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Faculty of Humanity

Languages, Cultures and Linguistics

Investigating the Contextual Factors that Affect the Motivation and De-motivation of EFL Teachers in a University in Saudi Arabia

by

Doaa Sadiq Mahrous

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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University of Southampton

Abstract

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Teacher motivation is widely recognised as a crucial determinant of educational quality and student achievement, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. This qualitative study investigates the personal and institutional factors that shape the motivation and demotivation of EFL teachers working at a Saudi Arabian university. The research was conducted within the English Language Institute (ELI), a preparatory programme that supports foundation-year students. Situated within the wider framework of educational reform driven by Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, this study provides an in-depth exploration of the lived experiences of female EFL teachers and the contextual forces that influence their professional engagement.

The study is framed by Ushioda's (2009) Person-in-Context (PIC) theory of motivation, which emphasises viewing motivation as a fluid theoretical perspective rather than a fixed trait, which is relationally and contextually shaped. The research was conducted using a two-phase narrative inquiry design to understand these dynamics. During the initial "exploratory phase", the researcher conducted open-ended narrative interviews with ten language instructors to identify the contextual elements that affected their motivation. The second "Narration Focus Phase" involved open-ended narrative and semi-structured interviews with four participants, providing in-depth and reflexive accounts of motivational change over time. The study applied Braun and Clarke's six-phase model of thematic analysis to code and interpret the narrative data. Through this multi-stage framework, the research achieved comprehensive and detailed insights into teachers' motivation within the Saudi EFL teaching context.

The findings show that factors such as personal fulfilment, religious and moral values, and a passion for teaching initiate intrinsic motivation, but it remains vulnerable to contextual pressures. These pressures include curriculum standards, lack of autonomy, time constraints,

and insufficient recognition. Positive teacher-student relationships were found to bolster teachers' motivation, while constraints such as standardised assessments, lack of transparency, and organisational mistrust led to emotional exhaustion.

Importantly, motivation and teacher identity were found to change over time, influenced by personal believes, opportunities for professional growth, and institutional transformation. Engagement in professional development, combined with reflective practice, enhanced teachers' ability to maintain or regain their motivation throughout their careers.

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on teacher motivation by offering culturally contextualised insights from the Gulf region. It underscores the need for policy frameworks and institutional practices that promote autonomy, recognition, and meaningful professional development. Recognising teacher motivation as a dynamic, relational construct enables more responsive and sustainable approaches to educational reform and teacher support in rapidly changing higher education environments.

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Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

Print name: DOAA SADIQ MAHROUS

Title of thesis: Investigating the Contextual Factors that Affect the Motivation and De-motivation of EFL Teachers in a University in Saudi Arabia.

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission.

Signature: Date: September 2024

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Teacher motivation has been a subject of interest for many years not only to develop understanding of how to enhance teacher performance but also to examine how it can affect student learning. The correlations between teacher motivation, teacher performance, and learning outcomes has been firmly established (e.g. Cephe, 2010; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021; Wang et al., 2024). Dias et al. (2021) found that the motivation of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers at work affects their performance, with highly motivated teachers being more productive. In addition, the quality of teaching and educational success depend heavily on teacher motivation. Teacher motivation affects teachers' engagement and pedagogical practices, while the surrounding institutional context shapes their emotional, professional, and motivational experiences, which in turn directly affect student learning outcomes (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021).

The aim of this research was to develop an understanding of the contextual (external) and internal factors that influence female EFL teachers' motivation within the context of an English language institute at a Saudi Arabian university. Motivation is considered especially important for instructors working in EFL and 'English as a medium of instruction' (EMI) environments, where they are likely to face multiple standardised instructional policies and institutional challenges. Therefore, investigating what drives EFL teachers' motivation in this context will potentially enhance the pedagogical environment in Saudi Arabia and contribute to a deeper understanding of the factors that impact EFL teacher motivation in specific contexts. The research draws on Ushioda's (2009) person-in-context (PIC) motivation theory, which emphasises that individual motivation cannot exist separately from the context in which the teacher is embedded (see 2.2.6), as a theoretical lens. It also uses a narrative inquiry approach in which participants are encouraged to reflect on the intrinsic and extrinsic influences on their language teaching motivation and how these personal and contextual factors may have been combined (see 3.3.1).

This chapter begins by presenting both the research aim and the underlying rationale. The second section examines the significance of the study. The third section provides details about

the research context and setting. Lastly, the chapter presents the research questions, followed by a section that outlines the thesis structure.

1.1 Research Aim and Rationale

Han and Yin (2016) define motivation as the energy and drive that help people accomplish a task naturally. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021) define motivation as behaviours that manifest as choices, persistence, and efforts towards a specific goal, arguing that teacher motivation is essential in enhancing the instructional process because teachers' primary objective is to aid their students in achieving their desired academic goals. Although Dörnyei and Ushioda's (2021) definition provides a useful starting point, scholars have struggled to reach a consensus on the operational definition of the term, which is largely due to the lack of agreement on the nature of the concept of motivation itself (ibid). The notion of motivation is not easily defined, as it is complex, dynamic, and shaped by not only contextual factors and experience but also personal beliefs and values (ibid). Despite the significance of teacher motivation and its correlation to success in learning outcomes, limited research has investigated this notion in the field of English language teaching (ELT), although a number of studies have focused on language learners' attitudes, motivation (e.g. Aydin, 2012; Han & Mahzoun, 2018; Hastings, 2012) and demotivation (Gao, & Liu, 2022). Han and Yin (2016) argue that major aspects that affect teacher motivation, particularly that of EFL teachers in developing countries, have remained unexamined.

Moreover, there is a need to focus on the negative contextual factors of motivation and to specifically target the problem of demotivation and the reasons behind it (Aydin, 2012). A further rationale of this study is the call by researchers, such as Aydin (2012) and Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021), for more qualitative studies into teacher motivation to enhance the understanding of contextual and internal factors that contribute to motivation or demotivation among EFL teachers, especially in developing countries, such as Saudi Arabia.

Studies have examined teacher motivation in the EFL classroom (Aydin, 2012; Bekleyen, 2011, Minalla, 2022; Tran, & Moskovsky, 2022), but most of these studies have focused on factors that result in teacher demotivation rather than on those that enhance or maintain motivation in order to overcome demotivation. For example, Han and Yin (2016) identified excessive workloads, insufficient student engagement, and lack of institutional support as factors that demotivate teachers. This finding provides insight into aspects that should be avoided but

does not provide any guidelines for aspects that should be improved, such as educational policies, institutional support, and professional development for teachers, to enhance teacher motivation. Thus, the aim of this study was to understand how teachers experience (de)motivation over time and across individuals and situations.

Recent research has raised concerns about the internationalisation of educational systems and the impact of EMI on higher education, especially in the context of existing multilingual universities (Aljehani & Modiano, 2024; Dafouz & Smit, 2014). Dearden (2014) defines EMI as the use of English as the teaching language for academic subjects in countries or jurisdictions that takes place in areas where English is not spoken by the majority population as their first language (L1). English instruction around the globe seems to be experiencing a rapid change. Especially in non-anglophone countries, from English being taught as EFL instruction to using English as a medium for academic instruction in subjects such as science, mathematics, and medicine in non-native English-speaking regions (ibid). EMI is sometimes conflated with teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) through English, meaning that the interaction and texts used for instruction in EFL should never rely on the students' first language (ibid). When internationalising their programs, universities are moving to a situation where they are teaching academic subjects through the medium of English, and they run English language courses in their EFL context institutions in order to give the students the language skills needed to proceed with their majors. Therefore, teachers are required to teach English to foundation year students through EMI programs in Saudi universities, where English is considered a foreign language.

This changing context can impact teachers, their motivation, and their practices. AlBakri (2017) found that the EMI policy implemented in Oman led to psychological pressure and unequal opportunities for students, especially those with low English proficiency. She also found that certain Arab teachers did not directly adopt the EMI policy into their teaching methods; instead, they applied the teaching strategies they believed were the most effective for improving their students' English proficiency levels. These findings emphasise the need to align EMI policies with students' and teachers' needs to avoid demotivation and deficiencies in the learning environment.

The impact of internationalisation may be evident in the Saudi context, where EFL teachers are likely face similar challenges. Thus, understanding how the EMI policy influences teacher motivation is crucial, particularly because educational institutions in Saudi Arabia are

increasingly moving towards internationalisation and the adoption of English-medium teaching in higher education programs (Aljehani & Modiano, 2024). Therefore, teacher motivation should generally be regarded as a crucial factor in educational quality and successful student learning outcomes in educational settings (Han & Mahzoun, 2018; Kızıltepe, 2008; Mukminin et al., 2015; Thoonen et al., 2011).

1.2 Contribution of the Study

The probability of teacher attrition rises when educators experience a disconnect between their values and their work environment and when they lack support for professional growth and autonomy (Wang et al., 2024). The issue of teacher attrition has become widespread, with some teachers quitting their jobs within the first year of their teaching careers (Harfitt, 2015; Hong, 2012; Schaefer, 2013; Schaefer & Clandinin, 2011). In the United States, the resignation rate of schoolteachers at the beginning of their careers increased to 50% over five years (Ingersoll, 2003). This issue accord in various countries around the world, including South Africa, China and Hong Kong, where English is used as a foreign language (UNESCO, 2024). New teachers in South Africa encounter challenging work settings that include students and inadequate instructional systems, which hinder their job satisfaction and career continuation during initial professional years (ibid). The declining number of people choosing the teaching profession is alarming, which supports the need for extensive research to examine the factors that impact teacher motivation and retention and identify the problems that lead them to leave their teaching positions.

Researchers, such as Han and Yin (2016), have identified several factors that affect teachers' motivation in many Western countries (US, Australia and European countries), i.e., working environment, reduced job security, low prestige, and imbalance between demand and reward, as the primary causes of teacher attrition. Tehseen and Ul Hadi (2015) provide a broad overview of Western countries literature relevant to job satisfaction and turnover issues of school teachers; that demonstrates the direct link between insufficient teacher motivation and their retention in schools. Moreover, the authors refer to contextual factors related to the school environment, such as the teachers' relationships with colleagues and school leadership, as well as administrative policies and student behavior, which have a significant correlation with teachers' intention to turn over. Research findings from Western sources do not consistently affect teacher job satisfaction and turnover intentions within Eastern

contexts. Wang et al. (2024) observed 15 primary educational institutions in Shanghai, China and found that overwhelming demands in the workplace significantly impacted teachers' well-being and professional efficacy. Therefore, there is a need to investigate motivation in Eastern countries, more specifically the Middle East. As Saudi Arabia is developing rapidly, investigating teachers' motivation might enhance education in the country.

Teacher motivation among tertiary-level EFL programs is strongly influenced by various contextual factors. Empirical studies have identified several elements that can lead to teacher demotivation, including excessive workloads, insufficient student engagement, and a lack of institutional support. In an English preparatory school at a university in Turkey, Cephe (2010) found that heavy workloads affected instructor motivation and increased teacher turnover. Reversing this negative trend requires researchers to understand specific motivational factors that generate positive energy and motivate instructors to teach and remain in the profession. Most studies have relied heavily on quantitative data, which have been criticized for their lack of rich qualitative information to explain teachers' transitions within the profession (Harfitt, 2015). Moreover, it is necessary to investigate how these intrinsic and extrinsic factors interact over time and affect teachers' motivation. By using motivational lenses and theories, researchers have begun to investigate instructors' motivation over the past decades, focusing on collecting information on factors that motivate EFL teachers at various career stages and in various teaching and learning contexts to identify the individual and situational factors that sustain instructor dedication and interest (Richardson et al., 2014).

Keeping in view the contextual factors and influences that can negatively affect teacher motivation, it is important to observe these phenomena in the Saudi EFL context, where more rigorous research in this area is required. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the specific motivational factors that impact EFL teachers' motivation and demotivation in the research context. By investigating this relationship within the Saudi Arabian context, this study contributes to the existing literature by drawing on PIC theory (Ushioda, 2009) that aids in providing rationally and culturally specific insight into the influence of context-specific factors on teacher motivation, thereby increasing the understanding of how cultural and systemic factors influence educator well-being and motivation (see 2.2.6). The next section elaborates on the context of this study: Saudi Arabia.

1.3 Context of the Study

This section provides details about the sociocultural context that set the background of this research and describes the English language institute where this research was conducted.

1.3.1 Sociocultural Factors Impacting EFL Instruction

In language education, the classroom is inseparable from its sociocultural context (Shah et al., 2013). Islamic traditions and the heritage of the Arabic language form the fundamental basis of Saudi Arabia's sociocultural context and the classroom therefore is impacted by the local society, culture and beliefs including a religious and conservative mindset (ibid). In Shah et al's (2013) study of preparatory level EFL teachers in a Saudi university, the teachers felt the need to design classroom exercises that incorporate genuine language elements and also represented Saudi Arabian cultural characteristics. These teachers needed to gain a comprehensive understanding of their educational environment and to develop effective strategies to manage social, cultural, and religious elements (ibid).

However, the last few decades have seen a fast transformation and substantial changes to the traditionally strict conservative social norms in Saudi Arabia. The political, economic and social repercussions of this transformation have affected the entire country while creating the most significant consequences for women (Pilotti et al., 2021). The experiences of women are undergoing transformation; women's job opportunities have expanded while the availability of international tertiary education scholarships has grown. In Saudi Arabia, English language abilities offer a competitive advantage because they are seen as a reflection of social status and help individuals succeed in multi-cultural workplaces. Women now have the opportunity to enter previously restricted professions and positions within the workplace and can enjoy broader mobility and independence while pursuing leadership roles and political involvement (ibid).

Today many female educators are choosing careers outside teaching which leads to a potential shortage of teachers in the job market. According to UNESCO (2024), data from the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) (2018) showed that some countries reported a shortage of qualified teachers, such as Viet Nam (86%), Saudi Arabia (62%), and Colombia (53%). Therefore, there is an urgent need to investigate why teachers in these

countries lack the motivation to teach and choose this profession. This might be answered by examining the educational policies utilized by these countries in their educational systems.

1.3.2 English Language in Saudi Arabian Education Policies

The Saudi leadership recognised the value of providing English language instruction for the rapidly expanding population shortly after the Kingdom's establishment in 1932. English was incorporated into the national education system to facilitate oil trade negotiations and international communication. Furthermore, the government actively encouraged citizens to pursue English language studies to prepare them for international scholarship opportunities (Al-Seghayer, 2005), with the aim of providing an educated Saudi workforce. Among all the subjects and courses taught in the Saudi education system, the teaching of EFL has been a significant focus of the Ministry of Education, as English is the only foreign language included in the public school curriculum (Alrashidi & Phan, 2015).

After the establishment of the 2030 Vision Economic Transformation Plan by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in 2016, Saudi Arabia began reforming its educational system, including the transformation of the public school English curriculum and its approach to teaching English. Saudi Vision 2030 has several educational objectives, including the creation of working environments that promote creativity in the learning process and improve curriculum and teaching methods (ibid). It emphasises education as a means to support and foster national development; therefore, it aims to improve learning outcomes and align curricula with labour market needs (OECD, 2020).

