

Newly Hired English Language Instructors' and Preparatory Year Students' Viewpoints on Demotivating Factors That Hinder English Language Learning: An Analysis

Zaldy Maglay Quines

English Language and Preparatory Year Institute

Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanbu, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Email: quines_z@yahoo.com.ph or quinesz101@gmail.com

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Abstract: *This study aimed to analyze the viewpoint of newly hired English language instructors and preparatory year students on demotivating factors that hinder English language learning. The data for this study were collected by means of a questionnaire about factors that demotivate English language learning. Newly hired English language instructors and preparatory year students responded to the questionnaire. The analysis of the gathered data revealed the following results. First, teachers and students viewed "Students' Behavior" and "Teacher's Behavior" as the leading demotivating factors in English language learning. Second, both respondents viewed "Poor Teaching Style" and "Poor Learning Style" as the topmost demotivating factors related to teachers and students. Third, all respondents believed that "Course Content", "Course Requirements" and "Classroom Environment" are the least demotivating factors that affect English language learning. Last, there were some differences of ratings given to the main factors as well as to the sub-factors.*

Keywords: motivation, demotivating factors, language learning, teaching style, learning style

INTRODUCTION

Motivation is definitely one of the most important factors that educators must cultivate in the teaching-learning process to achieve expected learning outcomes and to improve learning as a whole. Many impressions have been conveyed to explain the significance of motivation in teaching. Entwistle (1991) observed that for psychologists and teachers alike, motivation has been one of the key concepts used to explain different levels of performance. It purports to explain differences in the amount of effort applied to learning tasks and is thus expected to be strongly related to differences in levels of performance. At its simplest, motivation has been related to the amount of intellectual energy typically used in learning activities, and this led to a belief that motivation could be seen as a stable characteristic of the individual, on a par with personality.

Williams and Williams (2011) identified five ingredients involved in motivation: student, teacher, content, method/process, and environment. They claimed that motivation is an indispensable element in effective and meaningful teaching and learning process. It does not only develop more positive behavior among learners, but it also offers a mental and psychological relief on the part of the teacher. When students are motivated to learn, the initiative of the teacher to expound and demonstrate the lesson is lessened.

Learning how to employ appropriate motivation in instruction is considered as one of the most interesting but challenging stages of becoming an effective and efficient teacher . When students are not motivated, they could hardly understand a difficult lesson. More often, students who are not motivated could hardly retain information, they won't participate, and some of them may even become disruptive because the focus is not on the lesson. Cheng and Dornyei (2007) believed that motivation becomes determining factor of successful language learning. When students are not motivated to do something, they are not motivated to accomplish a particular activity.

For teachers, a lack of motivation can be the most frustrating hindrances to student learning. There are two kinds of motivation, the intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is the act of doing an activity purely for the joy of doing it. Extrinsic motivation is the use of external rewards or punishments to encourage student to work, participate, or at least think about the lesson. Falout et al. (2009) noted that demotivation can affect the learner's attitudes and behaviors, and teacher's motivation has a negative impact on learning outcomes. In fact, when students are demotivated, second language learning is more difficult and less pleasant; consequently, the achievement of expected learning outcomes becomes difficult. Furthermore, students' demotivation might lead to complete lack of motivation. It seems that successful language learning requires serious attention to and plans for dispelling demotivating factors. Any failure to learn second language may be largely due to the existence of demotivating factors on the part of learners.

In this study, the researcher analyzed the viewpoints of instructors and preparatory year students on demotivating factors that hinder English language learning. The researcher specifically compared the ratings and rankings of the different demotivating factors based on the numerical values given by the respondents- teachers and students. The analyzed and interpreted results answered the research questions specified in this study.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Motivation

Motivation is often defined as psychological quality that prompt learners or students to achieve their goals. Gardner and Tremblay (1994) explained that motivation differs from orientation because students might demonstrate a particular orientation, but they may not be motivated to achieve the goal. Motivation, in this case, is the positive power toward learning the language to attain the goal reflected in the orientation. This power stemmed from the desire to attain the goal, positive attitude toward learning language. In relation to the previous statement, learners need motivation in order to attain the goal of language learning, and it can come from themselves or from their environment.

