

Demotivating Factors in English Language Learning as Perceived by Newly Hired English Language Teachers

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ABSTRACT: *Many researches claimed that motivation is a great factor in the teaching-learning-process. On the other hand, only few researches investigated the impact of demotivation in learning. There are many factors that demotivate learners and affect English language classes. This study aimed to investigate the perceived topmost factors that cause demotivation in English language learning. The data for this study were collected by means of a questionnaire about factors that demotivate learners. Newly hired English teachers from ELPYI- JTI, Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanbu responded to the questionnaire. They were chosen as respondents because they can literally connect to the younger generation. The collected data were analyzed by arranging the rating and ranking given for each factor. The analysis of the gathered data revealed a number of results. First, “Students’ Behavior” and “Teacher’s Behavior” are rated and ranked as the leading demotivating factors in English language learning. Second, “Poor Teaching Style” and “Poor Learning Style” are categorized as the topmost demotivating factors related to teachers and students. Third, “convenience” of the classroom is also perceived as a high factor of demotivation. Last, “Course/Lesson”, and “Course Requirements” are classified as the least demotivating factors that affect learning the English language.*

KEYWORDS: motivation, demotivating factors, teaching style, learning style

INTRODUCTION

Why is motivation important in teaching? Motivation is undoubtedly the most significant factor that teachers must develop in order to improve learning. Many concepts have been assumed to explain motivation. According to Williams and Williams (2011), there are five ingredients involved in motivation: student, teacher, content, method/process, and environment. 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.

One of the most challenging and demanding phases of becoming a teacher is learning how to motivate students. When students are not motivated, they cannot easily and effectively learn a concept. They could hardly retain information, they won't participate, and some of them may even become disruptive because the focus is not on the lesson. 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.

Students may be unmotivated for different reasons. Some are not interested in the course. Others find the teacher's methods boring. Some are distracted by outside forces. Others simply don't understand the lessons. In English language classes, there are many factors that demotivate learners, and these factors really affect the teaching learning process.

Knowing the different factors that demotivate learners is very important to achieve a meaningful teaching and learning process. Teachers should be aware on these factors to lessen their frustrations when they encounter unmotivated students. Identifying and understanding the problems or difficulty encountered by these students are the first two steps in solving the problem.

In this study, the researcher investigated the topmost factors that demotivate learners in English language classes. The researcher specifically figured the rating and rank of the different demotivating factors, analyzed, and interpreted results to answer the research questions specified in this study.

RELATED LITERATURE

A clear awareness or understanding on the different factors that demotivate students in English language classes is very crucial in attaining the objectives set in the lessons or courses as a whole. Issues on demotivation as a detrimental factor in language learning should be given more investigation to help teachers in dealing with unmotivated learners, and to guide learners develop intrinsic or extrinsic motivation.

Motivation aids the students to understand the lesson, and it assists the teacher to deliver the lesson to the learner. 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. Similarly, Saetti (2005) believed that motivation is one of the affective variables and a psychological factor that determines the amount of students' effort in doing their tasks. In this regard, Brown (2000) explained that success or failure in any task is directly related to motivation.

On the other hand, 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”.

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.

Some researchers have investigated demotivating factors on language learning efficiency. Bekleyen (2011) found out that insufficient use of technological types of equipment, course books, teaching methods and teachers themselves are major factors that demotivate students who are learning English as a foreign language. 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. Aydin (2012) asserts that curriculum, teaching profession, colleagues and school administrators, students and their parents, physical conditions, and working conditions are the demotivating factors at the elementary level of EFL contexts. Soureshjani and Riahipour (2012) identified three demotivating factors that hinder speaking proficiency: teachers, teaching equipment, and classroom utility. 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.

Dörnyei (1998) started a qualitative analysis by conducting structured long interviews in 10 to 30 minutes of 50 secondary school pupils who were studying either English or German as a foreign language. Nevertheless, in his study the participants were not of cross-sectional students but were those who had been identified by their teachers or peers as being particularly de-motivated. He

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.

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.

