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## **A Study on Teacher's Motivation and Job Satisfaction: the case of Nekemte Public Elementary School**

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### ABSTRACT

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*A teacher's motivation contains two inseparable things that could not be seen separately. This two components are the desire, wish to educate and one's interpersonal style toward students while undertaking the task of teaching. Teacher's own personal motivation revolves around the extent of psychological need satisfaction experienced during the process of teaching. As a result, it manifests itself in terms of teacher enthusiasm and job satisfaction. The concept of a teacher's motivating patterns toward students is linked to what teachers say and do while teaching to motivate students to engage in learning activities, and it manifests itself in terms of autonomy-supportive versus controlling teaching in its result. This specific qualitative study aimed, to investigate factors that affect teachers' motivation and professionalism within the framework of teaching in Ethiopia. For this purpose, two public second cycle primary schools were selected in Nekemte a city found in eastern part of Wollega. A structured and semi structured interview was conducted with teacher participants and also an open and closed ended questionnaire was administered. Moreover, observation was also conducted for consecutive five weeks in a row. The data shows, the key factor for poor motivation of teachers was unattractive salary. The teachers felt that the salary and incentives are very low as to what they are doing. In addition, the study also revealed that the other reason, in addition to salary and benefits was, the low emphasis given by the society, student's misbehaviour and the inability of the school management & administration to effectively address the teachers' demands for supportive and fair leadership to make the teaching and learning process effective and smooth as expected.*

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Keywords: education, motivation, schools, salary, satisfaction, teachers.

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### **1. Introduction**

Development of any country depends on its educational system that is the quality of its graduates, so teachers are the nation builders. It is difficult to determine the real value of teachers by country qualitatively, especially when comparing them against other professions. The role of a teacher cannot be ignored in the process of development and success in one country. Teaching is a profession that has low emphasis but teachers have a great role in their students' intellectual, personal and social development, there by influencing the whole nation's development. Teachers can have an influence more profound than others and give the glorious position and dignified status to the nation<sup>1</sup>. Unsurprisingly, in countries with a higher level of respect for educators, such as China and Malaysia, more than half responded that they would encourage their children to pursue the teaching profession. Teaching is about passion, love of education and learning, inspiration, concern, consideration of the other, dedication to trusting students, belief in the power of knowledge and a non-stop attempt to make a difference to the lives of others<sup>2</sup>.

Lack of motivation and commitment of teachers can have a negative impact on the student's learning and most importantly it put the future of children on the stake. Thus, teacher's contribution in the human capital development and technological advancement greatly depends on their motivation and willingness for taking initiatives. Generally, competence and commitment of teachers should be the most important determinant of learning outcomes. Dornyei and Otto<sup>3</sup> defines motivation as the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates,

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and evaluates the cognitive and motor processes where by initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritized, operationalized and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out. According to this definition, motivation is dynamic and can change a person's level of interest and involvement in a task. A motivated teacher is recognized by high level of commitment, hard work, devotion, dedication and becomes a source of inspiration through his or her exemplary character because a teacher is always expected to be a role model for students. Motivation is the desire or drive within a person to achieve some goal and also it is an internal condition based on a person's perceptions and needs<sup>4</sup>. To motivate teachers is one of the most important management tasks expected from school principals. It comprises the abilities to understand what initiates people to communicate, to involve, to encourage, setting an example, to develop and coach, to obtain feedback and to provide a just reward<sup>5</sup>. Motivation is about cultivating your human capital. According to the report of Centre for British Teachers in 2008, it was found that the education system in Ethiopia, at all levels is confronted by a lack of quality. Policy makers themselves and other stakeholders also portray the lack of quality in the education system. This is confirmed by the state itself on the debate with political parties.

Thus, a reform is needed to improve the efficiency and quality of education system of Ethiopia. The lack of quality in the education system in Ethiopia is associated with many factors including the poor standard of those entering the teaching profession, high teacher turnover and problems such as demotivation, poor quality of the teachers' working environment, low status of teachers, inadequate salaries by Centre for British Teachers: Voluntary Services Overseas<sup>6,7</sup>. Of these factors motivation plays a great role in the education system, because it is when a teacher has high motivation and commitment that the required change and quality education be ensured. Imrab, strengthen this argument by noting a profound influence of teachers than any other body in the education system. Similarly, Kayuni & Tambulasi confirmed the negative effect of low motivation of teachers on students learning. However, to alleviate the problem, there is a need to investigate and understand its root causes to help policy makers take plausible interventions. This study, therefore was directed towards identifying factors that motivate and de-motivate teachers' and to obtain teachers' views on what improvements could be made to motivate them by gathering in-depth data from teacher participants.