According to Ellis (1994) motivation can be defined in terms of the efforts the learners make when they are learning a second language due to their desire or wish to learn. Gardner (1985) claimed that motivation is the primary factor that affects English language learners. It is the combinations of desires and efforts to reach an aim, and the attitudes toward the language learning process. He claimed that motivation has three important components. Motivation has a Behavioral component (Motivational Intensity), a Cognitive component (Desire), and an Affective component (Attitudes Toward Learning the Language)

Motivation aids the students to understand the lesson, and it assists the teacher to deliver the lesson to the learner. Motivation is a concept that could be described as a driving force that energizes human's behavior. Dornyei (2001) realized that motivation is related to one of the most basic aspect of the human mind, and most teachers and researchers would agree that it has a very important role in determining success or failure

in any learning situation. He also claimed that 99% of really motivated language learners will be able to master a reasonable working knowledge of it as a minimum, regardless of their language aptitude. Halawah (2011) claimed that motivating college students learning is an essential goal for teachers and educators in higher education institutions. Motivation is an important key for effective and successful learning.

Filgona et. al. (2020) emphasized that motivating the learner to learn is pertinent to curriculum implementation. This is because motivation is an influential factor in the teaching-learning situations. The success of learning depends on whether or not the learners are motivated. Motivation drives learners in reaching learning goals. It is important to recognize the fact that motivating learning is a central element of good teaching. This implies that learners' motivation is probably the single most important element of learning. Purnama et. al. (2019) believed that motivation is one of the most significant things in learning process. Without motivation, the purposes of learning is tough to be achieved. When learners have it in learning process, they will more understand with the materials, especially English.

Demotivating Factors

During the teaching-learning process, maybe some students are not positively influenced or motivated. Some negative influences experienced or perceived by the learner have a significant effect on motivation. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) called this "dark side" of motivation "demotivation". They also claimed that "demotivation" has not been considered as a research topic until recently, even though its crucial role in the learning process has been confirmed. According to them, demotivation refers to "specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioral intention or an ongoing action".

Issues on demotivation as a detrimental factor in language learning should be given more investigation to help teachers in dealing with unmotivated learners. Chambers (1993) gave observable characteristics of demotivated students: having poor concentration during lessons, not believing in their competence, making no attempts to learn, distracting their classmates and failing in bringing study materials to lessons. They also emphasized that demotivated students blamed their teachers for various reasons, for instance, not giving enough clear instruction, criticizing students, using old-fashioned teaching materials, shouting at students when they do not understand.

In order to fully understand demotivation, sources of demotivating factors should be identified first. Aladdin (2013) identified nine demotivating factors, namely (1) subject-related factors; (2) teacher-related factors; (3) class-related factors; (4) negative attitudes towards the FL; (5) course materials and learning content; (6) the compulsory nature of the course; (7) time constraints; (8) lack of opportunities to communicate; (9) lack of ability. Ghadirzadeh et. al. (2012) identified five demotivation factors: (a) lack of perceived individual competence, (b) lack of intrinsic motivation, (c) inappropriate characteristics of teachers' teaching methods and course contents, (d) inadequate university facilities and (e) focus on difficult grammar.

Afshari et. al. (2019) revealed that both novice and experienced teachers had largely similar perceptions of sources of demotivation. Both groups indicated that method of instruction, teacher personality, classmates' behaviors, anxiety, and physical environment of the language institutes have the potential to negatively affect motivation in learners. However, they differed in the degree of importance they attached to the factors falling within each of these demotivation sources. The findings suggest that teachers need to develop an awareness of the sources of demotivation among learners and the strategies to cope with them.