To facilitate this, the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) has engaged in the establishment of many new Saudi educational institutions and colleges to accommodate the growing population's desire for higher education. The development and modernisation of Saudi Arabia's educational system have corresponded with the growth and transformation of English language instruction (Albiladi et al., 2022). The English language is considered to play a pivotal role in the development and progress of the country at various levels, including the rapid changes to social cohesion in recent years (Al-Seghayer, 2014). Given the recognised value of English, Saudi Arabia has adopted an English Language Medium (EMI) policy and it has become a compulsory subject in all public and private schools at all levels. In most universities, technical departments and scientific, medical, and engineering colleges are

taught in English (Al-Seghayer, 2011), while other Arabic majors teach English as a subject course during their first year in the university.

Moreover, the MoHE policy requires EMI for science majors at government universities, and all private and public universities have now implemented a preparatory year programme (PYP) focused on teaching the English language (Shah et al., 2013). Hence, beginner students at universities must complete the PYP that focuses on developing certain abilities, including communication skills in English, in order to enrol in undergraduate education (Aljehani & Modiano, 2024). However, the move towards EMI in education in Saudi Arabia may not align with the goal of Saudi Vision 2030 to enhance English language proficiency, as students who feel unprepared and unsupported may resist, which leads to demotivation amongst both students and teachers (ibid). Therefore, English language institutes in Saudi Arabia should be examined to ensure the effect of the Saudi 2030 vision.

1.3.3 Research Setting: English Language Institute at a Saudi University

As this study examined the contextual factors that relate to teacher motivation, it is important to describe the context in which the study was conducted. This study was conducted on the female campus at a public university in Saudi Arabia. The university name where the study was conducted has been anonymized to maintain research context confidentiality and participant protection. Therefore, the original university name has been substituted with a general term like "a public university in Saudi Arabia" and the citation used to refer to the university was "University handbook (2022)."

The Saudi education system requires separate male and female campuses. Owing to sociocultural norms and Islamic beliefs (Nouraldeen & Elyas, 2014), female and male students are segregated in schools (Alamri, 2011) and in many majors in universities. In fact, due to this strict segregation, the teaching profession was, in the past, one of the few options available for women in Saudi Arabia, particularly for those from more conservative families. This means that many women entered the profession because of their desire to work in a female-dominated environment rather than a passion to teach.

Given the gender separation policy, the researcher did not have access to the male campus. The government university offers a wide range of programmes for full-time and part-time students. The university and the British Council cooperated to launch the English Language Centre (ELC) in 1975 (University Handbook, 2022). In the beginning, the ELC provided courses

for engineering and medical students. Then, In 2008, aligned with the new government directive for the Department of Education to develop a PYP, the ELC's responsibilities increased, and it was thus renamed the English Language Institute (ELI). The ELI implemented the Preparatory Year English Language Programme to deliver quality-intensive EMI instruction. The ELI strives to achieve its objectives by implementing administrative and academic methods that adhere to international higher education standards (ibid). One of these measures is developing a unified curriculum (e.g., textbooks and pacing guide) and designing reliable assessments to evaluate the learning outcomes across all programmes. Therefore, the ELI developed programs with various tracks to benefit students who will be studying majors through the medium of English the following year. (ibid).

The ELI provides English language courses to all new full-time students entering the university (with approximately 16,000 students admitted every year). These students are required to attend English language lessons and complete six credits of general English before they can enrol in any major specialisation (University Handbook, 2022). The academic year is now divided into two semesters, each consisting of two modules (see 1.3.6). Each course level includes a detailed pacing guide, which faculty members receive to support day-to-day lesson planning. It specifies the exact number of textbook units and language items students should learn and practice within defined timeframes (ibid). Pacing guides created for all course levels mirror the institution's expected aims of student learning outcomes while maintaining appropriate standards for both learners and teachers (ibid).

Over the past ten years, the instructional teaching context has evolved from a language centre to a language institute. During this period, the semester-based system was replaced by a modular system. As a result of this structural shift, the curriculum was revised twice. External factors, such as holidays and adverse weather conditions, further contributed to the instructional instability, with classes cancelled frequently due to flooding risks during moderate to heavy rain and occasionally due to sandstorms. In addition, the sudden transition to online teaching due to the COVID-19 lockdown significantly impacted teaching practices. As findings from this study indicate, EFL teachers are affected by these frequent changes because these changes require them to meet syllabus guidelines within strict timeframes in difficult circumstances. This creates a working environment where constant change contrasts sharply with the rigid structure of the syllabus, potentially impacting teacher motivation. The next section provides details on EFL teachers working in ELI education and their duties.

1.3.4 Instructors at the English Language Institute

The ELI has approximately 600 male and female academics (University Handbook, 2022). English instructors at the ELI must hold at least a bachelor's degree in English; however, a master's degree or a PhD in English or applied linguistics is preferred. There are two main groups of EFL teachers at the ELI. The first and currently largest group is composed of Saudi EFL teachers with bachelor's, master's, or PhD degrees. The second category is composed of non-Saudi instructors from various countries, such as the United States, Canada, Malaysia, Pakistan, and India. Non-Saudi faculty members receive one-year contract terms. The terms and conditions of their contract are as follows: new faculty members receive a tax-free monthly salary and paid summer vacation along with annual benefits to help them settle in Saudi Arabia (e.g., housing allowance, transportation allowance, furniture allowance, and end-of-service gratuity) (ibid).

All language instructors at the ELI (Saudi and non-Saudi) work 40 hours per week, 18 hours of classroom teaching per week with a class duration of 3 to 4 hours per day, and a required two office hours per week, teacher training, faculty meetings, workshops, and invigilation (ibid).

ELI faculty members must participate in the professional development opportunities provided by the ELI's professional development units (PDU) to improve their teaching capabilities and expand their field knowledge, which aids in fulfilling the ELI's objectives (University Handbook, 2022). Between 2015 and 2018, the PDU and Cambridge University Press delivered comprehensive and detailed training sessions on the efficient use of the textbook *English Unlimited Special Edition* (*EUSE*) series and its digital tools. The PDU provides faculty with information about relevant webinars, online courses, workshops, discussion groups, and seminars available on-campus and at different locations to achieve the ELI objectives. Faculty members receive regular formal and informal developmental opportunities to learn from the experience and expertise of their colleagues (ibid).

Teachers are observed three to four times during an academic year by appointed observers and teacher trainers. Unannounced and formally announced observations count for teachers' annual evaluations (ibid). In teaching English courses, EFL teachers at the ELI are required to teach an established syllabus in line with curriculum guidelines and to follow a weekly pacing guide to cover the course components. Instructors spend their remaining hours working on committees and special projects while invigilating and offering support to various ELI units.

Adherence to allocated working hours is essential to ensure the quality of the instruction process and student learning.

1.3.5 Students at the English Language Institute

The ELI Preparatory Year English Language Programme is a mandatory English language programme that aids students in meeting the language requirements for university studies. Students, especially newly admitted full-time learners, whose population ranges from 12,000 to 16,000 annually depending on places availability, are required to complete the English language course as part of the PYP (Faculty Handbook, 2021). Student acceptance criteria are based on the percentages of high school leaving grade point average (GPA). Most students are 18 to 20 years of age, with some rare exceptions. Undergraduate admissions depend on four essential components: the type of high school diploma (natural science, management, or humanities) and students' weighted grade point average (GPA; 60%) in high school and general aptitude and admissions test results (40%). The university admits its highest-scoring candidates to the PYP, based on available space. Students who do not meet the standard GPA during their preparatory year are allowed one semester to improve but will be disqualified from the admissions process if they still do not meet the requirements at the end of this period (ibid).

Students who enter the ELI come from diverse social and educational backgrounds and have varying levels of English proficiency. Students who enrol in universities are graduates from public and private schools with diverse English language curricula, which lead to significant disparities in students' levels of English language proficiency. However, before students engage in the course, the ELI conducts an assessment to determine each learner's overall English language proficiency. They administer the Cambridge English Placement Test (CEPT) and use the test results to group students according to their language ability levels to ensure that their teaching methods are tailored to address each student's needs (ibid). During each module, students receive 18 hours of instruction per week to complete the units of the textbook (ibid).

1.3.6 Program and Curriculum

The ELI curriculum has two tracks: the general English track (GET) and the academic English track (AET). Students specialising in Arabic programs, such as Islamic Studies, take the GET,

whereas those majoring in English programs, such as medicine, take the AET. The PYP follows a module system with four modules for each academic year. Each module is eight weeks long, excluding the exam week, so the actual teaching weeks are seven. Each modular course is designed to cover one of the four language levels of the programme, in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference (ELI 101 Beginner (A1), ELI 102 Elementary (A2), ELI 103 Pre-intermediate (B1), and ELI 104 Intermediate (B1)). Students in both tracks must successfully pass each course level to move to a higher level and complete the four courses (University Handbook, 2022).

The ELI currently uses the *Cambridge University Press Textbook Unlock (*2019) for academic track classes and *EUSE* (2014) for general track classes (ibid). Each module has a detailed curriculum and course descriptions provided to EFL teachers by the curriculum committee. Students' learning outcomes are set for each assigned ELI course. Each course has a pacing guide and suggested lesson plans for EFL teachers to follow. These guidelines explain how many units and language items should be taught per week. The Curriculum and Testing Unit at the ELI keeps track of and monitors the teaching materials covered by EFL teachers and the student learning outcomes achieved as a result of the teaching.

1.3.7 Assessments

The overall evaluations of the general and academic tracks are performed through online computer-based mid-module and final exams, and listening, reading, writing, and speaking exams (University Handbook, 2022). The Academic Management Unit, in collaboration with the Curriculum and Test Development Unit (CTU), supervises the administration and creation of all exams. These examinations are standardised and include objective questions, which are exemplified by multiple-choice questions (MCQs) drawn from a common test bank. This bank randomly selects the MCQs and randomises the order of the questions and answer choices. Nonetheless, despite the strict procedure, these MCQs are essential, as they evaluate students' proficiency in learning key course learning outcomes (CLOs) and goals (ibid).

As the central University control both the teaching process and assessment content, the EFL teachers' only task is to teach the curriculum according to the syllabus guidelines. This comes at the cost of teacher autonomy. Consequently, teachers' lack of control might mean that they do not have the opportunity to make adjustments in the assessment tools according to learners' specific needs or the spare time to provide constructive feedback to their students

(Wang et al., 2024). These contextual factors experienced by EFL teachers throughout the academic year may affect their motivation to teach the curriculum. They follow pacing guides and administrative policies, which often conflict with established language teaching standards and such factors exhaust teacher emotional reserves while hindering student learning progress (AlHarbi & Ahmad, 2020). The next section moves on to look at the goal of this study and the research questions it sets out to answer.

1.4 Research Goal and Research Questions

The goal of this study is to explore contextual (external) and internal factors and how they interact and affect the motivation of EFL teachers in a higher education setting in Saudi Arabia. To achieve this goal, the study aims to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What factors embedded in the Saudi Arabian context play a significant role in impacting the motivation and demotivation experienced by EFL teachers during their teaching?

- 1a) What kinds of personal values, beliefs, and experiences do teachers identify as shaping their motivation or demotivation?
- 1b) What external or contextual conditions do teachers perceive as significant in their professional experience?

RQ2: In what ways do internal and contextual influences interact to shape teachers' motivation?

RQ3: How do EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia narrate changes in their motivation and professional identity over time throughout their teaching journeys?

These questions examine different aspects of motivation based on the PIC model framework (see 2.2.6). The research questions investigate how teachers' beliefs and values, along with their identity and perceptions, shape their motivation. The questions reflect the relational characteristics of the PIC framework by acknowledging that the influences of internal and external factors interact together rather than separately. Teachers' narrative accounts are used to examine how their teaching motivation changes (or not) over time, whether they develop their identity positioning over time, and how these evolving processes affect their motivation.

1.5 Thesis structure

This investigation is designed to report the current research for a thesis project and is divided into seven main chapters: 1) Introduction, 2) Theoretical Framework and Literature Review, 3) Methodology, 4) and 5) Findings of the Study, 6) Discussion of the Findings, and 7) Conclusion.

Chapter 1 introduces the research problem and questions and provides a comprehensive overview of the context of the study. Chapter 2 critically reviews prominent theories of motivation, with particular emphasis on Ushioda's (2009) PIC theoretical framework, which underpins the analytical lens of the study. This framework supports an in-depth exploration of individual perceptions within specific contexts (Section 2.2.6). The chapter also reviews key literature on teacher motivation, identifying various contextual factors that influence educators' motivation across diverse educational settings. Chapter 3 outlines the qualitative methodology adopted in the study, focusing on the narrative inquiry research design. It elaborates on the chosen research paradigm, data collection methods, analytical procedures, and ethical considerations. Chapters 4 and 5 present the research findings, organised around the major themes that emerged from the data analysis. Chapter 6 interprets these findings in the existing literature. Finally, Chapter 7 concludes the study by outlining its implications and contributions to the field of research.

Chapter 2 Theoretical Framework

What moves a certain individual to decide to engage in a task is the main question at the heart of understanding and researching the notion of motivation. Such a question has encouraged scholars to create and develop various theories, resulting in greater debate regarding the understanding and construction of motivation and why humans behave the way they do **(**Dornyei & Ushioda, 2021)**.** The complexity of motivation lies in its continually changing nature and the fact that it varies from one individual to another, making it difficult to comprehend. According to Ushioda (2008), a growing interest in the social dimension of motivation is reflected in the most recent literature on the issue of motivation in education which has addressed a wide range of subjects, including social and cultural impact, curriculum and institutional contexts, classroom environment, relationships among peers, teaching styles and techniques, teaching material, and structure of work. This study draws on Person-in-Context (PIC) theory (Ushioda, 2009) which uses a holistic approach to conceptualize motivation, perspectives, identity and beliefs, which are at the core of this study. The use of PIC theory in this study serves to provide a comprehensive view of motivation as a dynamic and fluid concept that can allow the understanding of teachers' as real individuals whose beliefs, goals, and professional identities are formed through interaction with their personal, cultural, and institutional contexts.

The chapter begins with a critical review of a number of theories of motivation that can serve to explain the motivational factors that affect teachers. The analysis begins by reviewing several motivational models, including Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT), Achievement Goal Theory (AGT), and Self-Determination Theory (SDT), and continues with an in-depth examination of Person-in-Context theory which forms the theoretical framework of the study. The chapter also examines other language teacher-related factors, such as teacher autonomy, believes and professional identity in relation to teacher motivation and development. It further explores literature regarding the external factors that affect teacher motivation, such as teaching environment, incentives and workload, teacher-student relationships, and the implementation of EMI policies globally in higher education and in Saudi Arabia. Finally, the chapter concludes with teacher motivation studies that have been conducted in Arab and Saudi Arabian societies.