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

This part presents the research objectives, research methodology, research respondents and instruments used in the study.

General Objective: This study aimed to identify the the topmost and least factors that demotivate English language learning as perceived by newly hired English language teachers.

Specific Objectives: It sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the **rating** of the different demotivating factors in English language learning as perceived by newly hired English language teachers?
 - a. Course/Content
 - b. Classroom Environment
 - c. Teacher's Behavior
 - d. Students' Behavior
 - e. Course Requirements
2. What is the **ranking** of the different demotivating factors in English language learning as perceived by newly hired English language teachers?
 - a. Course/Content
 - b. Classroom Environment
 - c. Teacher's Behavior
 - d. Students' Behavior
 - e. Course Requirements
3. What are the **rating and ranking** 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

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used descriptive statistics like frequency counts, percentages, weighted means, to analyze data to answer descriptive questions.

Respondents and Research Instruments

The respondents of this study were the newly hired English language instructors 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 6 newly hired male English teachers in ELPYI-JTI for school year 2021-2022 were taken as respondents. The participants received and answered the research questionnaire "Demotivating Factors in English Language Learning as Perceived by Newly Hired

English Language Teachers”. The questionnaire includes 5 general factors that demotivate learners, and 3 sub-factors for every general factor.

Data Collection, Analysis, Discussion

The research questionnaire “Demotivating Factors in English Language Learning as Perceived by Newly Hired English Language Teachers” 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. The following questions were answered based on the analyzed and treated data.

1. What is the **rating** of the different demotivating factors in English language classes as perceived by new English language teachers?
2. What is the **ranking** of the different demotivating factors in English language classes as perceived by new English language teachers?
3. What are the **rating and ranking** of the different demotivating factors in English language classes along the varied domains?

1. What is the rating of the different demotivating factors in English language learning as perceived by new English language teachers?

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

Factors	Mean Score	Rating
Students' Behavior	43.33	87
Teacher's Behavior	40	80
Course/Content	15	30
Course Requirements	13.33	27
Classroom Environment	13.33	27

Table 1 shows the **rating** of the different **factors that demotivate** English language classes. Based on the table, “Students’ Behavior” (87) is rated to be the leading demotivating factor in English language learning. “Teacher’s Behavior” (80) is perceived as the 2nd demotivating factor that hinders successful learning in English. The mean scores for students’ and teachers’ behavior are relatively close and high compared to other factors. “Course/Content” has a rating of 30 while “Course Requirements” and “Classroom Environment” have the same rating mean score.

2. What is the ranking of the different demotivating factors in English language learning as perceived by new English language teachers?

Table 2. Ranking of the different factors that demotivate English language learning

Factors	Mean Score	Ranking
Students' Behavior	1.333	1st
Teacher's Behavior	1.833	2nd
Course/Content	3.166	3rd
Classroom Environment	4	4th
Course Requirement	4.333	5th

Table 2 shows the **ranking** of the different **factors that demotivate** English language classes. Based on the table, "Students' Behavior" is ranked as 1st or considered as the leading demotivating factor in English language learning. "Teacher's Behavior" is ranked as the 2nd leading factor that demotivates learners in English. Based on the mean scores, students' behavior and teachers' behavior have a very slight difference. "Course/Content", "Classroom Environment", and "Course Requirement" are ranked as 3rd, 4th, and 5th sequentially. The ranking of the different factors that demotivate English language classes are consistently paralleled to the rating given on the first table.

3. What are the rating and ranking of the different student-related factors that demotivate English language learning?

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

Factors	Rating (100)		Ranking (1-3)	
	Mean Score	Rating	Mean Score	Ranking
Poor Learning Style- no focus, no notes, no self-motivation	45	90	1.166	1st
Negative Personality- how the student deals with teachers/students	30	83	2.166	2nd
Low Competence- poor performance in English course assessment	41.66	60	2.666	3rd

Table 4 shows the **rating and ranking** of the different **student-related factors** that demotivate English language learning. Based on the table, "Poor Learning Style" has a rating of 90, which is the highest rating under "Student-related Factors" that affect English learning. "Negative Personality" and "Low Competence" are rated 83 and 60. Consistently, "Poor Learning Style" is ranked as the 1st demotivating factor followed by "Negative Personality" and "Low Competence" factors. Based on the mean scores for ranking, the numerical gaps among "Poor Learning Style", "Negative Personality", and "Low Competence" are comparatively far from each other.