Attentiveness and understanding on the different factors that demotivate students in English language learning is very essential in attaining the objectives set in the lessons or courses as a whole. Aydin (2012) explained the six main factors that cause demotivation during the EFL teaching process. The main factors included were problems relating to the (a) teaching profession, (b) curriculum, (c) working conditions, (d) students and their parents, (e) colleagues and school administrators, and (f) physical conditions. First, the lack of knowledge of teaching methodology, dealing with special children and the use of computers in classes, and the difficulties with stress control were the main sources of demotivation under (a) teaching profession. Second, lack of supportive material for classroom use, invalid central examinations, and problems with the course books regarding the disunity and coherence, and imbalanced activities presented in the books were the source of demotivation under (b) curriculum. Third, financial problems, heavy workload and problems concerning regular duties and social activities within the school environment were the sources of demotivation under (c) working conditions. Fourth, violence and abuse, negative attitudes and perceptions of EFL learning, ignorance of computer use, and lack of parental interest were sources of demotivation under (d) students and their parents. Fifth, communication problems among the teachers and the ideological discrimination by school administrators were sources of demotivation under (e) colleagues and school administrators. Last, crowded classrooms, noise, and bad school climate about educational technology were sources of demotivation under (f) physical conditions.

Ali & Pathan (2017) revealed that course content and teaching material were the leading perceived demotivating factors followed by teachers' behavior, classroom environment, effects of low test scores, and grammar based teaching. Lack of self-confidence appeared to be the least demotivating factor. In terms of the course content and teaching material, students quoted that they were over burdened by a lot of textbooks as well as supplementary readings assigned, whereas they did not find clear answers for many of the problems related to English language, few students were demotivated due to the inappropriate pace of the lessons. The results extracted from the responses of the participants to open-ended question also suggests that course content and teaching material was the prominent demotivating factor, the reasons cited were the outdated books, and lengthy lessons.

Trang & Baldauf (2007) identified other causes of demotivation, particularly extrinsic ones related to students, teachers and the curriculum, that also need to be more explicitly addressed. Better teacher training and awareness, and more appropriate curriculum and support would undoubtedly help to reduce these extrinsic problems. However, further research into matters like the match or mismatch between teaching styles and learning styles, or studies designed to obtain information about the demotivation phenomenon at different levels of education to consider age related variables need to be undertaken. Thus, for this group of FL students at least, extrinsic factors were the principal causes of demotivation, while intrinsic factors were those that had the most impact on demotivation. This suggests that changes in teaching and curriculum practices have the potential to have greatest impact on increasing students' success in FL learning.

Demotivation comes from different sources. Oxford (1998) discovered four broad sources of demotivation: the teacher's individual relationship with the students; the teacher's attitude towards the course or the material; style conflicts between teachers and students; and the nature of the classroom activities. Soureshjani and Riahipour (2012) identified three demotivating factors that hinder speaking proficiency: teachers, teaching equipment, and classroom utility. Çankaya (2018) discovered that among six groups of demotivation factors, the most mentioned one by all participants was class characteristics which includes such reasons as learners' being unsatisfied with the course contents and pace, focus on grammatical structures, focus on university entrance exams and the memorization of the language; while the least one is

teacher factor. It is a fortunate result for the researcher which implies that teacher's attitude, teaching competence, language proficiency, personality, and teaching style do not demotivate the learners.

Pretty (2019) emphasized that factors such as the instructor's poor methods of teaching, teacher's behavior, consistent failure of exams by students, difficulty of the language itself and work overload of the students could really demotivate learners. The study revealed that instructor related factors such as: use of conventional teaching methods, negative attitudes towards students and favoritism were the main factors contributing to demotivation. The lessor factors identified were difficulty of the Chinese language, constant failures of student and work overload.

Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) identified six demotivators which are: characteristics of classes, lack of interest, classroom environment, class materials, teachers, and experiences of failure. Meshkat and Hassani (2012) found out that learning context and materials, teachers' competence and teaching styles, insufficient school facilities, lack of intrinsic motivation and test scores were found as basic sources of language learning demotivation. Dornyei (1998) identified 9 types of de-motivating factors: the teacher (personality, commitment, competence, telling method), inadequate school facilities (group is too big or not the right level; frequent change of teachers), reduced self-confidence (experience of failure or lack of success), negative attitudes towards the L2, compulsory nature of L2 study, interference of another foreign language being studied, negative attitude towards L2 community, attitudes of group members and coursebook used in the language class. The compulsory nature of L2 studies and the interference of a L3 were first discovered in this study.