2.1 Conceptualizing Motivation

Motivation is a multi-faceted concept that cannot be expressed in a single definition. Although it is widely used in research and educational contexts, there is little consensus on the exact connotation of the concept because there are various factors that affect individuals' motivation. Kızıltepe (2008) posits that the concept has been derived from 'movere', a Latin verb denoting the act of moving. Ryan and Deci (2000) contextualize the word by asserting that it indicates being stimulated to do something. This definition suggests that the term is oriented towards predicting decision processes rather than predicting performance. However, various scholars have conceptualized the concept in different ways. For instance, Roos and Eeden (2008) suggest that the concept denotes an inner force influenced by dynamic personal factors that might differ over time. In the same vein, Evans (1998) provides perhaps the most relevant definition of motivation in line with the scope of the current research study. She examined teachers' job satisfaction and motivation and concluded that motivation is a "condition" or the creation of condition that includes all influential elements promoting a person's desire to participate in specific tasks. This condition includes an understanding that it only concerns itself with the individual's threshold of wanting to be part of an activity rather than whether or not they initiate participation. Thus, one does not necessarily have to participate to become motivated.

Given the complexity of defining motivation and consequent lack of consensus, Dornyei and Ushioda (2011) argue that the only thing about its definition that researchers agree on is the direction and extent of human behaviour. In other words, most researchers agree that motivation is characterized by the choice of a particular task or action, persistence with it, and effort expended on it. Therefore, motivation cannot be perceived solely from the cause-and-effect perspective of a task. Rather, it should be viewed as a dynamic, complex mental process that occurs in phases over the timeframe of life experiences (ibid). Arguably, the complexity of the concept cannot be accounted for in a single framework; therefore, the various definitions of motivation can be explored within the frameworks of different teachers' motivation theories (ibid). Hence, in relation to motivation to teach, it is essential to understand and conceptualize teachers' motivation. The following section presents some of the theories underpinning teacher motivation research that aid in conceptualizing and understanding teacher motivation.

2.2 Overview of Teacher Motivation Theories

Stężycka and Etherington (2020) define teacher motivation as the desire to teach. Teacher motivation, to put it simply, is the enthusiasm and willingness to instruct learners. Yet, Sinclair (2008) defines it as attraction, retention and concentration determined by the extent to which individuals are attracted to teach and how long they pursue the teaching profession or continue their teacher educational programs; thus, not just the attraction, but also the persistence and the degree of engagement with the teaching profession itself. Dornyei and Ushioda (2011) suggest four specific aspects of teacher motivation:

- Firstly, the intrinsic component is a key factor in teacher motivation, such as the intrinsic pleasure of educating people and advancing society.
- Secondly, another key feature includes contextual factors, such as the demands and constraints of the workplace.
- Thirdly, motivation relates to a lengthy, even lifelong affiliation with the institution, which is visible in terms of career structures and promotion possibilities.
- Fourthly, motivation seems to be fragile because it is subject to some strong negative influences and requires satisfying teachers' psychological needs.

In the most general terms, Dörnyei and Ushioda, (2011) describe teaching as a combination of several human behaviours and propose that general theories of motivation aid in conceptualizing it. Motivation is found within an individual in the form of one's own motivational capabilities, decision-making, and goal achievement in specific tasks within a particular social environment. However, scholars have shifted their emphasis and decided to go beyond learner motivation to teacher motivation, adapting established theories that had been used in analysing learner motivation to shed light on teachers' motivation. Two of the most significant researchers in the field of teacher motivation are Watt and Richardson (2014), who suggest three main theories that aid in theorizing and conceptualizing the measurement of teacher motivation: Expectancy-value theory (EVT); Achievement goal Theory (AGT); self-determination theory (SDT).

2.2.1 Expectancy-Value Theory to Understand Teacher Motivation

In the writings of Eccles and Wigfield (2000; 2020), the expectancy-value theory explains that people's achievement choices are a product of their perceived value of the task and the expectancy of success. This expectancy of success is linked to a person's abilities and beliefs

about how well they may perform on an upcoming task. According to Watt and Richardson (2014), the factors that make up a value component of this theory include an intrinsic value (how much an individual enjoys this task), a utility value (whether the task in question is considered useful), and an attainment value (if the task is important in achieving an individual's own goals). These three positive values have been adequately considered by the authors. However, the fourth value, a cost value (what an individual needs to give), has been less studied. The cost value considers the cost of an individual's opportunity, such as anxiety, financial losses, and the effort and time needed for carrying out the said task (ibid).

Based on this theory, Watt and Richardson (2006) created the FIT Choice Model (Factors Influencing Teaching) to understand the reasons behind preservice teachers' choice of teaching as a career in various Australian universities. This choice model considers individuals' values and classifies them into two categories: personal utility values, i.e., family, job security, and social utility values, i.e., shaping children's future and enhancing society. This model utilised motivation factors and perceptions about the teaching profession demands (task difficulty and expertise) and task rewards (salary, social status). The findings revealed that beliefs, ability, and intrinsic values were the most significant motivational factors for people to engage in teaching as a career in Australia. This was followed by social utility values, such as shaping the future of children or young people, making a social contribution, enhancing social equity, and working with children and young people, as reasons people choose the teaching profession (ibid). Another finding is that people do not opt for the teaching profession simply because they cannot pursue other career options, but because they prefer teaching. Lastly, social influence (social status and salary) was ranked the lowest reinforcement for pursuing teaching as a career (ibid).

In studies that apply the FIT Choice Model in diverse settings and contexts such as Norway and Germany, there were variations in the findings. Social utility motivations were rated the lowest among Norwegian participants as the teachers considered teaching emotionally challenging and highly demanding, requiring technical and specialised knowledge and expertise (Watt & Richardson, 2014). Teachers in Germany ranked salary as the highest motivator for pursuing teaching. Interestingly, in Chinese and Turkish contexts, other factors that serve as personal utility values, such as job security and benefits, influenced their choice of teaching as a career more than individual interest and ability. Perhaps, some of the

variables mirror different characteristics of countries in terms of their collectivist culture, such as in the Chinese and Turkish contexts (ibid).

Based on the findings of FIT-Choice Model studies, it can be argued that the FIT-Choice scale used in the studies represents a valid quantitative platform to consider varied teacher motivation across diverse contexts. The findings of these studies established the usefulness of the expectancy-value theory in explaining the primary motivation for why people choose to become teachers. Specifically, the expectancy of success and personal values influenced the choice of teaching as a career by individuals across the countries studied. Building on the value-based and expectancy components of motivation, this section turns to Achievement Goal Theory (AGT) to consider how the pursuit of professional goals and teaching outcomes influences teacher motivation.

2.2.2 Applying Achievement Goal Theory in Educational Contexts

Research has demonstrated that the Achievement Goal theory is highly useful in understanding why teachers currently in the profession choose to stay, but not as explanatory about why they enter the profession initially (Butler, 2014). Researchers have applied the Achievement Goal Theory (AGT) to learner motivation studies; however, teachers are part of school achievement as they structure and control the classroom activities (Butler, 2007). Achievement goal orientation relates to the purpose of individuals' behaviour in activities and how they interpret and respond to different situations (Ames, 1992). Thus, understanding how teachers interpret the conditions of employment and their pedagogy utilizing an achievement goal approach may be useful in understanding what might motivate teachers to strive towards their goals, define success, and orient themselves toward different means of personal achievement (Butler, 2007).

Butler (2007) examined whether the AGT model could measure and identify the four kinds of achievement goals. The first objective was to identify whether the four kinds of achievement goals set by students for their schoolwork matched the teachers' preferences in their teaching context. Therefore, Butler (2007) developed a self-reported measure of Goal Orientations for Teaching (GOT) based on the four kinds of motivational goals: acquiring and developing professional skills (mastery orientation); demonstrating superior instruction abilities (ability approach); not showing poor teaching abilities (ability avoidance); and accomplishing daily

duties with less effort (work avoidance). The report measured factors that made teachers feel successful in 17 schools in Israel. The study revealed that teaching motivation was significantly influenced by the distinct patterns put in place to help-related perceptions, behaviours, and preferences. The achievement goals of the teachers were associated with positive perceptions, which aimed at seeking beneficial tools for learning. There was a preference for receiving help or consultation, such as workshops, which could help them become more knowledgeable and effective practitioners (ibid). There was also a need for teachers to work with their colleagues to address professional questions and problems they encountered in their work. Teachers revealed that they were greatly motivated by the ability-avoidance goals. Most of the teachers agreed that they had good days when they did not have to work hard, and days when they did have to work hard as they would deal with low-achieving and disruptive students (ibid). Additionally, Butler (2012) added a fifth factor to the AGT that makes a significant contribution to teachers' achievement motivation. She stated that the main orientation for teaching is that instructors value and seek closer and caring relationships with their students to facilitate excellent teaching. While AGT focuses on professional purpose and perceptions of success, Self-Determination Theory highlights autonomy and internal drivers of engagement as central to motivation

2.2.3 Self-Determination Theory and Teacher Autonomy

Using the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) in research studies may aid in understanding teachers' motivation. The SDT categorizes human behaviour in social contexts and their motivation in an autonomous and controlled manner, which possesses significant differences (Deci & Ryan, 2012). For instance, autonomous motivation occurs with an interest in one's work, and teachers with this kind of motivation perform their duties because they find interest in doing the action voluntarily (intrinsic motivation). Teachers within this category have a self-driving force that makes teaching fulfilling. On the other hand, controlled motivation describes activities that individuals do because of social or professional pressure (ibid). Teachers, under this kind of motivation, teach because they want to fulfil their duties or because they want to earn a living. Characterising this behaviour according to the degree to which they are autonomous or controlled (Gagné, & Deci, 2005) might also aid in understanding their motivations.

Intrinsic motivation is an example of autonomous motivation, which differs significantly from internalization as the latter describes a process that an individual transforms requests or regulations into personally endorsed values (Deci & Ryan, 2000). SDT proposes that internalization shows how the external motivators can lead to intrinsic motivation by making the individual self-determined in completing their duties and making them realize the significance of rules and start adopting them as their own, transforming the behaviour to being intrinsically driven without external control.

Roth et al. (2007) argue that instructors might differentiate among the different types of motivation by reflecting on how their degree of autonomy differs. Their study examined whether the teachers would receive the motivation types proposed by the self-determination theory and tested the hypothesis that autonomy and motivation for teaching are associated with positive outcomes for students and teachers. In their quantitative study, they examined 132 teachers and students from various Jewish civil elementary schools in Israel. The teachers filled in a questionnaire assessing their autonomy and motivation for teaching, social desirability biases, and personal accomplishments (ibid).

The results of the study showed variations in teacher motivation. Motivation driven by autonomy for teaching was associated with teachers' positivity about their sense of accomplishment. On the negative side, most of the teachers ended up claiming that they felt exhausted much of the time (Roth, et. al, 2007). Additionally, the autonomous motivation for teaching was constituted by how students perceived learning, reflecting on their support for students' autonomous motivation for learning. Ultimately, SDT hypothesizes that teachers' motivation comes from diverse factors that impact their work. Autonomously motivated teachers expressed positive engagement in teaching as they found it enjoyable, which enabled them to overcome obstacles such as burnout and exhaustion. These categories of motivation determined the correlation between motivational regulations and basic psychological needs of teachers. Furthermore, students revealed that competent and supportive teaching behaviour caused autonomous motivation for studying and learning (ibid). The next section examines motivational theories in more detail and provides an evaluation for each theory discussed.

2.2.4 Critical Evaluation of Motivational Theories

The discussed motivational theories provide a clear explanation of what influences a person to work towards a given goal and provide insight into human behaviour and what drives it. However, the three motivational theories of education, namely the Self-Determination theory, the Achievement Goal theory, and the Expectancy Value theory, have also been criticised. The Expectancy Value theory has limitations regarding motivation. Since motivation is individual-based, the social nature of the Expectancy Value theory makes it challenging for employers to identify employees' unique individual needs (Shikalepo, 2020). individuals are uniquely different in their needs and expectations according to their different backgrounds. The institute administration and management teams may fail to adapt their practices to support teachers' individual requirements. One teacher might value job security, and another may find salary more important. The Expectancy Value theory does not address individual, social, or cultural differences. Hence, the theory is not suitable for application in today's workplaces with diverse populations (ibid).

Furthermore, the Achievement Goal theory does not correspond with individual goal setting. Goals drive and lead behaviour orientation, and can be harmful to performance as low-level learners may switch their goals because of their low proficiency. Scholars have suggested that the normative goals may indirectly interfere with students' achievement and task focus (Senko et. al., 2011). Normative goals can encourage students to opt for performance-avoidance goals. Senko and Harackiewicz (2005) found that students' performance goals may be reduced, and they would adopt an approach of goal avoidance. Furthermore, some students may change their desire to perform and achieve goals in the classroom because they frequently experience negative feedback and are vulnerable to goal switching (ibid). Perhaps some less experienced teachers face the same scenario during teaching, which results in their goal switching and affects their motivation to teach.

Similarly, the Self-determination theory undermines the social and cultural differences that may influence people's motivation in different ways. Despite the effectiveness of the Self-determination theory in measuring motivation in educational settings, it has some limitations. Van den Broeck et al. (2016) remark that the universality placed in the satisfaction of basic needs is imprecise due to different cultural values and human needs. For instance, evaluating human needs from a relativist perspective uncovers the differentiation in need satisfaction

activities as each individual is influenced by their culture. Collectivist societies place a greater emphasis on satisfying group membership or social relationship needs compared to individualistic cultures, which seek to satisfy their autonomy needs above everything else (ibid). In this regard, Saudi Arabia can be considered a collectivist society as it consists of various tribes and values that are primarily family-oriented and predominantly Muslim; collectivism is integral to Islamic beliefs. Besides, this study does not just focus on how autonomous or controlled the teachers are, or how they value a certain task, nor what goal they aim to achieve; it focuses on teachers' motivation, needs, and feelings about the context they teach in.

Individuals' needs differ from one context to another and from one society to another. Recently, Gobena (2018) in a mixed-method study on 303 Ethiopian teachers found that most teachers lacked motivation due to two significant factors: poor financial rewards (extrinsic) and insufficient social recognition (intrinsic). As they cannot afford basic human needs for their family and are forced to live in underprivileged economic conditions, teachers feel that their profession is not respected. The ANOVA analysis in this study depicts that the demotivated attitude was responsible for 63.20% of the issues leading to low educational quality, which further leads to students' poor performance (ibid).

On the other hand, diverse contexts and societies have different teaching needs. In the Turkish context, Börü's (2018) qualitative study cites internal factors as key: love for their job and the non-material benefits associated with it, and their ability to develop professionally and achieve success. Teachers feel willing to work hard, but they dream of being given more trust and autonomy by the Ministry of Education, as recognized in the national curriculum. To grow their internal motivation, educators need to have the autonomy to define the direction of their courses to some extent and apply creativity and professionalism (ibid).

The Self-determination, Achievement Goal, and Expectancy Value Motivational theories are again useful in understanding the most common motivational and demotivational factors that affect teacher motivation. However, their findings cannot be generalized to all teaching contexts, as individual needs are impacted by so many diverse factors. Furthermore, the models undercut the fundamental significance of the context and background of the society and its basic needs that eventually affect the needs of individuals who live in it. However, these critical analyses also help to clarify why the Person-in-Context (PIC) framework was

selected for this study. By focusing on the lived experiences of teachers within changing sociocultural contexts, PIC enables an in-depth and contextualised understanding of motivation. PIC adds to these theories by focusing on the dynamic change of motivation over time and how context interacts with individual experience within a specific context. Therefore, each teaching context (e.g., language institute, university, or college) must be examined individually, and the results from one setting may contribute to enhancing or solving teacher motivation issues in similar teaching contexts. This research examines language teachers who teach English in a specific working context, namely the English Language Institute at a public university in Saudi Arabia. The next section explores the history of L2 motivational research in order to determine the most recent approach to investigate motivation.

