and more as a means to an end to aid further travel and gain worldly experience, and Islamic religious converts who want to feel closer to the country that houses the two Holy mosques, (Stainton, 2017; Ahmad et al., 2017). The third type, NNESTs, may move to the Kingdom for reasons such as to evade war in their own country; Syria, Iraq, Libya, or more accessible employment rather than financial reasons, and they tend to see the job as vocational rather than a transitory means to acquire savings to travel, or to be closer to Islam and the two Holy Mosques (Louber, 2015). What is also common, is that they are often seen by their hosts,

students and NEST peers as not up to standard due to either their accent, or their knowledge and delivery of the language they are teaching (Kurniawati & Rizki, 2018).

There is a distinct lack of investigation into how NNESTs are treated in this manner, and the resultant feelings they have towards their work and the workplace in Saudi Arabia. If NESTs are treated with better wages, benefits and more value, then it would be understandable that NNESTs would feel undervalued and disrespected, and possibly harbour resentment to their NEST co-workers. If this is to be addressed, then NNESTs must either up their game, or students, parents of students, NESTs and educational institutions need to have a better understanding of the NNESTs' value, their contribution, their dedication to their continuing professional development, and allow them to flourish on equal terms.

Given the dearth of literature in this area of study, there is clearly a case for further investigation into the problem of how students and peer teachers affect the working conditions of both NESTs and NNESTs within the professional arena. For the learning environment to be more productive, all teachers must feel they are respected equally by their peers and their students. They must also feel motivated to pass on their knowledge to motivated and dedicated learners of the English language, and be satisfied with their contribution.

### **Methodology**

This study intends to scrutinise the areas around the effects that peer and student behaviour have on the motivation and satisfaction of EFL teachers working in Saudi Arabia. The design of the research adopted a mixed methods approach, using both qualitative and quantitative data collected via means of; qualitative data gathered from semi-structured interviews and quantitative data collected via a survey. The qualitative data was availed via a set of five loosely aimed questions from interviews with five teachers who worked within the Kingdom across a number of institutions. These interviews were held in order to find the most pressing issues, which would form the basis of a survey that would be given to a higher number of teachers (20) who also worked in a variety of institutions across the Kingdom. This would provide quantitative feedback that could then be displayed in order to verify findings. Initial feedback from the interviews was extremely negative, although in order not to present the survey as 'loaded', statements were constructed to provide a more rounded view. The opportunity to rate the statements was then provided on a Likert scale between 1 to 5; (5 = very motivated or very satisfied, 4 - somewhat motivated or satisfied, 3 = no opinion, 2 = somewhat demotivated or dissatisfied and 1= very demotivated or dissatisfied).

The information would provide feedback for the following questions: how does student and/or peer teacher behaviour affect the level of motivation and job satisfaction in your role as a teacher? What are the aspects of student and/or peer teacher behaviour that have the biggest influence on your motivation and job satisfaction? Results were drawn from 22 questions that were designed specifically for this task, and aimed at foundation year teachers working in various colleges across the Kingdom.

### **Ethics**

Three quarters of the number of teachers who participated were unknown to the authors on either a professional or personal level. All those who took part in the survey were informed that their identities would remain anonymous, as the required information was regarding their motivation and satisfaction in their current and/or past posts, which may have an impact on their current and/or future employment possibilities (Seideman, 2006). Consent forms were provided along with information sheets that informed them of the intention of the investigation,

and that all data therein would remain anonymous. The consent form also informed participants that they were able to withdraw from the study for up to one month after the survey had been completed. Pseudonyms were provided to offer added anonymity to further protect their true identities. Interviews of the five teachers were recorded and then transcribed by one of the researchers, and each interview was stored safely on a laptop computer that only the researcher had access to while they carried out their analysis.

### Findings

The questionnaires were analysed and reported in a numerical chart in order for ease of clarity. As we have seen, in the main there are three types of EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia, the first, the native English speaking globe-trotter, who will not stay in the country for long, as once they have earned enough to fulfill their needs, they will move on. It could be said that this type of teacher takes their work and responsibilities less seriously, as they know this will be a passing phase of employment (Stainton, 2017). The second type, the native English speaking religious convert, has a goal to be closer to their religion, and so teaching is not in the forefront of their minds when they take the position (Stainton, 2017). The NNEST, however, understands that this is their vocation, and will often stick at the job far longer than the previous categories, as well as being more motivated to better themselves with continual professional development. The major drawback they encounter is that they are not treated as equals with their NEST counterparts with either their pay or the respect they command (Louber, 2015), even though many are equally as qualified (Alghofaili & Elyas, 2017). The motivation is different for each of the three example teacher types, and this can often be seen in the classroom (Ahmad et al., 2017), which can have a detrimental effect on teachers and students alike.