Teacher motivation plays an important role in the promotion of teaching and learning excellence. Motivated teachers are more likely to motivate students to learn in the classroom, to ensure the implementation of educational reforms and feelings of satisfaction and fulfillment<sup>8</sup>. Education reforms focus on improving teacher competence, the learning and working environments and greater decentralization, all of which can improve teacher motivation. But, many reform programs also try to increase the workload of teachers and ignore or pay insufficient attention and other conditions of service<sup>9</sup>. He also put that regardless of development status, the teaching force in most countries has never enjoyed full professional status. According to him, the status of teachers as a semi-profession is more evident in developing countries including Ethiopia.

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## 2. Literature

There are two basic types of motivation which an individual (the teacher in this case) experiences. These are intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to motivation that is driven by an interest or enjoyment in the teaching profession itself. All this factors exists within the individual rather than external pressures. It is based on taking pleasure in an activity rather than working towards an external reward. Extrinsic motivation on the other hand is a drive to perform an activity in order to attain an outcome, which then contradicts intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation comes from outside of the individual. Common extrinsic motivations are rewards like money and promotion, working conditions, pressure, threat of punishment, relationships with others<sup>10</sup>. The teaching profession is one of the undermined professions in Ethiopia.

Because of this the education system in Ethiopia is challenged with high turnover. Many teachers have been leaving the job to seek employment elsewhere which they think hold promises of better pay and fame for them. Most of the remaining teachers in the profession might experience lower level of commitment with regard to teaching, thus affecting the standard of performance of students. In Zimbabwe, Gullatt<sup>11</sup> found that the need for motivated teachers is reaching crisis and asserts that a motivated and dedicated teacher need to be considered as a foundation for the effectiveness of a school in facing the various challenges and problems posed to it. It is therefore important to investigate the factors affecting teacher motivation in order to revert the situation. Teachers' poor motivation was reflected in their deteriorating standards of professional conduct including poor professional performance and commitment, absenteeism, lateness and general misbehaviour.

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## 3. Materials And Methods

Methodology allows the researcher to understand human and social behaviour from the insider's perspective and thus gain first-hand information about the perception of the participant. Unstructured interview and non-participatory observation was used as a primary source of data for this research. The goal of my observation is to understand the culture, setting, or social phenomenon of teachers in line with the purpose of the study. Non-participant observation involves observing participants without actively participating. This option is used to understand a phenomenon by entering the community or social system involved, while staying separate from the activities being observed<sup>12</sup>.

The researcher used this type of observation because of natural phenomena in which he can't place himself as a second cycle primary school teacher. It also allows the researcher to be open to discovering inductively how the participants understand the setting. Interviews on the other hand are particularly useful for getting the story behind a participant's experiences and pursue in-depth information around the topic being studied and the researcher has the opportunity to examine or ask follow up questions. Convenience sampling was used to select teacher participants. This is to mean that available teachers those who were close at hand and were willing to participate were interviewed. I continued to select teacher participants according to the findings that emerge in the progress of the study and I considered and examined extreme views or contrasting views. I persist doing this until saturation has been achieved or redundancies occur. This notion is called theoretical sampling. Accordingly, 15 teachers were interviewed. Two school principals were also interviewed to examine contrasting ideas from teacher participants in general.

## 4. Results and Discussion

There are around four thematic areas based on the data collected on the basis of teacher's motivation and professionalism in a wider context. These areas included: salary, benefits, administration, students' behaviour and respect, societal view of the teaching profession as in the community view. There are around four thematic areas based on the data collected on the basis of teacher's motivation and professionalism in a wider context. These areas included: salary, benefits, administration, students' behaviour and respect, societal view of the teaching profession as in the community view.

### Salary and Benefits Associated with Teaching

Of all the issues facing second cycle primary school teachers in Nekemte, inadequate pay is the highest in their minds and some of my respondents feel nervous when talking about their salary. Respondent claimed that "he hate the teaching profession since it does not change his life at all. The salary paid to teachers is not large enough to support their families and extended families. This issue is found to be the most demotivating factor that contributed to the low interest and initiation of the teachers towards teaching. Teachers had clearly report that there are allowances paid for housing and public transportation, and they claimed the absence of facilities for loans or grants or medical insurance as it is. One of the interviewee states that "the house allowance we receive does not cover the house rent we require, and we are unable to meet the current market situation with regard to the inflation and all". The following table summarizes the views of teachers about their profession and salary numerically.