2.2.5 Evaluation of Second Language (L2) Motivational Research

There is a need to highlight research into L2 motivation development since it may inform both the participants' motivation and their practices. According to Dornyei (2005), the history of L2 motivation theory has evolved through three distinct phases, integrating theoretical developments and perspectives of motivation research. This first period is *The Social Psychological Period (1959–1990).* This model indicates that an individual's interest in the target language culture is the most critical factor that affects the learner's ability to learn a language. Motivation can influence learners' attitudes towards the learning process by creating an interest in the target language's cultures and community to enhance intercultural communication (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011). The second phase is *The Cognitive-Situated Period (during the 1990s)*. This period's key contribution to the growth and evolution of second language learning motivation focuses on the linguistic cognition process. It emphasizes affecting learners' mental processes through the classroom setting and contexts to motivate learning (ibid).

Lastly, *The Process-Oriented Period (The Turn of the Century)* is the most recent framework explaining second language learning motivation. This framework is characterized by attentiveness to motivational change, as researchers have argued that learners' different characteristics can be accommodated by changing motivation over time. This period calls for a transition utilizing a new research approach that focuses on examining the dynamic nature of second language motivation within each specific learning context (ibid). This model perceives motivation as flux rather than stable; therefore, there is a need to shift the L2 motivation research and implement more qualitative exploration in the motivational

experience and change through time to recognize the contextual factors that interact dynamically with motivation (Ushioda, 1996). Dornyei and Ushioda (2021) argue that a PIC relational view of motivation is a new approach that conceptualizes the transition to the early phase of the socio-dynamic period within the field of L2 motivation research. Entering the socio-dynamic phase, motivation research and theories take into account the dynamic interaction between internal, social and contextual factors of language learning and use in the modern globalized world (ibid). There is a direct relationship between the learners' motivation to learn the target language and the teacher's motivation to teach (Mukminin et al., 2015; Dornyei and Ushioda; 2021; Zou et al.,2024) (see 2.4.2.3). Therefore, there is a need to investigate teacher motivation to enhance the learning experience of the student. A PIC relational view of motivation is adopted here as a new conceptual approach to investigate not language learners but language teachers, many of whom are also L2 speakers of English. By using Person-in-Context theory, this research attempts to provide a rational view of motivation in a higher educational context.

2.2.6 A Focus on Person-in-Context Theory

This section discusses the Person-in-Context (PIC) relational view of motivation by Ushioda (2009) applied in this research. According to Han and Mahzoun (2018), most research studies exploring factors that shape teachers' assumptions of motivational factors have used surveys as a research method, and thus lack an in-depth investigation of the topic. However, the PIC theoretical model employs a different approach to assess factors that drive language teachers to teach languages. Along with Lantolf and Pavlenko (2001), Ushioda (2009) claims that for L2 motivation, it is important to realize that people who study a second language are real people who are situated in a particular context, and their motivation and identity are shaped by their social context. The efforts of individual differences in most research has concentrated on "averages and aggregates that group people who share certain characteristics" (e.g., people chose teaching due to its benefit), without paying attention to "differences between individuals" (e.g., Why each teacher finds teaching beneficial) (Ushioda, 2009, p.215). The statistical results of the numerical research are unable to clarify the challenge of personal experiences and motivational perspectives. Moreover, no suggestions are put forward to indicate the role of the active engagement with social-environmental elements. Keeping these shortcomings in view, it is possible to determine general patterns of change or stability over time with the help of longitudinal designs research (Ushioda, 2019; Heckhausen, J. &

Heckhausen, H., 2018). According to Ushioda (2009), the PIC theory focuses on real individuals as thinking and feeling human beings with goals and motives:

> *I mean a focus on real persons, rather than on learners as theoretical abstractions; a focus on the agency of the individual person as a thinking, feeling human being, with an identity, a personality, a unique history and background, a person with goals, motives and intentions; a focus on the interaction between this self-reflective intentional agent, and the fluid and complex system of social relations, activities, experiences and multiple micro- and macro-contexts in which the person is embedded, moves, and is inherently part of. My argument is that we need to take a relational (rather than linear) view of these multiple contextual elements, and view motivation as an organic process that emerges through this complex system of interrelations. Ushioda (2009, p.220)*

Therefore, the theory emphasizes interactions between self-reflective intentional agents with other complex systems of social activities, experiences, and relations in micro- and macro-context levels (ibid). The PIC theory does not perceive a person as a theoretical abstraction, but as a real human with personality and identity. Therefore, the focus should be placed on individual beliefs, values, and perceptions through a self-reflective approach within social experiences and context (ibid). Self-reflection allows individuals to achieve a degree of objectivity towards themselves and the world, through stories of life experiences in a social context. This definition illustrates that context plays a critical role in people's development, including influencing teachers' motives and desire to teach languages, besides the belief that people seek to realize their intentions, desires, and goals within their social contexts (ibid).

Similarly, Crookes (1997) adds that teachers' teaching styles are affected by their social structures and their professional training. This argument implies that social context affects teachers and their teaching performance. However, context is not independent of background variables or disconnected from individuals. Instead, people are an integral component of the context and play an active role in its development (Ushioda, 2009). It is important to define the essence of the term "context as variable" as context should be seen as a representation of external factors that may impact an individual's motivation (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2021, p 32). Ushioda, (2009) suggests that scholars should take a relational outlook rather than a linear one when assessing people's behaviours, emphasizing that people are strongly connected with the context, in "dynamic, complex and non-linear" relationships (p.218). Research employing linear cause-effect relationships leads to generalizations regarding the identification of motivational patterns. Ushioda (2009) perceived motivation as 'an organic

process' that originates from multifaceted, interconnected contextual factors and the interactions between individuals and their social environments and contextual factors and the interaction between individuals and their social environment (p. 220). This approach aids in capturing the complexity in an individual's reactions to a particular experience in life, thereby resulting in understanding of how uniquely individuals give meaning by interacting with their social settings.

The theories discussed in this section aid in comprehending teacher motivation research to date. For example, expectancy–value theory (EVT) looks explicitly at teachers' expected levels of success and the importance they place on specific tasks, implying that teachers with high expectancy of success and a sense of a valuable work role are likely to be motivated and engaged with their professional role (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Achievement goal theory (AGT) proposes that teachers with mastery goals tend to be more motivated to pursue their goals (Butler, 2007), work harder, remain more persistent in the face of challenges, engage in more professional development, and seek opportunities to improve their teaching. Self-determination theory (SDT) argues that the need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness directs intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Together, these theories help in comprehending teacher motivation and are useful for examining and conducting motivational research. They also share elements with PIC theory (2009), which this study views as a more holistic approach to the understanding of individual motivation. PIC theory posits that motivation is multi-faceted and includes personal and contextual factors, such as beliefs, values, and goals over time, that influence teacher motivation. The PIC framework is based on the rationale that a teacher's beliefs about success depend on both context and background.

PIC theory offers a perspective on motivation and a motivational framework that both intersects with and diverges from those of EVT, AGT, and SDT. PIC theory shares multiple foundational elements with these motivational models. For example, like EVT, PIC studies task value and success expectancy (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000) by acknowledging how personal beliefs and task perception drive motivation. AGT centres on task mastery and performance orientation (Butler, 2007), which aligns with PIC's focus on agentic engagement and purposeful action. SDT's elements of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2020) parallel PIC's examination of the personal experiences and social settings that determine psychological needs.

Despite their similarities, these theories also exhibit significant differences. EVT, AGT, and SDT focus primarily on exploring cognitive effects for better insight into motivational elements, including beliefs and values, while treating context as static or beyond their main scope of study. In contrast, a PIC analysis demonstrates motivational understanding within dynamic socio-cultural environments by emphasising individual sociocultural narratives, thereby expanding AGT's goal perspective through social roles and extending SDT's concept of autonomy to include relational contexts.

However, EVT, AGT, and SDT, do not encompass the vital point that context is not a static concept, as it is changed by the actions of people who shape it. These theories are helpful in highlighting individual and internal aspects of teacher motivation but the present research draws on PIC theory as the main theoretical framework utilized in the study since PIC views context as a product of a relationship among external circumstances and individuals (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2021). In this context, Ushioda (1996) emphasized the need for more introspective qualitative research approaches to explore developments in motivational experience over time and identify the contextual factors dynamically linked to motivation.

By conceptualising motivation as an evolving construct shaped by dynamic contexts, the PIC framework challenges traditional models that overgeneralise their analysis. Rather than maintaining a fixed linear pattern, motivation reacts dynamically to shifts in both internal personal factors and external environmental factors. Whereas EVT, AGT, and SDT view context as a static concept, PIC views it as the product of the relationships between external circumstances and the individuals involved in them, creating a dynamic system that changes over time (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2021). In this way, the PIC framework provides a holistic view by integrating changes in context, personal values, identity, and interaction. For this reason, using qualitative research methods, the present study applies the PIC theoretical framework to explore the motivational building and management strategies of EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia within evolving educational and socio-cultural environments.

The need to determine how internal and contextual elements interact and influence people's decision to teach languages has led to the selection of the PIC theoretical model. The theory would allow for an assessment of how social factors shape teachers' personal and professional development, as well as how they influence the decision to teach a language. This evaluation will allow the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the aspects that shape educators' morale, giving insight into the intrinsic and extrinsic elements that drive people to

teach English in Saudi Arabia. By applying this approach, it will be possible to provide answers to the research questions through a teacher's narrative inquiry approach selection. The PIC theory is essential for this study as it is a holistic approach to understanding the relationship between teacher motivation and the organization or institution.

This theory encourages viewing the individual as a self-reflective agent living in a dynamic social context. Therefore, reflexivity is considered an additional theoretical perspective to apply in this study. According to Goodman (2017), the relationship between one's inner concerns and surroundings, including environment and society, is shaped by the concept that Goodman refers to as a 'mode of reflexivity,' which describes the way one perceives their internal dialogues that consequently inform their actions. Thus, humans engage in internal conversations, or a mode of reflexivity, in which the speech one's mind uses abbreviated language, which frequently consists of words or brief phrases that convey a lot of meaning and complexity (ibid). These phrases and words have "semantic embedding in our biographies" and a more profound meaning, being embedded into one's life stories. Nevertheless, biographies are not separate from the context in which one lives, as both have an interconnected relationship (e.g., students and teachers), which is now seen as a 'contextual resource' (Goodman, p. 3).

Reflexivity refers to engaging in an internal dialogue that results in transformative practices that may be applied to educational settings, including classrooms (Archer, 2012). Once intentional and informed internal conversation results in changes concerning educational practices, convictions, and anticipations, reflection transforms into reflexivity (Feucht at. el., 2017). According to this framework, teachers must initially recognize a problematic teaching situation (Reflection). Following this process, teachers must engage in an internal dialogue considering various cultural, structural, and individual aspects, including personal epistemologies (Reflexivity). The hypothesis implied that this epistemic reflexivity would eventually result in decision-making in the context of an educational setting (ibid). However, context is a dominant agent that affects reflexivity and involves a discussion regarding a social context that may result in reflexivity. The general formula consisting of "personal concerns + social contexts" is equally important for determining the extent and dominant mode of reflexivity in our thoughts (Archer, 2010, p.278). Participant reflexivity typically showcases changes that happened after a situation by reflecting on said situation (Perera, 2020). Therefore, to examine teachers' concerns in their working context, narrative interviews may

explore teachers' reflexivity, during which the interviewer and participants work together to create a shared understanding of social reality, which involves the interpretation of the surrounding world in the process. The next section explores studies on language teacher motivation conducted in various context.

2.3 Empirical Studies on Language Teacher Motivation

Based on a preliminary review, it is apparent that the examination of teacher motivation in developing nations is still in its infancy. Pennington (1995) was the first researcher credited with investigating the factors affecting teacher motivation in the ESL context. Pennington (1995) summarizes the empirical work she carried out with other researchers from different locations globally. One research study, conducted by Pennington and Riley (1991), administered a standardized work satisfaction questionnaire to 100 participants who were randomly selected from a Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) organization. The findings reveal that teachers were relatively satisfied with their job, but not satisfied with the lack of promotion opportunities and recompense compared to the work they did. Teachers were not pleased with "administrative policies and practices, supervision, social status, working conditions, authority, and job security" (p. 52).

Moreover, the findings of Doyle and Kim (1999) vary from the exploration detailed by Pennington (1991). Although the researchers used survey information, they supplemented data with qualitative interviews with Korean and American instructors. The authors presented their findings by emphasizing three essential themes:

- First, *intrinsic motivation,* as a common theme, was witnessed among the participants, which was considered a vital factor for motivating teachers and supporting learners.
- The second theme *was factors leading to dissatisfaction,* as the department heads and school administrations did not respect the tutors. Other factors included conditions in the workplace that did not favour the employees and the absence of opportunities for advancement.
- The last factor was *mandated curricula and tests;* the authors also observed how various causes of curriculum-related and standardized test pressures negatively impacted teachers' autonomy. Teachers were restricted to sticking to a curriculum and textbook that further limited their choices in the Korean context (ibid).

Recently, in the Turkish context, the motivation level of a secondary school EFL teacher from Istanbul was gauged through a triangulation method that involved a self-reported diary, self-reflection papers, and an interview (Barin et al., 2018). The authors aimed to find out what motivated and demotivated the young teacher. Barin et al. (2018) categorized intrinsic motivation factors upon analysis of the data. They arrived at as many as 11 intrinsic and 13 extrinsic factors impacting motivation. The first category included rewards, professional development and relationship, positive attitude, and career development. The second group listed issues such as salary, administrative aspects, textbooks, and workload (ibid).

While reflecting on her intrinsic motivation, the subject raised the problem of intellectual development as key to proper teaching. She insisted on the need for self-satisfaction in the profession, which was problematic in the Turkish context as no one emphasizes it or encourages teachers to pursue it (Barin et al., 2018). She also attributes the general lack of motivation among her colleagues to the lack of interest in their professional growth, the unprofessional attitude of the administration, lack of respect, and lack of appreciation (ibid). In addition, most teachers lacked proper professional development opportunities. All in all, extrinsic factors overburden teachers and demotivate them, translating into the deterioration of their intrinsic motivation. The researchers suggest that teachers should be externally motivated through adequate pay and favourable working conditions, which can boost their internal motivation as they gradually feel more appreciated and, thus, willing to develop their skills and work on their professionalism (ibid). Given the described challenges and obstacles to teachers' motivation, there is a need to review research in relation to intrinsic and extrinsic factors that affect teacher motivation.

2.3.1 Factors Affecting Teachers' Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation is one of the most significant constructs of human behaviour. When behaviours are driven by inner satisfaction of enjoyable experiences for one's own sake, intrinsic motivation is created (Ryan & Deci, 2020). There are three essential human needs linked to motivational behaviours: autonomy, the ownership of one's action as noted by how an individual see their experiences as the drivers of their behaviours; relatedness which relates to how individuals feel concerning others; and competence which relates to how effective and accomplished an individual feels (ibid). According to Hanfstingl et al. (2010), individuals have special needs for competence and autonomy to enhance their intrinsic

motivation. Teachers who are satisfied with these essential needs can maintain and develop intrinsic motivation. This sub-section deals with factors that affect intrinsic motivation such as autonomy, agency, identity and beliefs.