4. What are the rating and ranking of the different teacher-related factors that demotivate English language learning?

Table 4. Rating and ranking of the different teacher-related factors that demotivate English language classes

Factors	Rating (100)		Ranking (1-3)	
	Mean Score	Rating	Mean Score	Ranking
Teacher-related				
Poor Teaching Styles- boring methods, strategies, activities	43.33	87	1.333	1st
Negative Personality- how the teacher deals with students	38.33	77	1.833	2nd
Low Competence- poor knowledge or mastery of the lesson	36.66	73	2.833	3rd

Table 4 shows the **rating and ranking** of the different **teacher-related factors** that demotivate English language learning. Based on the table, “Poor Teaching Styles” has a rating of 87, which is the highest rating under “Teacher-related Factors” that affect English learning. “Negative Personality” and “Low Competence” are rated 77 and 73. Logically, “Poor Teaching Style” is ranked as the 1st demotivating factor followed by “Negative Personality” and “Low Competence” factors. Based on the mean scores for ranking, the numerical gap between “Poor Teaching Style” and “Low Competence” is comparatively wide, but the numerical gap between “Negative Personality” and “Low Competence” is relatively narrow.

5. What are the rating and ranking of the different course/content-related factors that demotivate English language learning?

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

Factors	Rating (100)		Ranking (1-3)	
	Mean Score	Rating	Mean Score	Ranking
Course/Content-related				
Contents are too boring	38.33	77	1.333	1st
Contents are too difficult	33.33	67	1.666	2nd
Contents are too boring	20	40	3	3rd

Table 5 shows the **rating and ranking** of the different **course/content-related factors** that demotivate English language learning. Based on the table, “Contents are too boring” has a rating of 77, which is the highest rating under “Course/lesson-related Factors” that affect English learning. “Contents are too difficult” and “Contents are too easy” are rated 67 and 40. Consistently, “Contents are too boring” is ranked as the 1st demotivating factor followed by “Contents are too difficult” and “Contents are too easy” factors.

6. What are the rating and ranking of the different course requirement -related factors that demotivate English language learning?

Table 6. Rating and ranking of the different course requirement -related factors that demotivate English language learning

Factors	Rating (100)		Ranking (1-3)	
	Mean Score	Rating	Mean Score	Ranking
Course requirement-related				
Undiscussed contents of assignments, projects, examination	38.33	77	1.333	1st
No clear instructions for assignments, projects, examinations	37	73	1.666	2nd
No clear purpose of checking attendance	15	30	3	3rd

Table 6 shows the **rating and ranking** of the different **course requirement -related factors** that demotivate English language learning. Based on the table, “Undiscussed contents” has a rating of 77, which is the highest rating under “Course requirement-related -related Factors” that affect English learning. “No clear instructions” and “No clear purpose” are rated 73 and 30. Consistently, “Undiscussed contents” is ranked as the 1st demotivating factor followed by “No clear instructions” and “No clear purpose” factors. Based on the rating mean scores, “Undiscussed contents” and “No clear instructions” are numerically very closed while “No clear purpose” is comparatively far from the two factors.

7. What are the rating and ranking of the different classroom environment-related factors that demotivate English language learning?