Hu (2011) found two leading demotivating factors pertinent to learning difficulties. Insufficient vocabulary size comes as the first and foremost significant demotivating factor. Insufficient vocabulary size has a detrimental impact on foreign language learning. Without sufficient vocabulary size, learners will never be able to command the English language effectively. Language-specific anxiety is the second most significant predictor variable among others. Learning difficulties and language-specific anxiety are interrelated. Students with a low word bank, bad grammar translation, or poor listening comprehension mostly experience anxiety in a foreign language classroom.

Adara (2018) analysed demotivating factors of a group of university students. The findings showed two most salient demotivating factors; teacher's competence and lack of intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, the findings indicated poor pronunciation and lack of communicative approach in the classroom as ones that make teachers seem to be incompetent. On the other hand, lack of intrinsic motivation seemed to be influenced by students' loss of interest in English and goal as an English speaker. To prevent or reduce demotivation among students, teachers should improve their fluency and introduce more topics related to cultural knowledge to improve students' intrinsic motivation.

According to Chambers (1993) there are two major sources of demotivation. Chambers conducted a questionnaire to 7 teachers about the main characteristics of the demotivated pupils, and a questionnaire to students on their understanding about demotivation. According to the teacher-respondents, demotivated students make no effort to learn, lack belief in their own capabilities, demonstrate laziness and are unwilling to learn. On the other hand, some student-respondents blame their teachers because teachers frequently criticize students and explain things insufficiently. Some also claimed that teachers use old-fashioned teaching materials and inferior equipment, thus losing their students and being ignorant of it. Others accused the number of students in the class and language room facilities. To summarize Chamber's study, student-respondents believe that demotivation originates from different sources- teachers, factors related to

teachers, and environment, and teacher-respondents claim that demotivation comes from the learners' characteristics.

Some researchers measured the impact of the different sources of demotivating factor in learning. Gorham and Christophel (1992) discovered that approximately 79 % of students' demotivation was caused by negative teacher behavior. They also summarized a rank of order of the frequency of the various demotivating factors, with first five categories as dissatisfaction with grading and assignments; the teacher being boring, bored, unorganized and unprepared; the dislike of the subject area; the inferior organization of the teaching material and the teacher being unapproachable, self-centered, biased, condescending and insulting. This rank offers an initiative insight into the true nature of teacher's role in demotivation. Christophel and Gorham (1995) initiated two different investigations of demotivation with both qualitative and quantitative techniques. The results indicated that most subjects attribute demotivation to what the teacher had done or had been responsible for. Using structured and long qualitative interviews, Dornyei (1998) confirmed that the teachers, and factors relating to the teachers, were the number one indicator of student demotivation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Objectives

Generally, this study aimed to analyze the viewpoint of newly hired English language instructors and preparatory year students on demotivating factors that hinder English language learning. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the given **ratings and rankings** of the different demotivating factors in English language learning as viewed by newly hired English language teachers and preparatory year students?
 - a. Course/Content
 - b. Classroom Environment
 - c. Teacher's Behavior
 - d. Students' Behavior
 - e. Course Requirements
2. What are the **ratings and rankings** of the different demotivating factors in English language learning along the varied domains?
 - a. Teacher-related Factors
 - b. Student-related Factors
 - c. Course/Content-related Factors
 - d. Environment-related Factors
 - e. Course Requirement-related Factors

Respondents and Research Instruments

The respondents of this study were the newly hired English language instructors and B1 English Level at the English Language and Preparatory Year Institute- Jubail Technical Institute, Royal Commission of Jubail and Yanbu, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. They were selected on the basis of systematic and convenience sampling where all the participants received and answered the research questionnaire "Demotivating Factors in English Language Learning".

Data Collection

The research questionnaire "Demotivating Factors in English Language Learning" was distributed to respondents. The data gathered were analyzed with the use of descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics

like frequency counts, percentages, and weighted mean were used to analyze data and to answer descriptive questions.