2.3.1.1 Teacher Autonomy, Agency and Motivation

Benson (2007) considers teacher autonomy to be one of the most important and problematic emergent concepts in the field of autonomy. Teacher autonomy is defined as an individual instructor's (a) freedom to make choices about their teaching approaches, (b) capacity for professional development and learning, and (c) responsibility to support learner autonomy (ibid). Some authors have argued that autonomy is central to motivation. According to Deci and Ryan (2012, 2020), SDT groups human behaviour and motivation within social contexts by distinguishing between autonomous and controlled levels, which exhibit major differences. Therefore, while having freedom and autonomy might serve as a motivational factor for certain individuals, it might not for others. Teachers may require different levels of autonomy, support, or direction depending on their professional environment, personal career trajectory, and self-confidence. According to Jerrim et al. (2023), a low level of autonomy among teachers leads to a reduction in job satisfaction and motivation.

Thus, there is a debate regarding which comes first: motivation or autonomy. It is possible that independence is necessary for inspiration or that the two always go together. Spratt and Humphreys (2002) conducted a study to understand whether students at Hong Kong Polytechnic University were ready to activate the autonomous roles they were encouraged and expected to assume. These 508 students, who were studying English courses across nine different departments, completed questionnaires on critical research questions. The authors' results indicate that motivation may lead to autonomy or be a precondition for the enjoyment of independence. A lack of motivation seemed to hinder the practice of learning autonomy. Furthermore, there was a strong relationship between higher motivation levels and greater engagement in activities (Spratt & Humphreys, 2002). These findings support the theory that motivation can lead to autonomy and learner support.

Contrary to this argument, from a pedagogical perspective, an individual can first become involved in learning activities and then become to be motivated to learn. Ushioda (2011) presents the example of Dam, an instructor who requires her teenage students to create plans

and take part in decision-making regarding their learning, finding that the students were motivated to learn and the instructor was motivated to teach. However, the success of this method varies depending on the sense of autonomy an individual needs. There are two critical senses of autonomy. The first is autonomy in the sense of taking responsibility for one's learning regulation, which is dependent on motivation (e.g., a student requires motivation to sustain interest to self-regulate learning). The second is autonomy in the sense of the psychological need to experience one's behaviour as self-determined (Ushioda, 2011). This latter sense represents the psychological condition of personal agency we need in order to be genuinely motivated: that is, "the psychological need to experience one's behavior as emanating from or endorsed by the self" (Reeve et al., 2004, p. 31) Autonomous individuals are wholeheartedly committed to their actions and might not face internal conflict while performing them (Ryan et al., 2016). This research could contribute to answering the question of whether teachers need autonomy to create motivation or vice versa. It may be that forcing teachers to engage in certain activities might motivate or demotivate them.

This sense might be what teachers need to feel motivated to teach and have a sense of agency and self-determination. Teacher agency depends on how teachers perceive their capacity to act and examines the potential for professional action based on available resources and existing limitations of their working environment; thus, practicing agency involves teachers negotiating a situation regarding an organizational issue or policy and being able to resist it (Erss, 2018). Teachers realize their agency through their professional decisions and actions while taking into account the socio-cultural and material factors of their work environment.

Autonomy is also situational, as it depends on social and contextual differences which either support autonomy or control the environment (Ryan et al., 2016). With autonomy, people demonstrate fuller functioning and more positive behavioural and psychological outcomes. When they become autonomous, they enhance creativity and show higher quality performances (ibid). Therefore, another significant source of internal motivation is the inner psychological inspiration fostered by an autonomous teaching environment. In this context, Tsutsumi (2014) studied 12 Japanese teachers of both genders aged between 40 and 59 years to identify different aspects of their lives and values in their teaching careers. The data established that teachers seek autonomy, including freedom to set their curriculum. Overall, the study results suggest that Japanese EFL teachers mostly pursue intrinsic needs and values. For instance, teachers are more inclined to seek affiliation needs in their workplace,

autonomy, and self-growth, as well as the satisfaction of seeing students' development in English classes through daily interactions (ibid). A mismatch between autonomy and institutional structures and personal professional needs might results in confusion and demotivation.

Therefore, an autonomous and supportive environment increases teachers' intrinsic motivation. Substantial evidence regarding the link between teacher autonomy and motivation suggests that intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction levels are typically higher among teachers who have the professional freedom to make choices in their workplace and the environment of their instruction. Recent studies have verified the benefits of including teachers in the decision-making process. For example, Wang et al. (2024) emphasize perceived autonomy in reducing emotional exhaustion among teachers. They posit that "teachers who perceive higher autonomy experience lower levels of emotional exhaustion, emphasizing the pivotal role of autonomy in preserving educators' emotional well-being" (p. 11). Such findings illustrate how autonomy assists in maintaining teacher motivation and general well-being. It can also lower exhaustion and prevent burnout in the workplace, making teachers feel empowered in teaching and managing their classes. This means a more sustainable and rewarding career, contributing to teacher retention and, more importantly, teacher effectiveness. Besides autonomy, teachers' identity may also impact teacher motivation.

2.3.1.2 Teacher's Identity and Beliefs

Identity is a fluid and dynamic process that continuously changes through interactions between individuals and their environments (Beijaard et al., 2004). Therefore, Bucholtz and Hall (2010) propose that identity should be analysed as a relational, dynamic socio-cultural phenomenon that develops through discourse and social interaction in specific local contexts. Using cultural and societal mechanisms in combination with language details, their research shows that identity formation spreads across multiple levels instead of a single layer by highlighting interactional dynamics, since social meaning arises from interactions (ibid).

Derakhshan et al. (2020) refers to the concept of identity as a set of unique individual characteristics. The concept of distinction functions as a well-known identity relation and can be linked to the notion of relationality; revealing that identities do not exist independently; rather, they depend on the social meanings acquired from their connections with other identity positions and social actors (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). This indicates that people form

various identities and roles, and these roles are shaped through the environmental factors to which people are attached. Identity and beliefs are evolving processes that can change over time in relation to surrounding factors. For example, people from rural areas and developing countries may evolve in their identities and beliefs after attaining a higher level of education and career experience. Social actors establish identities through multiple complementary and often intersecting relationships of similarities and differences. The primary focus of sociocultural linguistic identity research has been on distinction, since it explores social differentiation (ibid). Similarly, identity distinctions are central to Ushioda's (2009) rational PIC view of motivational theory, since PIC notes that each individual is unique in character and personality. A teacher's identity and beliefs reflect the socio-cultural environment to which they belong, which influences not only their behaviour, but also their teaching style and interaction with students.

Indeed, individuals take on multiple identities as they perform a variety of roles (e.g., child, friend, spouse, parent, teacher, colleague, and boss), illustrating how identity changes depending on the people with whom we interact in a given context (Joseph, 2003). For example, EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia maintain identities as educators, Muslims, men or women, and local community members, all of which influence their professional responsibility and motivation. Therefore, the individual and social dimensions of identity remain inseparable (ibid). The intersection of different identities demonstrates how intrinsic values and external expectations interact in complex ways. According to Alharbi and Ahmed (2020), educators' professional identities represent their teaching beliefs, emotional experiences, and pedagogical approaches.

Teacher beliefs are linked to job satisfaction and the development of positive teaching experiences (Martinez, 2021). A comprehensive understanding of teachers' beliefs and identities enables deeper insights into the influences on both their decision-making processes and their attitudes and beliefs (Derakhshan et al., 2020). Professional identity emerges as a critical influence on teachers' motivation levels. Teachers' success stems from their professional identity, which reflects their beliefs and views related to their rights and responsibilities (ibid). Motivation can rise or fall based on teachers' beliefs about language learning and institutional support, particularly if these beliefs match the educational context. According to PIC theory, these beliefs must be studied within larger sociocultural systems because understanding teacher motivation requires an analysis of their values and self-

perceptions in their specific environments. Teacher identity formation and motivation depend heavily on the interactions among beliefs and elements of autonomy and professional development. Narrative inquiry helps to discover teachers' interpretations of their career paths and their understanding of their roles in evolving educational systems, thereby shedding light on their beliefs.

Additionally, Teachers' beliefs regarding a teaching method could affect their teaching motivation. Kim and Song (2016) perform an in-depth qualitative inquiry based on semi-structured and life story interviews of two experienced EFL teachers from South Korea. Their findings suggest that instructors' beliefs about a teaching method mediate both their motivation and demotivation. As English is a mandatory subject for entering a Korean university, EFL teachers are required to ensure students achieve student learning outcomes. The EFL teachers carry the burden to teach English to students and enhance their communication skills, too. Under these conditions, there is a need to investigate these teachers' motivation levels. Initially, the first teacher, Anna, used the grammar-translation method (GTM) to reach the school objectives and meet the students' expectations. Anna believed that GTM method enhances students' vocabulary and grammar skills. Therefore, she felt highly satisfied and motivated by her teaching experience. The second teacher, Bona, on the other hand, did not find GTM to be a satisfactory method of teaching because it did not enhance students' communicative skills. This belief hurt her motivation to teach. In her case, beliefs regarding teaching methods were the main reason for her demotivation (ibid).

However, Kim and Song (2016) study found that the teachers' beliefs and motivation varied according to the environment. When Anna moved to a different city, students did not find GTM useful and lost their interest in the class. As a result, Anna's belief in the teaching method changed, which affected her motivation and the teaching role. Contrastingly, Bona's belief in the GTM method became positive after students showed optimistic responses to it. This change of belief made her more motivated and dedicated to teaching (ibid). Teachers' perceptions of their profession can vary across different context (Watt and Richardson, 2008).

2.3.1.3 Teachers' Professional Identity, Emotion and Motivation

Teacher autonomy and motivation are critical to education effectiveness. These are all strongly interconnected to teacher satisfaction, professional development, and professional identity. According to Ryan and Deci (2020), the feeling of competence and accomplishment

are factors that lead to teachers' motivation. This feeling may also contribute to the teachers' professional identity in a workplace context. Therefore, teachers' professional identity consists of self-image that emerges from the professional roles teachers play throughout their careers. Derakhshan et.al. (2020), further add that teachers' professional identity might be affected by the surrounding contextual and social factors. Their study in the Iranian context included 190 EFL teachers, who were English language university lecturers and teachers in language institutes. The instruments employed to collect the data included the Teacher Autonomy Questionnaire (TAQ), the Teacher Professional Identity Scale (TPIS), and the Characteristics of Successful Language Teachers Questionnaire (CSLTQ). The results showed that teachers' success is directly associated positively with teachers' autonomy. Teachers who are autonomous and take full responsibility for their work, reach effectiveness as educators, exert a great deal of cognitive and affective control in the classroom, and ultimately experience the freedom that comes from these feelings (ibid).

Furthermore, Cephe, (2010) studied the factors that lead to teachers' burnout using a mixed-methods approach, using a survey and interviews with a sample of 37 EFL teachers. The results show that the primary reasons for burnout among English teachers include academic work (e.g., writing assessments), administrative factors (rules and limited intervention to develop the system), governmental factors (low salaries as Turkey is a developing country), and personal factors (lack of social prestige of a language instructor). Specifically, teachers with high levels of burnout face "alienation to professional identity," which results in instructors quitting their jobs and leaving the institute (p. 32).

A teacher's identity develops over time due to different personal components, such as emotional state. Teachers undergo strong emotional experiences across a variety of professional stages, such as educational reforms, which shape their professional and personal identities (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Rodgers and Scott (2008) explain that identity formation involves both external factors, such as contexts and relationships, and internal factors, including stories and emotions, with 'awareness and voice' serving as the point at which these external standards intersect with internal teacher meaning-making and desires (p. 733). According to Hopkyns and Gkonou (2023), emotions play a significant role in human life. Emotions fluctuate in frequency and dynamics over time and across various settings. In particular, the English-medium instruction (EMI) in higher education contexts is full of a mixture of emotions. Therefore, the recognition of human emotions and the involvement of

emotional labour in the multilingual context needs to be embraced in teacher training courses, classroom dialogues, and continuous professional development courses; it should not be repressed and ignored (ibid).

Harvey (2024) investigated instructional quality in higher education through reviewing perceptions of quality assurance mechanisms by university teachers in journal articles over the last 30 years and concluded that teachers see a mismatch between the instructional standards and policies for quality and teacher autonomy. Therefore, autonomy allows teachers to exercise decision-making and creativity, leading to high motivation. Therefore, teachers require space and academic freedom to use their professional judgment in the classroom, and probably the best approach to enhance teacher education is to reject these standard regulations and focus on providing learning opportunities (Noddings, 2013; Harvey, 2024). Recent studies highlight the fact that autonomy as a teacher positively correlates with intrinsic drive to educate. According to Wang et al. (2024), autonomy is vital in fostering teachers' intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, and professional progress. It also helps in creating an environment that is favorable to teachers' self-directed learning and developmental opportunities. Therefore, teachers' autonomy aids in developing teachers' responsibilities and encourages them to develop professional identities that contribute to their competence, confidence, and motivation.

However, autonomy cannot be viewed in isolation; it is a contextual condition that promotes or constrains identity development and motivation. When aligned with teachers' developmental needs and supported within institutional structures, autonomy fosters competence, self-efficacy, and motivation. According to Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2014), one dimension of self-perceived competence is self-efficacy, often referred to by its alternative label: mastery expectations. For example, teacher self-efficacy might refer to the power teachers expect to have over themselves, such as their expectations to involve all students in a learning activity, maintain classroom discipline, or explain a lesson problem in such a way that low-achieving students will understand it (ibid). Eventually, believing in their teaching skills might increase teachers' self-efficacy and motivation. The relationship between teacher self-efficacy and teacher autonomy leads to adaptive motivational and emotional results. Research shows that, alongside perceived autonomy, self-efficacy leads to higher teacher engagement and job satisfaction, while reducing emotional exhaustion.

Since identity is an active process, it is considered dynamic instead of stable and exists as an evolving phenomenon. The challenge of comprehending identity lies in recognising how it undergoes transformation and reshaping (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). A teacher develops his or her professional identity through ongoing interactions with the teaching or social context. Such self-awareness is crucial for teacher development, which also influences identity formation and teacher agency. A teacher who understands his or her identity within teaching settings can develop agency and feel empowered to advance ideas, achieve objectives, and transform teaching environments (ibid). Professional context is a crucial aspect within the larger sociocultural and political framework that influences teacher identity formation (Tsui, 2007). Therefore, professional context and personal aspects form a key element that influences teacher identity formation and teachers' professional growth (ibid).