Table 7. Rating and ranking of the different classroom environment-related factors that demotivate English language learning

Factors	Rating (100)		Ranking (1-3)	
	Mean Score	Rating	Mean Score	Ranking
Classroom environment-related				
Room is not convenient. (poor ac, chair, table)	30	60	1.333	1st
Room is too crowded. (too many students)	10	20	1.833	2nd
Room lacks technology. (no projector, white board)	10	20	2.833	3rd

Table 6 shows the **rating and ranking** of the different **classroom environment-related factors** that demotivate English language classes. Based on the table, “Room is not convenient” has a rating of 60, which is the highest rating under “Classroom environment -related Factors” that affect English learning. “Room is too crowded” and “Room lacks technology” are rated 20 and 20. Consistently, “Room is not convenient” is ranked as the 1st demotivating factor followed by “Room is too crowded” and “Room lacks technology” factors. Based on the rating mean scores, “Room is

too crowded” and “Room lacks technology” have the same rating, which is considered as the least factor that demotivates learners.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This part summarizes all the research questions with their answers based on the analyzed and interpreted data.

1. What is the **rating** of the different demotivating **factors** in English language classes as perceived by new English language teachers?

Factors	Rating
Students' Behavior	87
Teacher's Behavior	80
Course/Content	30
Course Requirements	27
Classroom Environment	27

2. What is the **ranking** of the different demotivating **factors** in English language classes as perceived by new English language teachers?

Factors	Ranking
Students' Behavior	1st
Teacher's Behavior	2nd
Course/Content	3rd
Course Requirements	4th
Classroom Environment	5th

3. What are the **rating and ranking** of the different demotivating factors in English language learning along the varied domains?

1. Student-related Factors	Rating	Ranking
Poor Learning Style- no focus, no notes, no self-motivation	90	1st
Negative Personality- how the student deals with teachers/students	83	2nd
Low Competence- poor performance in English course assessment	60	3rd
2. Teacher-related Factors	Rating	Ranking
Poor Teaching Style- boring methods, strategies, activities	87	1st
Negative Personality- how the teacher deals with students	77	2nd
Low Competence- poor knowledge or mastery of the lesson	73	3rd
3. Course/Content-related Factors	Rating	Ranking

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Contents are too boring to their interest	77	1st
Contents are too difficult for their level	67	2nd
Contents are too easy for their level	40	3rd
4. Course requirement-related Factors	Rating	Ranking
Undiscussed contents of assignments, projects, examination	77	1st
No clear instructions for assignments, projects, examinations	73	2nd
No clear purpose of checking attendance	30	3rd
5. Classroom environment-related Factors	Rating	Ranking
Room is not convenient. (poor ac, chair, table)	60	1st
Room is too crowded. (too many students)	20	2nd
Room lacks technology. (no projector, white board)	20	3rd

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Students' behavior is rated and ranked as the leading demotivating factor in English language learning. Teachers' behavior is rated and ranked second. This only shows that students' and teachers' behaviors have great contribution in achieving successful, productive and meaningful classroom interactions. Behaviors of students and teachers during the teaching-learning-process automatically affect the result of the target objectives. When negative behaviors of teachers and students thrive in the class, all instructional activities and objectives will be affected because the effectiveness and efficiency of teaching and learning process will be disrupted.
2. Poor learning style is rated and ranked as the leading demotivating factor in English language learning under student-related factors. Teachers perceived that students poor learning style contributes to their demotivation. When students have no focus, notes, and self-motivation, 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 classes. 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. Course requirements and Classroom environment are ranked and rated as the least factors that demotivate learning. Under course requirement-related factors, undiscussed contents of assignments, projects, examination is ranked and rated as the leading demotivation. Under classroom environment-related factors, room is not convenient is perceived as the leading demotivation.
5. Teachers should consider evaluating the performance of their students and try to discover the different factors affecting their learning performance. Based on the result, students are

demotivated because of their poor learning style. Teachers have the authority to remind students about their learning behavior inside the class to lessen the impact of this factor in their learning.

6. Poor teaching style is rated and ranked as the leading demotivating factor in English language classes. Teachers should try to discover strategies, activities and materials that could possibly motivate or engage all the learners.

7. 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.

8. For factors that are related to classroom environment and courses as a whole, teachers should try to make a report about their observations on the quality or conditions of environment and courses to their immediate supervisors to address these issues.

STATEMENT OF COMPETING INTEREST

The author has no competing interests.

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