FINDINGS

Table 1. Rating and Ranking of the different factors that demotivate English language learning

Factors	Rating		Mean (rating)	Ranking
	Teachers	Students	Mean	Rank
Students' Behavior	87	81	84	1st
Teacher's Behavior	80	80	80	2nd
Course/Content	30	40	35	3rd
Course Requirements	27	23	25	4th
Classroom Environment		17		
	27		22	5th

Table 1 shows the rating and ranking of the different **factors** that demotivate English language learning. Students and teachers rated "Students Behavior" as the leading demotivating factor with a rating of 87 from teachers and 81 from students. Both respondents rated "Teachers' Behavior" as the second demotivating factor with a mean rating of 80. Students gave "Students' Behavior and Teacher's Behavior" relatively close numerical ratings with only one-point difference. "Course/Content" "Course Requirements" and "Classroom Environment" were considered the least factors that hinder English language learning. Some parts of the results contradict the findings of Çankaya (2018) where the researcher concluded that "class characteristics" (course contents) was the leading demotivating factor, while teacher's attitude, teaching competence, language proficiency, personality, and teaching style do not demotivate the learners. This study also contradicts the previous studies of Dornyei & Ushioda (2011) and Gorham & Christophel (1992) in which they discovered that teachers (not students) had mainly been the prominent source of demotivation in the learning experiences.

Table 2. Rating and ranking of the different student-related factors that demotivate English language learning

Students-related Factors	Rating		Mean (rating)	Ranking
	Teachers	Students	Mean	Rank
Poor Learning Style	90	84	87	1st
Negative Personality	83	81	82	2nd
Low Competence	60	46	53	3rd

Table 2 shows the rating and ranking of the different **student-related** factors that demotivate English language learning. "Poor Learning Style" was rated as the leading student-related demotivating factor with a rating of 90 from teachers and 84 from students. The ratings given by teachers and students for the leading "demotivator" are comparatively far with a difference of 14 points. "Negative Personality" was rated as the second demotivating factor with very close ratings of 83 and 81 respectively. "Low competence" was considered the least demotivating factor under student-related factors.

Table 3. Rating and ranking of the different teacher-related factors that demotivate English language learning

Teacher-related Factors	Rating		Mean (rating)	Ranking
	Teachers	Students	Mean	Rank
Poor Teaching Style	87	83	85	1st
Negative Personality	77	77	77	3rd
Low Competence	73	83	78	2nd

Table 3 shows the rating and ranking of the different **teacher-related** factors that demotivate English language learning. Based on the table, there were many differences in the results. For teachers, they considered “Poor Teaching Style” as the leading demotivating factor, followed by “Negative Personality” and “Low Competence” correspondingly. For students, they considered “Poor Teaching Style” and “Low Competence” as the leading teacher-related demotivating factors with the same rating of 83. Based on the mean score, “Low Competence” was considered the second leading demotivator. “Negative Personality” was rated as the least demotivating factor with a mean rating of 77, a one point behind “Low Competence”.

Table 4. Rating and ranking of the different course/content-related factors that demotivate English language learning

Course/content-related	Rating		Mean (rating)	Ranking
	Teachers	Students	Mean	Rank
Contents - too boring	77	46	61.5	1st
Contents - too difficult	67	45	56	2nd
Contents - too easy	40	16	28	3rd

Table 4 shows the rating and ranking of the different **course/content-related** factors that demotivate English language learning. “Content- too boring” was rated as the leading course/content-related demotivating factor with a rating of 77 (teachers) and 46 (students). “Content- too difficult” was rated as the second demotivating factor with ratings of 67 and 45 respectively. “Content- too easy” was considered the least demotivating factor under course/content-related factors.

Table 5. Rating and ranking of the different course requirement-related factors that demotivate English language classes

Course requirement-related	Rating		Mean (rating)	Ranking
	Teachers	Students	Mean	Rank
Undiscussed contents of assignments, projects, examination	77	43	60	1st
No clear instructions for assignments, projects, examinations	73	40	56.5	2nd
No clear purpose of checking attendance	30	19	24.5	3rd

Table 5 shows the rating and ranking of the different **course requirement-related** factors that demotivate English language learning. “Undiscussed contents of assignments, projects, examination” was rated as the leading course/content-related demotivating factor with a rating of 77 from teachers and 43 from students. “No clear instructions for assignments, projects, examinations” was rated as the second demotivating factor with ratings of 73 and 40 respectively. “No clear purpose of checking attendance” was considered the least demotivating factor under course requirement-related factors. It can be noted that all mean scores were below 50%.