2.3.1.3.1 Professional Development (PD) and Teacher Motivation

Professional development (PD) activities that match teachers' requirements are a strong motivational force. PD that encourages growth and collaboration while giving teachers a sense of purpose strengthens their professional engagement and instructional quality. Nghi and Hue's (2024) research demonstrates that teacher motivation benefits from PD, leading to higher confidence levels and increased enthusiasm among 316 teachers in Vietnamese EFL settings across various sectors (HE institutions, public schools, and private schools). The research reveals that, among teachers, PD fosters stronger professional relationships, increased engagement, and stronger motivation to improve teaching abilities. Through appropriate PD activities, teachers can experience improved motivation and job satisfaction (ibid). The research validates Ushioda's (2009) PIC framework through evidence that teacher motivation arises from interactions among personal beliefs, institutional structures, and professional opportunities. According to Nghi and Hue (2024), EFL teachers who engage in PD activities experience increased motivation, job satisfaction, and self-efficacy. Participation in PD enables teachers to develop stronger connections with their students, satisfying their competence and relatedness needs. A PD programme helps teachers renew their teaching methods while restoring their confidence. One teacher stated that their participation in PD activities allowed them to strengthen connections with the EFL teaching community while motivating them to improve their teaching methods (ibid).

However, education research should be more relevant to practitioners' practice. For this reason, organisations like universities should enable teachers to carry out action-based

research. Kennedy (2005) describes a powerful approach to teacher development that allows educators to take an active role in exploring and improving their practice through participating in action research. Instead of being passive recipients of PD delivered from the outside, teachers using this model become researchers in their classrooms, reflecting on their practice. This encourages deeper reflection and more relevant learning that directly connects to everyday teaching experiences. The process enables teachers to perform critical reflection during inquiry and evidence-based implementation, which provides substantial foundations for PD (ibid). Teacher PD is rooted in placing teachers at the centre of their own development process to enhance motivation. Teachers who explore their practice and reflect professionally rediscover their purpose and autonomy, which become essential to sustaining their motivation over time.

Overall, changes in teachers' demotivation and motivation levels are dynamic, but different due to their diverse beliefs and the effects of contextual factors in the teaching environment. Hence, EFL teachers' motivation to teach depends not only on intrinsic beliefs, but also on their social and contextual environment (Watt & Richardson, 2008). The next section explores the social and contextual factors that affect EFL teacher motivation in various contexts such as Turkey and Iran.

2.3.2 Extrinsic Motivation (Social and Contextual Influences)

Ryan and Deci (2020) defined extrinsic motivation as being derived from the external environment rather than internal satisfaction. Social and contextual influences are essential drivers of teacher motivation because they affect how individuals might behave. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) suggested that the contextual influences can be isolated into two fundamental classes that influence instructors' satisfaction: micro and macro. Macro-contextual influences may be linked to the overall work ethos that is common at the societal level. Teachers are affected by various external aspects of society that range from parenthood to the media and politics. Moreover, micro contextual thought processes are firmly related to the environment of a specific institution where teachers work. To this end, the more significant effects of the school environment are shaped by factors that include the existing leadership and decision-making structures within the school environment, its approaches to reward and feedback collection, and the general expectations related to student potential, classroom sizes, available resources, and other facilities. In addition, school climate and available standards and norms play a significant role in developing collegial relations, defining teachers' roles by

the authorities and their colleagues, and operating standard procedures (ibid). Therefore, the micro contextual class might be considered crucial in terms of extrinsic contextual factors of motivation.

2.3.2.1 Incentives and Workload

Salary is one of the most significant external factors that impact teacher motivation (Gultekin & Acar, 2014). Without proper external motivating factors like consistent salaries, teachers would have low motivation levels, influencing their effectiveness and activities in the classroom. In this context, Stężycka and Etherington (2008) investigate teachers' motivation among Polish secondary school EFL tutors. The findings revealed that a teacher's heavy workload resulted in low motivation. Increased workload is an issue among EFL teachers that influences their inspiration to impart knowledge and remain in the profession. The authors reported that teachers' pay was fundamental in inspiring tutors to teach, arguing that governments must focus on providing teachers with competitive salaries to boost their morale. Caruso (2019) contended that increased focus on teacher motivation helps counter burnout among instructors. The study points to a significant relationship between teacher motivation and burnout. Poor motivation results from burnout, which is directly linked to absenteeism and attrition. Burnout and heavy workload may lead to stress and result in reduced teacher motivation.

In the Iranian context, Pourtoussi et al. (2018) found that teachers also suffer from external factors lowering their motivation. The study's analysis of 10 interviews, using open-ended questions completed by 16 instructors and diary entries made by two teachers while teaching, and the application of modern software MAXQDA 10 (which allows for extensive interpretation), show that it is essential to develop policies that improve incentives, such as payment and social benefits, to adequately cover the teaching effort. Furthermore, the physical environment of the classroom should facilitate comfort, covering, among other aspects, classroom temperature, textbook availability, and appropriateness of the difficulty level of materials used. The researchers conclude that many of the teachers in their sample were aware of their lack of motivation but could not react to their problem because of the school environment. Therefore, a supportive school environment may lead to a supportive teaching environment.

2.3.2.2 Teaching Environment

The power of teacher motivation may be due to the influence of school-based factors that shape the learning environment in which teachers work. For instance, in a qualitative study, Aydin (2012) postulates that teacher motivation can be disrupted due to an unsupportive working environment. This study was based on the exploration of the case of Elif, a 26-year-old EFL teacher who revealed her experiences as an elementary and secondary education teacher in Balikesir, Turkey. One essential factor in the lack of motivation was curriculum-related issues. For instance, many teachers did not have sufficient support materials available for classroom use. Others realized that they had to prepare students for examinations using irrelevant textbooks and assignments. Therefore, it is apparent that unrelated materials or activities contribute to the discouragement of teachers. These findings emphasise the importance of considering environmental stressors and institutional dynamics when exploring teacher motivation in the Saudi EFL context.

Another aspect that may contribute to the lack of motivation among teachers is related to their communication with the school administration. Instructors may feel pressured by ideological discrimination inside their schools. Furthermore, the same teachers may experience issues in terms of relationship-building when trying to connect with their colleagues. As a result, teachers tend to feel frustrated by the lack of necessary support inside their professional environment (Aydin, 2012). Finally, the low level of motivation in teachers is related to the uncomfortable physical conditions endured when working in schools. For instance, teachers may suffer from aspects such as noise and crowded classrooms, leading to their inability to concentrate on the process of instruction itself (ibid). These adversities may deeply affect the quality of the school climate, resulting in a lack of motivation in teachers.

The findings of Aydin (2012) are consistent with the conclusions that Han and Mahzoun (2018) draw, as both studies were conducted in the same society. These scholars used qualitative methods to demonstrate that the problems that contributed to the lack of teacher motivation were mainly related to human factors, work conditions, and personal issues. The study by Han and Mahzoun (2018) involved several data collection instruments, ranging from semi-structured interviews and the investigation of profile forms to the creation of field notes and diaries by the participants. This research involved nine EFL teachers who practiced in primary and secondary schools in Turkey. They found that the key stakeholders who contributed to

the lack of motivation in teachers were parents, administrators, students, and working conditions. It is crucial to argue that the value of high-quality human and working conditions is significant in the development and maintenance of teacher motivation. Teachers can lose motivation to teach because of the insufficient quality of working conditions, such as a hot and crowded classroom (Han & Mahzoun, 2018; Mukminin et al., 2015; Aydin, 2012). In this case, Balintag and Saengsri (2022) suggested two types of strategies that might be useful when dealing with demotivation caused by contextual factors such as administrative regulations. First, the key to coping with demotivation is self-regulation, by staying positive or negotiating problems with administration, and teachers' self-efficacy. Second, teacher pedagogical work strategies, including the creation of a comfortable working environment, preparation of lessons, and providing help to students, might help teachers to regain their teacher motivation. This indicates that there is a relation between students and teacher motivation to teach.

2.3.2.3 A Relation between Student and Teacher Motivation

The level of motivation in teachers could ultimately affect students' motivation to learn. Kızıltepe (2008) explains that university teachers see students as the key source of their motivation or frustration. Thus, the quality of teacher-student relationships in schools and universities should be treated as the primary focus of these educational environments. The same argument is presented by Mukminin et al. (2015), noting that there is a direct connection between learners' motivation to learn the target language and teachers' motivation to teach. Utilizing surveys and in-depth face-to-face interviews among three Indonesian high school English instructors, this study found that students' limited proficiency in English was a main source of low motivation for teachers to instruct the English language. Therefore, students' lack of motivation also resulted in frustration among teachers. On the other hand, instructors stated that students' lack of grammar, vocabulary, and lack of learning affected their motivation to learn English. Moreover, student knowledge and attitudes towards the process of instruction are potentially key factors that influence teacher motivation (ibid). Hence, Zou et al. (2024) concur in finding that teachers' intrinsic motivation for teaching was positively linked with students' intrinsic motivation for learning, and teachers' teaching style positively influenced student and teacher intrinsic motivation.

However, the simple, dualistic view of intrinsic and extrinsic factors as sources of motivation or demotivation needs to be revised. Motivation is a complex construct that depends on both

relationships and specific contexts. The PIC view of motivation draws on complex and dynamic interactions among both personal internal factors, such as values and beliefs, goals and external influences, such as institutional policies and leadership. A teacher who wants to advance professionally might be driven by personal satisfaction while also aiming for career advancement and family support needs which shows how intrinsic and extrinsic motivations work together.

According to Ryan and Deci (2020), external regulation refers to behaviours motivated by outside rewards or punishments, leading individuals to feel that their motivation is controlled and not self-directed. Introjected regulation refers to extrinsic motivation that integrates into a person's internal framework, where behaviour is driven by internal rewards like self-esteem and the avoidance of anxiety, failure, shame, or guilt. When an individual engages in identified regulation, they consciously accept and support the value of an activity, resulting in a strong sense of personal freedom and readiness to participate. Integrated regulation is the most autonomous extrinsic motivation, since people engage with activities they find valuable while also seeing these activities as aligning with their central interests and values (ibid). The key difference between autonomous extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation lies in their foundational basis: People participate in activities that provide intrinsic motivation because they experience enjoyment and interest, making these activities entertaining, whereas identified and integrated motivations develop from seeing value, making activities meaningful even when they are not enjoyable (ibid).

Therefore, the present study explores the emergence and development of motivation among EFL teachers from a broader perspective, using PIC theory to examine not only contextual factors, but also teachers' intrinsic factors and how the two interact (Ushioda, 2009) in the context of Saudi Arabia. Especially in a university language institute where English is used as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) as is the case in this study. The following section discusses the implementation of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) within higher education (HE) universities in the Saudi Arabian context.

2.3.2.4 EMI from a Global Perspective

The global increase in the adoption of EMI across HE institutions reflects broader trends of globalisation, internationalisation, and the commodification of education (Akıncıoğlu, 2023; Dafouz & Smit, 2016). Universities worldwide are implementing EMI to increase global

competitiveness, attract international students, and align with knowledge-based economies (Dafouz & Smit, 2016). While EMI is often promoted as a means to enhance internationalisation and modernisation, concerns have been raised about its impact on local languages and cultures. According to Akıncıoğlu (2023), EMI adoption often follows political and economic directives from higher authorities, rather than educational reasoning, thereby tending to suppress minority languages and empower linguistic structures.

Research shows that many EMI programmes have been implemented with limited institutional planning or understanding of how executing EMI works in correlation with educational and linguistic outcomes: an approach that does not account for the dynamics of a multilingual classroom (Dafouz & Smit, 2016). In addition, the absence of standardised EMI guidelines, paired with inadequate teacher training, raises doubts about the effectiveness of learning content in EMI classrooms. The situation is exacerbated by inconsistencies in EMI definitions across institutions, which sometimes overlook the difference between teaching English as a subject and using EMI (Akıncıoğlu, 2023). Specifically, EMI programmes should prioritise content delivery over teaching English as a second language. Most universities and researchers fail to examine how internationalisation strategies from the adoption of EMI in HE affects educational institutions (Dafouz & Smit, 2016).

2.3.2.4.1 English Medium Instruction (EMI) in the Saudi Context

EMI implementation is a key component of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 strategy, which aims to foster economic diversification and global integration through educational reform (Aljehani & Modiano, 2024). English is increasingly viewed as a necessary skill for both individual employability and national scientific advancement and international collaboration. Policymakers position EMI as a means to align with international academic standards and prepare graduates for participation in global markets (ibid). However, the rapid expansion of EMI in Saudi HE has introduced several challenges. While the practice seeks to boost English proficiency and professional mobility, it is often perceived as marginalising the Arabic language and Islamic culture (Phan & Barnawi, 2015).

English-only policies face resistance from both students and teachers, with many proposing a bilingual or mixed-medium approach that accommodates Arabic for better comprehension and student engagement (Aljehani & Modiano, 2024). Students are likely to experience educational disadvantages when they move from elementary and secondary schooling, taught in Arabic with EFL, to EMI in HE. Aljehani and Modiano (2024) claim that the one-year

Preparatory Year Programme (PYP) fails to prepare students adequately, demotivating students' learning and leading to instructional disadvantages. A full-year initiative that learners must pass to be eligible for undergraduate courses, the PYP is also inefficient, as it fails to provide students with the language proficiency needed to succeed at the university level (ibid).

The difficulties of EMI implementation are exacerbated by inconsistent institutional practices, inadequate preparation for students who struggle with English, and poor training for faculty teaching English-language content courses in countries that utilise Arabic as their first language (Albakri, 2017; Al-Issa, 2017). In Saudi Arabia, EMI implementation represents both an educational and a sociocultural challenge because it affects both student identity and teaching effectiveness. Where EMI exists, research into teacher motivational factors is necessary to ensure teachers remain motivated to teach. The following section reviews extant research on language teacher motivation both in Arab and Saudi society.

2.3.3 Motivation in the Arab and Saudi Context

Recent national reforms, combined with religious principles and institutional standards, have shaped Saudi Arabia's educational and sociocultural environment, affecting teacher motivation. Under Vision 2030, national development depends on educational transformation, which focuses on improving learning outcomes and English language proficiency while aligning educational outputs with workforce demands in a knowledge-based economy. English language institute instructors hold critical positions that facilitate the growth of English-medium education in universities. Preparatory programmes initiate tertiary EMI pathways by assessing both student preparedness for university EMI courses and teacher competence in multilingual instruction.

2.3.3.1 Religious Values in Teacher Motivation in the Saudi EFL Context

The PIC framework serves as an essential tool for analysing both personal and religious values to understand teacher motivation in Saudi Arabia. Education professionals develop their values through interactions with institutional systems and cultural and social experiences. Research indicates that teachers in Saudi Arabia perform their duties because of their personal beliefs and religious convictions. The ways in which these teachers find motivation demonstrate the connection between religious obligations and moral duties and reveal that their professional goals are established by personal ethical beliefs. Albishi (2021)

demonstrates that teachers in Saudi Arabia experience intrinsic motivation driven by religious values during their educational careers. Using qualitative case study methods to gather data, the study shows that participants believed God would reward their teaching efforts and diligent performance of their responsibilities. In other words, Saudi Arabian educators found intrinsic motivation through adhering to their religious duties and beliefs while engaged in teaching. Albishi's (2021) outcomes match Alshammari's (2022) argument that sociocultural elements must be included when evaluating motivation in Saudi EFL educational contexts. The PIC framework states that values operate as internal motivators, which are also formed by external environments and interactions. The dynamic interplay among belief systems, professional roles, and socio-religious discourses demonstrates how motivation emerges from their combined integration.