The culture of learning in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is an unusual one; standards and rankings are quite low in comparison to other Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) countries (Webometrics, 2021), and expectation seems to follow that pattern, which results in a learning culture of laziness and academic integrity issues ranging from cheating to grade fixing in order to push numbers through for contract fulfilment obligations (Pacino, 2016).

The prominence that institutions put on their native speaking educators on the marketing pamphlets of a foreign country's school or university is more likely to encourage parents within that country to choose a school or institution offering a predominantly white staff over a foreign looking establishment, as they perceived white teachers to offer higher levels of dynamism and are able to communicate more fluently (Kurniawati, 2018). The common belief, therefore, is that an institution full of NESTs offer a better educational package than a staff room inhabited with NNESTs (Kurniawati, 2018).

As well as good standards and practises of teaching from the staff, learners' behaviour and their attitude to their education is paramount to establishing good, solid progress in the classroom (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2010). Student behaviour, the culture of learning and the students' attitude towards the teachers can have both positive and damaging effects on a teacher's morale (Al-Awadh, 2016). Mohammadi's 2012 study revealed that males were almost 50% more likely to cause disruption and trouble in the classroom than their female counterparts, and this may account for some of the lower motivation and satisfaction in this study as 60% of the subjects were male and, therefore, taught in male colleges. AlZaanin's more recent research into Saudi student behaviour reported that there has been little change in student behaviour over the past five years, and that due to the culture and behaviour of the learner in the context, life in the classroom can be an extremely demanding, frustrating and a demotivating affair for teachers (2021).

Adding to this, Alhamad's research revealed that many teachers who have worked in Saudi Arabia felt they were immersed into their roles without the requisite training with either the syllabus or curriculum, had little or no induction to the lifestyle, and had no cultural awareness training (2018). Furthermore, they felt they were solely reliant on other teachers' support, as the heads of department and managers failed to provide such (Alhamad, 2018). Dörnyei & Ushioda also reported, as far back as 2010, that when teachers are faced with these and other problems such as biased criticism, a lack of respect from management and poor discipline from students, there is no surprise that they leave their posts at the moment they have the opportunity or funds to do so. That said, it is far easier for NESTs to change positions and countries due to them having fewer passport restrictions. If this situation is to improve, then it is vital to understand how and why teachers feel undervalued by their students, and in which areas. It is also essential that there is equality between NESTs and NNESTs, and that each is seen, respected and treated on an equal footing. Viewing the following charts and figures make for uncomfortable reading, and action must be taken if students' future positions of global trading, prominence, power and authority on the world stage are to be realised.

Table 1

*Student Behaviour Effect on Teachers' Motivation and Satisfaction*

Q No	Teachers' reasons for levels of motivation & job satisfaction (student behaviour)	Current % Job motivation					Current % Job satisfaction				
		VDM	DM	NO	M	VM	VDS	DS	NO	S	VS
		Score: 1 = Very demotivated/dissatisfied, 2 = demotivated/dissatisfied, 3 = no opinion, 4 = motivated/satisfied, 5 = very motivated satisfied									
1	Students are motivated	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2	Students have a good attitude towards learning	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3	Students have a sufficient amount of critical thinking skills	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4	Students behave well and respect the teacher	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
5	Students progress, achieve and progress at the expected rate	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
6	Students are able to form and give opinions	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
7	Students are interested and care about their work	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
8	Students are able to discuss a variety of matters from in or out of the classroom	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
9	Students adapt to classroom culture	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
10	Students are able to form and ask questions	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
11	Students are sufficiently exposed to the English language	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	Total available score	220	440	660	880	1100	220	440	660	880	1100
	Actual total	11	44	99	176	275	11	44	99	176	275
	Percentage of motivation/satisfaction	5	10	15	20	25	5	10	15	20	25

One of the main points of contention that the survey revealed (Table 1), was that the teachers felt somewhat or very demotivated and dissatisfied that their students had such little respect for them (90%), where not a single teacher stated that student motivation motivated them also (Q1), and only 5% of teachers were somewhat satisfied by their student's will to learn (Q1). This finding suggests that there is much room for improvement in this area. Figures for students' attitude towards learning fared little better, as 90% of teachers said that they were also less than motivated or satisfied by their students' poor attitude towards learning (Q2); and

a mere 5% were somewhat or very motivated, while 5% were somewhat satisfied and 5% were very satisfied.