**Table 1 - Teachers Response about their profession and salary**

Statement	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total
Do you think that you are satisfied with teaching profession?	67.7	32.3	100
If you are free to choose, would you prefer to continue in your profession?	84.3	15.7	100
Do you think that you receive less salary as compared to the work you do?	0	100	100
Is your salary sufficient to meet the financial needs of your family?	0	100	100

The above table illustrates all respondents are not satisfied with their salary and so claiming for the improvement. There is a high quit intension, revealing that the current status of the profession is on crisis. The respondents also recognized that there are few opportunities for them to have additional income. About 75% of the respondents say that there is no additional income they earn. The rest of the respondents 25% however said that they get additional income other than their normal career by giving tutor. The result of the finding clearly shows that majority of them doesn't have any source of additional income other than their regular salary.

### Administrative Support and Reward System in School

In this section, teacher participants raised the issue of a lack of good governance in their school respectively. This is related in particular access to training and workshops and that there was little transparency about how these choices were made. Of the respondents, 65.6% report that the school has limitations in communicating policies and procedures of selection to different training and workshops. This is also another de-motivating factor for teachers, because how teachers are managed and supported is of fundamental importance to teacher motivation. One of my participants stated as follows to mention the poor administration in the school system "...The school administration not focused on and accountable for what matters to the primary stakeholders, their focus is simply to meet the political needs of the ruling party and also they are appointed to do so by the top down process". The following table shows teachers view on the administrative support and reward system.

**Table 2 - Teachers Response on the administrative support and reward Statement**

Statement	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total
Is there any reward given for academic staff for those showing good performance?	50	50	100
Do you think that your school administrators appreciate your participation in decision making?	34.8	65.2	100
Do you feel that your administration is best in communicating its policies and procedures?	34.4	65.6	100
Do you feel there are tight rules and regulations in your school which demotivate teachers?	71.8	28.2	100

### Misbehaving Students

The respondents mentioned students' misbehaviour as part of their de-motivation that leaves a problem. A respondent stated that "...what is disgusting about my profession other than salary is: high work load and students' misbehaviour". Student misbehaviours such as disruptive talking in the classroom, avoidance of academic work, disrespect of teachers and rudeness were observed and reported by teacher participants. Besides de-motivating teachers, students' misbehaviours in schools can clearly affect the smoothness and effectiveness of the learning process. This is a point of departure for teacher respondents to agree with the decline of students' achievement. The other respondent stated as follows to mention the decline in achievement of students over time. "...almost all students' are low achievers and have low interest to learn".

### Societal Opinion on the Teaching Profession

The respondents mentioned the low emphasis given by the society, as another aspect of teachers de-motivation similarly to the points mentioned above. A respondent stated that, "in the eyes of the society the profession is underrated." Another respondent mentions the following to highlight the low emphasis given by the society "around 20 years ago teachers were respected by the society and the government. People were proud to give their daughters to teachers as a wife. This thing is reverted negatively and claiming that a teacher is the lowest option to be married by Ethiopian ladies.

### Poor Teacher Motivation

The most demotivating factor was the issues related to salary and the other factors were secondary for teacher respondents of the study area. Teacher respondents believe that their role is important and they highlight the opportunity they get for their personal development in the teaching profession. However, teachers' does not have any motivation to join the profession; they joined because of lack of opportunity for other professions. This shows that when they join the profession, these teachers have low motivation because of the low emphasis given to the profession and the low salary. Of the respondents of this study, 93.7% percent of the respondents claimed that they joined the profession without their choice. The remaining 6.3% reported that it is their first choice. The positive thing that teachers have is that they believe that being a teacher is being a base for all professions. One respondent for instance claimed that "a teacher produces human power not an object and producing skilled man power is the best ever satisfying thing" The respondents mentioned that teaching is the main source to every other profession and they can be happy and satisfied by seeing their students' success. One of the respondents feels as follows: "I feel happy in building future generation and what is more satisfying is when I see my student's achievements in their work places".

"When I teach my students I upgrade myself with a lot of knowledge and that makes me happy and satisfied" the other respondent replied. It is also found that they have high commitment to teach and contribute to their country and the society, provided that the question for survival is assured. Regardless of these views, all of them (100%) reported that they want to shift to other profession. The foremost reason to do so was found to be salary issue. All respondents report that they joined the profession because of their relatively low result they have as compared to their peers and hence they have no other option. One of the respondent claimed that "...the only job I get at that time was teaching and so I joined since I have no choice". This shows that less competitive students are joining the teaching profession.