2.3.3.2 Arab and Saudi Teacher Motivation Studies

There have been a number of studies related to teacher motivation in an Arab specific context. Regarding the Arab context, a study by Ismail and Jarrah (2019) takes a slightly different turn, focusing on prospective teachers in the United Arab Emirates and factors influencing their motivation, including their decision to use questionnaires and focus-group interviews, in a mixed-method analysis. The collected responses were qualitatively interpreted along with a T-test. Among the critical motivating factors, what motivated the participants to choose teaching were the long holidays associated with the job, mutual family decision for this career, their love for working with children, and their passion for their chosen subject. Additionally, one should think about the choice of the teaching profession as the first point of analysis for teachers' motivation. Female instructors often opt for this profession due to the assumed feeling of job security, ability to communicate with other female staff members, and compatibility of this career with their home responsibilities—the latter being a key aspect in their culture (Arar & Massry-Herzllah, 2016). In a different context, Arab teachers in Israel may suffer from problems that are similar to those experienced by colleagues in other contexts, as their motivation is adversely affected by poor school climate, unfriendly atmosphere, lack of respect towards their ideas and roles, and insufficient resources and teaching tools. Therefore, Arab teachers' motivation is affected by educational policies and the new government adjustments to teaching programs, such as projects and tasks, which increase teachers' pressure at work (ibid).

To date, regarding the Saudi Arabian context, few studies have examined teacher motivation in higher education institutions. Shah et al. (2013) examined factors that impact EFL teaching in Saudi Arabia. The sample comprised five non-Saudi EFL teachers with a minimum of five years of teaching language experience in the Saudi Arabian context. The results showed that EFL learners with conventional and religious mindsets influenced both the instructors' choice of teaching materials and the general learning environment in Saudi Arabia. Thus, EFL teachers must comprehend the teaching environment and tackle cultural, societal, and religious factors effectively (ibid). The participants were aware of the religious and cultural norms in Saudi Arabia. For instance, religion is one of the sensitive issues in the country. For this reason, teachers should not devise activities that go against religious norms and should consider them when planning lessons. Teachers often attempted to align all classroom activities with cultural sensitivities to understand and get accustomed to the learners (Shah et al., 2013). However, a Saudi teacher might not face such an issue as they share similar cultural backgrounds and understand the students' religion. For example, in an Indonesian Islamic school context, Hartwick (2015) found that the religiosity of teachers at the Islamic institution boosts the effect of intrinsic motivation on the teachers' loyalty and drive to teach. Such motivation increases the teacher's level of sympathy and willingness to assist in students' learning and development and may result in an effective student-teacher relationship (Yusuf & Triyonowati, 2022).

In the same vein, Safa (2014) investigated factors that impact teachers' motivation in a foundation program run by a government-sponsored language institution in Saudi Arabia. 94 participants took part in this study, which used survey questionnaires. Male participants comprised 60% and female participants comprised 40% of the total population. The study examined and compared the qualitative and quantitative data. The findings showed that the participants appeared to be intrinsically motivated except in relatedness. In the participants' perspective, the lack of relatedness was assumed to emanate from the administrators' failure to develop a conducive learning environment where coordination and collaboration with senior people and peers were embraced. Furthermore, external factors that affected teacher motivation and ability to teach were a lack of school facilities, the lack of promotion opportunities, and a lack of professional development (ibid). Therefore, the educational leaders or supervisors appeared to play a major role in contributing to motivation in the classroom by keeping the learning environment free from factors that may demotivate teachers.

Although these studies have some limitations, they involved participants who were EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia, except for the non-Saudi participants recruited by Shah et al. (2013). It is important to note that Saudi teachers are more likely to share demotivating factors than non-Saudi teachers (e.g., students' lack of interest). However, they might not find it difficult to communicate with learners from the same context since they have similar cultural, social, and linguistic backgrounds as their students. Another limitation of both studies is that the interviews involved male teachers only due to social restrictions. This limitation hindered the researchers from understanding the female teachers' perception of the factors that impact EFL teaching (Shah et al., 2013; Safa, 2014). Female teachers' perception could have made the data more reliable and valid. However, this research will consider Saudi female teachers by focusing on applying a qualitative research methodology.

This chapter has offered insights into the concept of motivation and teacher motivation. It has also presented the historical framework of motivational dynamics and research developments over time, discussing the key literature related to teacher motivation and creating an understanding of several contextual factors that affect teacher motivation and de-motivation. Thus, what motivates EFL teachers in one context does not necessarily motivate other EFL teachers in another context; therefore, there is a need to investigate each teaching context separately to count institutional and sociocultural differences during the investigation of teachers' motivation. Most of the presented teacher motivation research follows a quantitative research approach, and there is a lack of qualitative research on the subject. As there are limited studies using narrative inquiry as a study method to investigate the issue of teacher motivation in the Saudi EFL educational setting, the present study focuses on teachers' narrations and stories to explore this issue in depth. The following chapter outlines this research methodology and approach.

Chapter 3 Methodology

As this study aims to understand teachers' motivation and demotivation in a Saudi EFL context, it draws on the person-in-context rational view of the motivation theory to examine the dynamic correlation between the person and the effect of the context in which they work. Therefore, this study employs a qualitative research design with a narrative inquiry approach to obtain a deeper understanding of teachers' motivation and its relation to their teaching context to answer the research questions from the respondents' perspectives. The study draws on the stages proposed by Ary's et al. (2018) to conduct a narrative inquiry research and utilise interviews as the main data source (see 3.3.1). Further, the study adapts Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach for the data interpretation procedure (see 3.3.5.2). This chapter outlines the study's research methodology and describes the research paradigm, research approach, research design, sample population, and data collection process and analysis.

3.1 Research Paradigm

Research often needs to adopt a paradigm as there is a need to understand the worldview of a research phenomenon. A research paradigm constitutes an accepted model that provides a way of looking at a phenomenon in view that is received within shared beliefs or principles and proves a scientific concept of knowledge and how to investigate it (Cohen et al., 2018). The paradigm that supports this research is the interpretivist model of researching a phenomenon. Interpretivism is a research paradigm that assumes reality is subjective and socially constructed, in which people can shape their understanding of situations while making sense of their world through different interpretations. From the ontological perspective, people are thoughtful, creative, and intentional in their actions, enabling them to interact and negotiate a social situation. An interpretive process allows the examination of multiple realities to aid in understanding an issue rather than considering a single truth (Cohen et al., 2018).

From an epistemological position, the interpretivists believe that obtaining knowledge about a phenomenon occurs through a subjective view and interpretation. Therefore, examining a research issue is most effective through the respondents' eyes and perceptions of the

situations lived through. To understand the situation, a researcher must understand the context of the situation holistically as it affects viewpoints and behaviours (ibid). For example, when researching teachers' motivation, the researcher must understand the context before examining the problem from the respondents' perspectives. The best methodology for this paradigm is the one that relies on thick and descriptive data and the meaning respondents create of a living situation. Therefore, this research utilised a qualitative research methodology and a narrative inquiry approach to provide a clear understanding of the teacher motivation phenomenon. This point is discussed in detail in the following sections.

3.2 Research Approach

Research is broadly classified into two types: quantitative research and qualitative research. Qualitative research aims to provide thick, detailed descriptions that deviate from the quantification of data as in quantitative research (Mackey & Gass, 2015). A qualitative research methodology has been chosen for this study. One characteristic of qualitative research is to present a natural and holistic representation of the phenomena under study (ibid). It allows the researcher to dig deeper into the respondents' responses and provide details to gain understanding of their personal behaviours, intentions, voices, and meaning-making regarding a phenomenon (Cohen et. al., 2018).

Additionally, qualitative research is viewed as an emergent type of research design as researchers step into the field with an open mind and flexibility to new details or changes that may appear during the investigation. This contributes to the focus of the study, which is narrowed step by step, and the analysis of the concepts takes place during the process and not before (Dornyei, 2007). This process relies on the effective interactions between the researcher and the people or phenomenon under study (Ary et al., 2018). Therefore, the qualitative design was more effective than the quantitative approach as the research is exploratory and aims to obtain in-depth and detailed responses, enabling the researcher to identify interrelationships between contextual factors and teacher motivation (Börü, 2018; Dornyei & Ushioda, 2021). Several other scholars have utilised this approach in teacher motivation research (Doyle & Kim 1999; Kim & Song, 2016; Aydin, 2012; Mukminin et al. 2015), hence, it can be seen as an appropriate approach for this study.

Narrative inquiry is one of a variety of approaches to qualitative research. This approach addresses how humans live, speak about their life stories, and make meaning out of them

(Clandinin, 2006). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) stated that narrative inquiry involves a method presumed to understand experiences through collaboration between a researcher and respondents by retelling and reliving stories of their experiences in a social context. A narrative inquiry was chosen for this research as it fosters a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of a person's accounts through lived experiences and their link to a certain social condition, context, or phenomenon (Barkhuizen, 2014).

One of the features of narrative research is that it can help understand conflict and change (Ary et al., 2018). Personal narrative allows researchers and individuals to more accurately comprehend their personal experiences by facilitating a holistic understanding of past, present, and future events (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). In this approach, the researcher aimed to describe the meaning presented in a story to take a closer look at what people say about their lives, after which they generate a narrative analysis of such stories. For this reason, a narrative inquiry can be an ideal approach for researchers who aim to study or examine teacher pathways in their profession, through which the teacher can narrate their experiences and how they feel about teaching (Ary et al., 2018). Together, both the researcher and the respondents are brought to a familiar setting and have an equal voice in determining the meanings and implications attributed to the experiences and encounters of the respondents (ibid).

In addition, a narrative inquiry, as a feature of qualitative research, has been ranked as the most effective method in this type of research as it is ideal for capturing the detailed stories and life experiences of an individual or a small group (ibid). In education, narrative inquiry has been particularly productive in exploring teachers' work and careers (Bathmaker & Harnett, 2010; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Narrative inquiry has special relevance for research in the language teaching field because it aids in comprehending the mental worlds of English language teachers, learners, and the nature of language teaching and learning as a social and educational activity (Barkhuizen, at. el., 2013). Narrative inquiry moves beyond just storytelling to the "examination of the underlying insights and assumptions that the story illustrates" (Bell, 2002, p. 208). It was used in investigating issues related to foreign language learning, including motivation and strategies of learning in Japan and China (Nakata, at. el., 2022; Xun & Barkhuizen, 2023), thus, there is a need to investigate and provide updated research of this matter in Saudi Arabia. Consensually, this approach is efficient for the researcher to gather relevant information concerning the context of the study and place

individual stories and personal experiences in different settings. It can be used as a tool to examine career trajectories in a specific time and place and allows for investigation of certain aspects in the field to analyse and reorganize the data while shaping them into a framework (Ary et al., 2018). Hence, such an approach requires an efficacious research design and methods that promote heavy narrations.

3.3 Research Design

The research design adopted here addresses the system of data collection and analysis of any case, situation, or individuals to answer the research questions (Flick et al., 2004). Broadly understood, a case study usually refers to a case of a certain individual within a social community, although an institution or organisation could also be the subject of a case analysis. Since the current study was conducted in a higher education institution in Saudi Arabia, a case study research design that suited the goals and purpose of the study was employed. Hence, the current institutional case study aimed to answer the study's research questions by applying a qualitative approach and analysis techniques of interaction between a person and the context in which they work. This section discusses the narrative inquiry research layout, instruments, participants, and procedure for data collection and analysis.

3.3.1 Narrative Inquiry Research Design

I adapted a narrative inquiry methodology as the main approach for this study because it enabled me to obtain detailed answers to the research questions of this study. The narrative inquiry was supported by semi-structured interviews as a data collection tool, which focused on providing crucial insights into teachers' motivation, challenges and underlying factors that impact EFL teaching in the Saudi Arabian educational context, particularly when there was a need to study individual experiences. For example, if a researcher aims to study the life experiences of teachers, the narrative inquiry paradigm can be adapted to map out the lived experiences of those involved in the teaching profession (Ary et al., 2018; Harfitt, 2015).

Similar to Ushioda's (2009) PIC theory, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) emphasise that "People are individuals and need to be understood as such, but they cannot be understood only as individuals. They are always in relation, always in a social context" (p. 2). Therefore, using narrative inquiry, I was able to investigate the respondents' personal, social, geographical, and temporal experiences as English language teachers (Clandinin et.al, 2007). Temporal transition

between events in the teacher's past, present, and future is taken into account, which occurs in a specific place in social interaction with the surrounding environment, and between a participant and a researcher (ibid). Moreover, to evaluate and examine these dimensions of respondents' experiences properly, I drew on Ary et al. (2018) steps in conducting narrative inquiry research:

1. Identify a phenomenon that addresses a problem. (Contextual factors that affect teachers' motivation at language institute).
2. Select an individual from whom you can learn about the phenomenon. (EFL teachers teaching in that institute).
3. Collect stories from the individual that reflect personal experience (narrative interviews).
4. Transcribe the stories including the nuances noted by the researcher.
5. Re-transcribe the stories.
6. Analyze the stories: Look for elements of time, place, plot, and scene.
7. Build in past, present, and future; collect other field texts.
8. Look for themes.
9. Re-story or retell the story in a chronological sequence, attending to setting, characters, actions, problems, and resolutions.
10. Write a coherent story in collaboration with the participant about the individual's personal and social experiences.
11. Validate the accuracy of the story with the individual.

(Ary et al., 2018, p. 470-471)

However, not all the steps were applied. For instance, for step 10, the participants of the study did not feel they had the time to write a coherent story with the researcher. Thus, the researcher provided the participants with a copy of the stories used in the analysis for validation purposes. Further details of the data analysis process are explained in section (3.3.5.2). The researchers attempted to follow the majority of the steps when conducting the study to enhance the research design and answer the research questions. By employing narrative inquiry, the researcher collected stories from participant teachers' life experiences to identify the main themes that impact their motivation.

3.3.2 Participants of the Study

As this research aims to understand individuals' motivation for the context around them, in this case, a higher education institution case study, individual interpretations should come from inside of the educational institute rather than outside (Cohen et al., 2018). The participants of the study are teachers working at the English Language Institute in Saudi Arabia (see 1.3 for more details of the research context). One key feature of qualitative research is applying purposive sampling (ibid). Purposive sampling is effective for engaging with well-informed individuals who possess in-depth knowledge regarding a specific matter due to their professional experience (Ball, 1990, as cited in Cohen et al., 2018). Hence, I used a purposive sampling technique to select a suitable group of respondents; this method focuses on recruiting respondents within a segment of the population with the most relevant information on the research topic (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024) to gain insight into a particular problem or a case. As such, the purposive sampling technique eliminates bias when selecting the sample population and enhances the reliability of the study.