The next set of questions fared marginally better, with 80% and 70% of respondents stating that their students had little or no critical thinking skills, and that accounted for a large measure of both demotivation and dissatisfaction levels respectively (Q3). Furthermore, 80% of teachers felt both demotivated and dissatisfied with the level of bad behaviour and lack of respect the students showed in class, with 80% of respondents feeling both demotivated and dissatisfied (Q4). The fact that students did not progress at the expected rate or were unable to form or offer opinions was cause for a 70% demotivation and dissatisfaction rating (Q5 & Q6 respectively), while 75% of teachers stated students were simply not interested or cared enough about their classes or language development (Q7). Teachers felt somewhat or very demotivated by the fact that their students did not have the capability to discuss general matters either in or out of the classroom, this accounting for 65% of respondents' answers (Q8), while a 70% score represented the teachers' somewhat or very dissatisfied feelings.

While not presenting the biggest of the challenges for students, 60% of teachers found they were somewhat or very demotivated by the students' ability to adapt to classroom culture, and 70% of participants found it led to becoming somewhat or very dissatisfying in the workplace (Q9). Similar figures accounted for the fact that students were unable to form or answer questions (Q10), and as there is little exposure to English language for Saudi students, this accounted for 60% of teachers becoming demotivated while 55% reported being dissatisfied in their jobs (Q11). One reason for this could be the amount of connection that students have with the English language: the returned figures purporting that there was little or no exposure to such outside of the classroom. These figures support the argument that the treatment from students and peers can have damaging effects on a teacher's morale, motivation and job satisfaction.

Overall figures for the student effect on the teachers' working lives revealed distinct room for improvement in the motivation and job satisfaction figures for both NEST and NNEST in Saudi Arabia. When we examine the figures as a whole, we can see that the majority of teachers who completed the survey (72%) felt either demotivated or very demotivated by their students' overall behaviour towards the class (Table 1, Line 16), a mere 12% felt somewhat or very motivated while 15% had no opinion. Almost three quarters of the teachers (74%) said that the students' behaviour was detrimental to their job satisfaction levels, only 13% noted they were somewhat or very satisfied in their work, and 13% held no opinion.

Those whom teachers work alongside can have dramatic impacts on how satisfied or motivated they feel in their job, and this proved to be the case in this study. Question 12 addressed the feelings on the basic teaching ability and competence in the classroom, and 65% of teachers felt both unmotivated and dissatisfied by the perceived inability of their peers to source their own classroom materials, and only 15% felt either somewhat or very motivated, only 10% felt motivated or satisfied (Q12) by that aspect.

Peers' language and teaching skills were also judged to be lacking, with 50% feeling demotivated, and 55% dissatisfied with such, and while only 15% felt somewhat motivated, 10% of the teachers declined to answer this question (Q13). Although two teachers failed to provide answers, a mere 15% of teachers felt motivated by their peers' ability to deliver the lesson adequately (Q14), with 60% of teachers admitting they felt their peers did not have the skills to do so with any competence, becoming both demotivated and dissatisfied with the

perceived lack of ability, and only 10% of teachers either somewhat satisfied (5%) or very satisfied (5%) with teaching skill levels at their institutions. This, of course, will have a knock-on effect on the students, who not only fail to receive the education they require, but could also become demoralised and demotivated in the classroom due to poor teachership. Considering the majority of teachers (60%) who completed the survey were NNESTs, on the surface it would appear that they feel either their own or their peer NNESTs' skills are lacking, which could also point to many of them having little confidence in their ability to perform in class.