### Motivating Factors

From the teacher's point of stand, strategic measures has to be taken to enhance both the job satisfaction and motivation was found to be the improvement of salary and the provision of good governance. Moreover, respondents mention the provision of allowances, life insurances and housing. Teacher respondents agree that poor motivation affects their efficiency and thereby, badly affect their students' performance or learning outcome. For instance, one of the respondents says "almost all students' are low achievers and have low interest to learn. As a result, to resolve all this problems and impose quality into the education system there should be a political will and commitment to address the problem". Maslow<sup>13</sup> stated that people are motivated to achieve certain needs. When one need is fulfilled a person seeks to fulfil the next one, and so on. The most widespread version of Maslow's hierarchy of needs includes five motivational needs, often depicted as hierarchical levels. These are physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs and self-actualization. However, the above Maslow's five stage model currently has been expanded to include cognitive need, aesthetic needs and transcendence needs. Cognitive needs include knowledge, meaning, etc. Aesthetic needs include appreciation and search for beauty, balance, form, etc. Transcendence needs include helping others to achieve self-actualization.

From Abraham Maslow's perspective, their motivation lies at the bottom of the hierarchy. In this stage peoples are motivated to fulfil the physiological needs such as food, water, air and other primary needs such as shelter, clothing, etc. As a teacher they need to prepare themselves for teaching and assisting students in a different ways, but their mind is busy and depressed of the way they are living. Thus they don't give appropriate emphasis for their students in the school. This leads students to become dependent and less competitive which in turn mean gradual decline of the education system in general. I believe that teacher would have a good motivation to work if they reach the safety needs. Because it is at this stage that they feel they are living and the need for serving the society arise.

## 5. Conclusions and Implication

Salaries of teacher are found to be the most de-motivating factors. There is a mismatch between the salary and living cost, and that teachers were unable to cover all their basic needs up to the end of every month. Salary and benefits are extrinsic factors associated with the environment. The fulfilment of these factors is a requirement for the intrinsic aspects of the work factors to prevail. This study showed that the absence of satisfactory salary and benefits were the main factors found to de-motivate teachers. Therefore, teachers were dissatisfied with the extrinsic aspects of their work. They also showed dissatisfaction with the absence of good governance. The school administration was found to be weak in effectively addressing the teachers' demands for supportive and fair leadership.

The teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the administrative support practices prevailing in the schools, which relates to the fairness, transparency and student disciplinary problems. Teachers' respondents found the intrinsic tasks associated with teaching a satisfying aspect of their work. Teachers were happy with the responsibilities associated with teaching (production of human capital).The teachers' greatest satisfaction was related to the emotional

rewards of teaching; such as the opportunity to use their skills at school, their view that their teaching developed the human beings and their contribution to the development of their country. The findings of this study have the potential to add value to educators as well as those who are interested in furthering the research in a more detailed way. The detailed findings from this study might provide current information to policy makers and practitioners on which areas to target to improve the teachers' satisfaction, and thus their motivation. Based on the aforementioned discussion and conclusion, the following implications were forwarded for implication: Allocating sufficient budget for upgrading school materials like water, classroom structure, and restroom might help teachers at least to feel comfortable in the school compound. Producing good governance, including the appointment of school principals might also help to improve teachers' motivation level.

Generally, the following points were found important from the data obtained:

- a) Since teachers were highly dissatisfied with their salaries, the government of Ethiopia and education leaders needs to understand the issue and work for its improvement. This will improve motivation of teachers' and effectiveness, and in the end it might contribute for the overall quality in the education system.
- b) Teachers association needs to work hard to create commitment of teachers to the profession by dealing with stakeholders and government to raise teacher salaries.
- c) There is a need to provide housing and free health facilities for teachers to meet their basic needs in such a way that they feel they are favoured for being in the profession.
- d) The school principals, need to take time with teachers to listen to their thoughts, aspirations and complaints and take a positive measure.
- e) Provide merit-based scholarships so teachers can upgrade their credentials and make the selection fair and clear.
- f) Create a well-furnished staff room for teachers to hold staff meetings, work together, and socialize.
- g) This study provides information about the factors that de-motivate teachers in Nekemte second cycle primary schools. Using the same methodology it is recommended that this study be repeated in other parts of the country.
- h) This study focused on second cycle primary school teachers. Similar studies could be done with first cycle primary school teachers and secondary school teachers in Ethiopia.

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