Table 6. Rating and ranking of the different classroom environment-related factors that demotivate English language classes

Classroom environment-related	Rating		Mean (rating)	Ranking
	Teachers	Students	Mean	Rank
Room - not convenient	60	20	40	1st
Room - crowded	20	27	23.5	2nd
Room -no technology	20	15	17.5	3rd

Table 6 shows the rating and ranking of the different **classroom environment-related** factors that demotivate English language learning. “Room - not convenient” was rated as the leading classroom environment-related demotivating factor with a rating of 60 (teachers) and 20 (students). “Room – crowded” was rated as the second demotivating factor with ratings of 20 and 27 respectively. “Room -no technology” was considered the least demotivating factor under classroom environment-related factors.

Discussions, Conclusions and Recommendations

The following statements are the conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of this study.

Conclusions

1) “Students’ Behavior” was rated and ranked as the leading demotivating factor with a mean rating of 84, closely followed by “Teachers’ Behavior” with a mean rating of 80, while “Course/Content”, “Course Requirements”, and “Classroom Environment” were rated 35, 25, 22 correspondingly. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that students’ and teachers’ behaviors contribute a great impact on the failure or success of any instructional activities. When undesirable behaviors of teachers and students flourish in the class, all instructional activities and objectives will be affected because the effectiveness and productivity of the teaching and learning process will be interrupted. The low ratings given to “Course/Content”, “Course Requirements”, and “Classroom Environment” suggest that these factors have minor impact on demotivating factors as a whole.

2) Under “Student-related Factors”, “Poor Learning Style” is rated and ranked as the leading demotivating factor in English language learning. Teachers and students perceived that students poor learning style contributes great impact to students’ demotivation. The result suggests that when students have poor learning styles, demotivation will surely consume their time inside the class because connection to the lesson is missing.

3) Under “Teacher-related Factors”, “Poor Teaching Style” is rated and ranked as the leading demotivating factor in English language learning. This only shows that the present generation is motivated to learn or

participate in the lesson when they are exposed to engaging instructional strategies, interesting activities, materials, and present time technology.

4) Under “Course/Content Factors”, “Contents - too boring” is rated and ranked as the leading demotivating factor in English language learning. When contents of a course are not connected to the knowledge of the learners, the course becomes boring and difficult to understand.

5) Course Requirements and Classroom Environment are ranked and rated as the least factors that demotivate learning. Under “Course Requirement-related Factors”, “Undiscussed Contents” is ranked and rated as the leading demotivation. Under “Classroom environment-related Factors”, “Room- not Convenient” is perceived as the leading demotivation. Though these two factors have less impact on demotivation, they still add burden to the overall impact of demotivation in learning.

Recommendations

1) For student related factors, teachers should consider evaluating the performance of their students and try to discover the different factors affecting their learning performance. Students’ behavior and poor learning style should be observed or monitored to lessen their impacts to language learning. Teachers have the authority to remind students about their learning behavior inside the class. Students should be informed about their learning performance and observed behavior in the class.

2) For teacher related factors, teachers should try to reflect on their teaching performance and discover strategies, activities and materials that could possibly motivate or engage all the learners.

3) For boring and difficult lessons, teachers should simplify the contents based on the levels of the learners. They should discover activities that could help students understand and appreciate learning activities to lessen the boredom caused by the content of the lesson.

4) Course/Content, Course Requirements, and Classroom Environment could hardly be controlled by the teachers nor students because these are the main concerns of academic administrators or top management. The only remedy they (teachers and students) can do is to give feedback to administrators or management so they can give solutions to the problem. Teachers should take the initiative to relay about their observations on the quality or conditions of environment and courses to their immediate supervisors to address these issues.

5) For course requirement-related factors like undiscussed contents of assignments, projects, examination, and no clear instructions for assignments, projects, examinations, teachers should always update themselves about the coverage of course assessments and pacing schedules so students will be guided accordingly.

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