Table 2  
*Peer Behaviour Effect on Teachers' Motivation and Satisfaction*

Q No	Teachers' reasons for levels of motivation & job satisfaction (peer behaviour)	Current % Job motivation					Current % Job satisfaction				
		VDM	DM	NO	M	VM	VDS	DS	NO	S	VS
	<b>1 = Very demotivated/dissatisfied, 2 = demotivated/dissatisfied, 3 = no opinion, 4 = motivated/satisfied, 5 = very motivated satisfied</b>										
12	Fellow teachers are able to source relevant resources	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
13	Non-native teachers have competent language/teaching skills*	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
14	Native teachers have competent language/teaching skills*	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
15	Co-workers work hard and do not copy other teachers' work	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
16	Fellow teachers possess the right skills for writing curriculum and involving students in projects	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
17	Fellow teachers have necessary skills for involving students in projects	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
18	Fellow teachers have necessary skills to make a difference	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
19	Teachers are fully supportive of each other	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
20	Teaching standards are high here	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
21	Teamwork, support system and collaboration amongst teachers is effective	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
22	Teachers do not engage in back-biting and office politics	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	Total available score	220	440	660	880	1100	220	440	660	880	1100
	Actual total	10	40	90	160	250	9	40	90	160	250
	Percentage of motivation/satisfaction	4.5454	9.0909	13.636	18.181	22.727	4.0909	9.0909	13.636	18.181	22.727

(\* 2 teachers failed to respond to Q13 satisfaction).

The following areas were also cause for concern, and while questions 15, 16, 17 and 18 garnered the highest approval ratings, this still accounted for only 20% of respondents believing teachers worked hard and prepared original material (Q15). While 30% felt teachers had sufficient curriculum writing skills (Q16), 35% of the subjects believed teachers were able to get their students involved in projects (Q17) and only 40% believed that teachers could make a difference in class. The motivation figures for those areas were extremely low, with only 15% (Q15), 20% (Q16), 15% (Q17) and 15% (Q18) approval ratings for each of those points respectively, which ought to be cause for concern, as it means that more than half of the respondents were unhappy with the levels of professionalism they viewed their peers to possess.

The most demotivating aspects came in questions 19, 20 and 21, which addressed how teachers felt they were supported by their peers and the standards of teaching; 65% (Q19) of teachers said they were unmotivated by their peers' support, while only 20% felt that they were motivated. 70% (Q20) said they felt the standards were not high enough, while 15% thought



they were, and 65% (Q21) felt that the teacher support and peer collaboration system was ineffective while only 25% felt they were effective.

There seemed to be some unrest in the staffroom between teachers too, as 60% of participants reported that there was in-house back-biting, and that their fellow teachers played office politics, which affected the levels of motivation and satisfaction with equal detriment (Q22). Overall this survey revealed seriously disappointing figures for how teachers perceived each other, and how they believed students valued their teachers' professionalism.

The effect that peer behaviour had on the teachers' work, while not encouraging in the slightest, was not so disappointing as the students' behavioural effect (Table 2, line 34). Overall, 52% of teachers felt their motivation was negatively affected by their peers' attitude, 10% stated they were somewhat motivated, only 3% felt very motivated by their peers, while 27% offered no opinion. Faring a little better were the job satisfaction levels, although again, these were still quite poor, with 47% feeling somewhat or very dissatisfied with their peers' attitude, 18% felt somewhat satisfied, only 3% felt very satisfied and 17% of teachers had no opinion.

Respondents' interviews demonstrated the ill-feeling that the difference in treatment between NESTs and NNESTs by both students and peers had a damaging effect on NNESTs. When asked whether the difference in treatment of NEST and NNEST made a difference, the reply was stark.

Most certainly it does, NNESTs are completely demotivated when they compare themselves to their native speaking colleagues... Yes, it is a totally demotivating factor, hugely demotivating for the NNESTs.

Another demonstrates the frustration of one of the NEST respondents, who complained about the levels of education in both NEST and NNEST teachers, mentioning that, although it was common for many of the NNESTs to make spelling and grammar mistakes, there were a number of his peer NESTs who also made very basic spelling mistakes.

Some couldn't spell, and these are native speakers I'm talking about here. It was a joke. It still is a joke, Those teachers....who had presented the lowest acceptable teaching certificate, a 120 hour online TEFL certificate, to get the job.

If improvements are to be made in the teachers' working lives, and, indeed their students' learning, then much has to be done to motivate not only the students, but also teachers and their peers' behaviour towards each other, and improve the quality of delivery, training and professionalism.

### **Suggestions for Further Studies**

While there has been a substantial amount of research into student motivation in the region, there is a distinct lack of investigation into how the behaviour of students and peer teachers affect the working life, confidence and mental well-being of the NNEST, and so trying to gain an all-encompassing view on that area of the teaching profession in this context is not an easy task. Further research is required in order to fully investigate this aspect of the NNESTs living, learning and teaching experience in the Saudi Arabian context. As Saudi has recently relaxed its borders and – COVID aside – made tourism accessible, the Kingdom has become a far more attractive place to live and work for NESTS, and while it is possible that more teachers could consider working in the region, it stands to reason that with more competition for places, wages may be reduced and NNESTs, who have enjoyed a relatively competition-free market, may well be edged out to the preferred native English speaking teachers. Further investigation could

provide suggestions and solutions for areas of improvement for dealing with student and teacher motivation issues, and peer collaborations and professional development sessions. This would not only improve peer relationships, but also help teachers recognise their own shortcomings, and realise where they can help each other to progress.

### **Originality and Implications**

There exists a plethora of research and literature on how students are motivated and the differing aspects of such motivation, however, there is a gaping chasm in research into how student attitudes affect the motivation and job satisfaction of the teachers who deliver classes to those students. There is also little research that has been conducted on the effects that peers have on their fellow teachers; certainly not in a EFL context, and especially in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This research therefore intends to investigate that effect, and highlight the reasons behind 1, the challenges students and their behaviours present, and 2, the effect peers can have on a teacher's motivation and job satisfaction in a Saudi Arabian context.

Studies by Abu-Ghararah (1990) and more than ten years later, Subahi's 2001 research found little change, and students had a less than positive attitude when speaking to each other or their teachers, and that there were few opportunities for them to converse in English either in or out of the classroom. Because of this, students may not gain either the confidence or the ability to converse in English, which can lead to frustration and disinterest in learning, which in turn, leads to disinterest in class and manifest as problematic behaviour in the class. A disaffected or unmotivated group of students, along with poor administration and parental interference are among the most demoralising factors of a teacher's professional life (Han & Mahzoun, 2018). As well as negatively affecting the teacher's motivation, this has a cyclical, Catch 22, impact by demotivating students too (Bennell & Akyeampong 2007).

The survey revealed that 72% of teachers (Table 1. Line 16) felt either demotivated or very demotivated by their students' behaviour towards their learning, the classroom and the teacher (2016), which is a disappointing statistic. Studies have revealed there is a vicious circle of unmotivated teachers leading to unmotivated students and vice versa, and although the levels of the latter require further investigation, Dörnyei and Ushioda's research revealed that a teacher's motivation did have a direct effect on the students' willingness, unwillingness or amount of enthusiasm there is displayed in the classroom (2010). Although there appears to be less research into the opposite effects, Dinham & Scott's 2000 report found this to be the case. Hong Goo also noted that when a teacher is immersed and engrossed in their profession and work, they are far more satisfied (2011). It therefore stands to reason the opposite would be true without that same engrossed state of mind. Spear et al. also noted that intrinsic factors such as the practice of teaching and a solid peer and student relationship lead to more satisfied teachers (2000) while Cockburn & Haydn's study supported this with similar results (2004).

### **Conclusion**

There is little doubt that motivation in work and job satisfaction go hand in hand, and attributing factors to each in the education sphere has much to do with how teachers treat each other, as well as how students react to their teachers and perform in the classroom. As many NESTs working in Saudi Arabia are there for non-vocational reasons, it is understandable that their training and dedication to the profession may not be as committed as that of the NNEST. When miscreant students and poor classroom behaviour are added to the mix, this can create extremely demoralised teachers. Then we have seen how the NNESTs feel undervalued and underappreciated, and while this is not necessarily the fault of their peer NESTs, the fact that there is such disparity in wages between the two, as well as perceived value and treatment, this

is bound to have an effect on how they feel about both their work and their native English speaking colleagues. Given the very low levels of teacher motivation and job satisfaction revealed in this study, the most worrying factor is that in this context, the classroom customers, i.e. the students, are unmotivated to make progress. This too impacts the teachers, and may create a vicious circle of disenchantment and lethargy on both sides of the classroom, and until this is addressed and rectified the status quo of disappointment for all parties will remain.

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