The respondents are EFL teachers for foundation year students. The sample consists of 14 female EFL teachers, selected randomly from the English language institute and requested to participate in the study. The 14 participants were divided into two groups (10 teachers participated in phase 1 and 4 teachers participated in phase 2) (see 3.3.4.2, 3.3.4.3). The limited sample and the focus on one institution enabled an in-depth analysis and close interpretation of the data. The group of 14 purposively selected EFL teachers can be seen as homogeneous sampling, in which respondents of a study are selected for their similarities (Cohen et al., 2018). Homogeneous sampling enables the researcher to select respondents from a huge group (see 1.3.4 for the language institute context) who share relative experiences to the matter being explored, thus enabling an in-depth analysis to distinguish common features (Dornyei, 2007). Although one of the participants was a non-Saudi who had moved to Saudi Arabia to work at the university, she shares key similarities with the remainder of the group in terms of degree level, duration of teaching experience (five years teaching experience within the ELI of the study context), and a belief in the religion of Islam (see 5.3.3 for further details); thus, her inclusion maintains the integrity of the homogeneous sample.

All the respondents in this study hold master's degrees and have at least five years of experience in teaching at the ELI; hence, they were in a favourable position to share their

experiences and capture the changes in their motivations in this context. At this stage, these individuals have probably developed sufficient confidence and understanding of the context to enable them to reflect and make sense of their stories and provide justification for their standpoints regarding a situation. Moreover, I utilised various research instruments in this study to provide a holistic understanding of the investigated phenomena.

3.3.3 Research Instruments

Qualitative research and data function in a broad range of information, comprising recorded interviews of diverse types of texts, such as diary entries, journals, and observational records. The major objective of the varying types of qualitative methods is anchored on the need to have a personal or cultural sense of the investigated phenomenon. Moreover, the information or the data collected must ensure that it captures both the complex and the rich forms of information or detail (Dornyei, 2007). Thus, to facilitate achieving an in-depth description, qualitative interviews enhance varying responses to have a deeper understanding of the points of view. In addition, this method allows flexibility instead of a fixed format of discussion, thereby permitting various respondents to track and raise diverse issues of concern. (Cohen et. al., 2018). One qualitative method that facilitates the data collection process and provides a high level of accuracy is the narrative interview (Flick et al., 2004).

3.3.3.1 Narrative Interview

Since qualitative interviews aim to capture a high level of reality, narrative interviews serve as a useful instrument; such interviews are mostly characterised by specific features and unstructured tools. These aspects enable the emergence of stories of social reality through an examination of a situational context, such as social interaction, to capture detailed life experiences narrated by individuals (Muylaert et al., 2014). Ushioda's (2009) PIC theory argues that personality, identity, and feelings are significant factors that affect individual motivation. Connelly and Clandinin (1999) developed the idea that professional identity for teachers consists of the stories they live by. Teachers use stories as narrative threads that enable them to understand their experiences and personal identities. Teachers who participate in storytelling perform narrative theorising, which helps them to discover and shape their professional identity, thus leading to the creation of new or different stories (Tsui, 2007). Therefore, the selection of the narrative inquiry as the main approach to data collection in this research provides an efficient method of collecting data regarding teachers' experiences.

Narrative interviews typically start with open-ended questions (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2016). People frequently tell tales about occurrences in their lives, allowing them to create meaning for their existence. The narrative method prioritizes the persons under investigation's ideas that belong to their tales and positions them at the centre of the research process. When a researcher studies individuals, observes their experiences, and strives to comprehend their lives, narratives may come closer to capturing the context and authenticity of their lives than surveys and graphs (ibid). Through narratives, open-ended questions allowed the EFL teachers the opportunity to answer honestly and provide a detailed reflection of the topic being discussed (see Appendix B for narrative interview questions).

The “what”, “how”, and “why” inquiries, common in qualitative research, are dealt with in narrative interviews (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2016). The features of a story, according to Hermanns (1995) are as follows: the initial phenomenon is highlighted ("how everything began"); the relevant events to the narrative being chosen from a vast array of perceptions and provided as a comprehensible series of events ("how things developed"); and the scenario after the development ("what became") (p. 265, as cited in Flick, 2014). Therefore, narrative inquiry was the most effective method for answering research questions that require individuals’ perspectives.

3.3.3.2 Semi-Structured Interviews as a Complementary Approach

Narrative inquiry is considered significant for exploring people’s experiences and their insights into the subject of study, which can be best achieved through various types of interviews. I drew on different but complementary approaches to create the qualitative toolkit for this study. Narrative interviews can be either open-form or semi-structured interviews (Flick et al., 2004). Semi-structured interviews involve researchers utilising prepared lists of inquiries as a guideline for the interview, but they are free to deviate from that and explore other questions to obtain further information (Mackey & Gass, 2015). Semi-structured interviews are ideal in several contexts, particularly when there are more than a handful of open-ended queries that necessitate follow-up investigations (Adams, 2015). Flexibility was perhaps the most crucial element to success in employing this approach, both in building and revising interview protocols and conducting interviews. Consequently, semi-structured interviews were selected to provide the respondents a degree of flexibility to clarify their opinions, identify areas of specific importance and knowledge that they perceived they had, and enable the interrogation of specific reactions on a deeper level to highlight and resolve inconsistencies

(Horton et al., 2004). These interviews also enable the researcher to dig further and more directly into a few of the underlying motivational factors that affect teaches drive to teach. Such interviews also highlight concerns that may not have been perceived before and can be followed up with more questions and subsequent interviews (ibid).

However, the intention to employ this interview approach in this study was not merely to obtain narrative data but also to acquire greater insights into the respondents' specific knowledge of the topic, such as teachers' understanding of their motives to teach in a particular context and the motivating factors for these conceptions. This process enables the researcher to identify conflicts encountered by an EFL teacher and investigate their interactions in specific settings. EFL teachers can provide deep descriptions of flashback narratives, which reveal the psychological battles they encounter throughout their teaching careers. They can also describe how different teaching contexts trigger emotional changes through experiences of stress, frustration, and satisfaction. Teachers' professional development and teachers' identity formation occur alongside emotional experiences. These concepts were tracked and explained in considerable detail in the discussions to achieve the research goals; thus, it was not possible to let the interview process remain completely unstructured. A multiple-interview method enabled the researcher to have the interviewees discuss or expound on ideas that they had discussed in their previous narrative interviews. An example of a follow-up question might be a question such as "How did this experience make you feel?" or "How did it affect your motivation to teach?" (see Appendix D for Semi-structured interview sample). Consequently, the interviews enabled the respondents to talk in greater detail regarding a certain situation that motivated or frustrated then as teachers, particularly during periods that they considered significant in their professional careers. The interviews were subsequently combined with field notes to write down the progress of each interview.

3.3.3.3 Supporting Instruments

In addition to the specific methods of narrative inquiry discussed above, multiple supportive methods help researchers achieve the desired knowledge in a more precise and accurate way. Below are some supporting methods that have assisted the researcher in understanding the context of the present study:

- **Field Notes:** In qualitative research, observational records are generally recommended to collect important contextual information. Qualitative observational records are

widely recognised as an important component of qualitative research in which researchers collect observational records to enhance data and offer context for analysis. Comprehensive observational records, particularly those that incorporate critical comments, can aid in the study's data collection efforts in the future. If the interviewer learns anything that they wish to come back to later during the narrative interview, they must make a special note to explore it later (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018). In the case of the current study, the interviewer/researcher kept a track of the study's progress over time, which helped in the analysis process. For example, the researcher took notes of a few of the themes that emerged during the interviews, which served as a preliminary coding stage and supplied a fundamental context to inform the data interpretation process. Moreover, a documented record of the researcher's reflection encouraged her to consider her own biases and identify them, thereby increasing the accuracy and credibility of the work (ibid).

- **Document analysis:** Qualitative research methods commonly work together with document analysis to provide a complete understanding of a research phenomenon. The systematic evaluation and review of papers and digital documents related to the research issue is known as document analysis (Bowen, 2009). Documents can provide information regarding the setting in which respondents in the study operate, thus enabling the researcher to obtain significant additional knowledge. Moreover, documentary materials may enable researchers think of questions to ask while creating the interview questions (ibid). For example, when one of the EFL teachers complained about the pacing guide or the writing and speaking assessment, the researcher reviewed and analysed these documents to fully understand what the teacher meant.

- **Observation:** Another instrument frequently used in qualitative research is observation, which is the deliberate noticing and evaluation of individuals' behaviour in a realistic environment (Cowie, 2009). This tool often comes with other instruments of data collection to provide supportive evidence for a research study. Participant observation involves interacting with people while they are performing normal tasks, such as teaching. Researchers must observe what happens at a research site and make extensive observational records regarding the location, people, actions, and situation. It is through observation that researchers aim to make sense of a complex situation

and seek explanations to fully understand respondents' actions (ibid). Further explanation regarding observation and document analysis has been mentioned in the narration focus action plan (see 3.3.4.3.1).

3.3.4 Data Collection Procedure

This study was designed to be divided into two phases: The exploratory phase (open-ended question interviews) and the narration focus phase (semi-structured interviews) (see Appendix B for interview question samples). The data were collected over six months (see Table 1) of regular weekly interviews that included teachers' stories reflecting their career experiences, which were used to obtain crucial insights into motivation, challenges, and underlying reasons for motivation or demotivation of EFL teachers. Therefore, to test the effectiveness of the research tools, piloting was conducted—before the interviews began—with one teacher who was working in the same teaching context.

Table 1 Action plan of the study

Phase	**Month**	**Date**	**Task**
Pilot Study	July	20/8/2022	Conducting a pilot narrative interview Refining interview process
Phase 1 Exploratory phase Data collection	September-November 2022	20/9/2022-24/11/2022	Recruiting participants Obtaining consent Conducting narrative interviews Writing field notes
Phase 1 Exploratory phase coding	December-January	4/12/2022-24/1/2023	Transcribing audio recordings Reviewing transcripts Identifying manual coding and themes
Phase 2 Narration focus phase Data collection	February - May	1/2/2023-28/5/2023	Recruiting Phase 1 participants Interviewing participants Creating semi-structured follow up interviews Writing field notes
Phase 2 Narration focus phase observation	June	30/5/2023-26/6/2023	Observing the context Conducting weekly meetings with participants Identifying possible manual coding and categorizing themes

3.3.4.1 Pilot Study

Pilot studies are considered a significant part of a research project that is seen as a preliminary study of a specific research instrument (e.g., interview protocol or a survey). According to Shakir and Rahman (2022), a pilot study enhances the validity and methodological establishment of a qualitative enquiry. It ensures that ethical and practical issues are tested or identified and dealt with before the main study. To test and refine the research narrative interview questions and process utilised in the actual research, a pilot study was conducted as per the following schedule:

- 21/7/2022: I obtained approval from the ERGO community to begin the study.
- 20/8/2022: I contacted a colleague who was a PhD student at the University of Southampton and at the same time had worked as an EFL teacher at the English Language institute in Saudi Arabia for over five years.

I requested a meeting to inquire if she wanted to participate in the pilot study. After she approved and signed the consent form, I began by asking the open-ended questions (see appendix B), and the conversation took around one hour. She shared her perspectives on the institute's regulations, assessment, and curriculum change during her teaching experience, which indicated that her motivation changed due to several contextual factors.

From a personal perspective, my self-assurance as a researcher, interviewer, and observer was boosted by this pilot study; for example, I recognised how the researcher's field note records appear at a primary coding stage and better understood the practice of analysing the transcripts. It gave me a hint about some of the themes and how they were related to teacher motivation and context. Moreover, the pilot study provided a general understanding of the situation and revealed possible relevant aspects that affected a teacher's desire to teach. The research was greatly enhanced by the pilot study. For example, I was able to identify from the open-ended questions that various contextual factors influence the teaching experiences and motivation, such as the workplace impact and institute-specific factors along with student-related elements; thus, there was no need to change the open-ended questions for the narrative interviews. Moreover, I realised the importance of creating semi-structured interviews for each participant in Phase 2 (narration focus phase) and included follow-up interview questions to provide a more in-depth understanding of the respondents' perspective. Therefore, it was an important precursor to collect all the necessary information.

Following the pilot phase, the primary research was conducted with the knowledge obtained from the pilot study serving as a well-informed guide map of the main study and informing phase for the study's exploratory phase.

3.3.4.2 Exploratory Phase

The second step was the exploratory phase, which explored contextual factors that impacted teacher motivation. The duration of the first phase was four to six weeks and utilised open-ended interview questions (see Appendix B for interview question samples). The sample consisted of 10 respondents to explore different perspectives regarding the research topic. The initiation of a typical narrative interview would entail open-ended questions to share experiences of the research phenomenon (Lindsay & Schwind, 2016.). This phase enabled the respondents to self-reflect and freely express their perceptions, beliefs, and emotions through their narratives and stories of their lived experiences (see 2.2.6 A Focus on the Person-in-Context Theory). Therefore, at this stage, I attempted to utilise my interviewing skills and to listen attentively, avoid disruptions, and build trust early in the interview (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2016). This stage enabled me as a researcher to understand and draw out themes regarding the contextual factors that affected teacher motivation (see Table 2).

Table 2 Exploratory Phase Description

Instruments	Duration Sessions/	Participants	Aims
Narrative interviews/ Open-ended questions/ Researcher's field notes	2 months, 1 session Per person	10 teachers/ purposive sampling/ homogeneous sampling	To answer the first research question: What factors embedded in the Saudi Arabian context play a significant role in impacting the motivation and demotivation experienced by EFL teachers during their teaching?

3.3.4.2.1 Exploratory Phase Action Plan

After obtaining approval from the ethics committee of the English Language Institute, I began recruiting EFL teachers by sending them emails with a summary of the study and the processes involved. I also provided them with contact information to enable those interested in participating to approach me prior to the beginning of the first phase of the study. Fourteen EFL teachers were finally recruited for this study and were interviewed. Ten EFL teachers participated in phase 1 (exploratory phase) and four teachers agreed to participate in phase 2

(narration focus phase) of the study. The duration of this phase was approximately two months, from 20/9/2022 to 24/11/2022. The respondents read the information on the project and signed a consent form for approval to participate (see Appendix A). Pseudonyms were used for the participants to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Table 3 presents the respondents' background in detail and mentions the duration of the interviews.

Table 3 Phase 1 Exploratory phase: participants' portfolios

Participants	Age / nationality	Teaching experience	Education	Interview duration
Participant 1/ Norah	36 /Saudi	5 years	MA Modern Languages	27:33 minutes
Participant 2/ Manal	38 /Saudi	7 years	MA TESOL	40:15 minutes
Participant 3/ Kenda	43/Saudi	13 years	MA TESOL	26:13 minutes
Participant 4/ Dalia	38/Saudi	7 years	MA TESOL	20:10 minutes
Participant 5/ Shahad	39/Saudi	20 years	PHD Applied Linguistics and English Language Teaching	47:33 minutes
Participant 6/ Lara	42/Saudi	17 years	MA European Languages and Literature: Applied Linguistics	41:31 minutes
Participant 7/ Rinad	39/Saudi	15 years	MA Applied Linguistics	53:30 minutes
Participant 8/ Dana	37/Saudi	15 years	PHD in TESOL	35:41 minutes
Participant 9/ Amera	48/ American	15 years	MA Educational Leadership	1: 12: 42 hours
Participant 10/ Hanadi	44/Saudi	10 years	MA Applied Linguistics	44:43 minute

At this stage, I created a weekly schedule to meet the participants at their convenience. The participant EFL teachers preferred to meet after their morning classes or before the afternoon classes began. We met at the participant teacher's office or the teachers' meeting room at the English Language Institute. I began the face-to-face interviews with open-ended questions (see appendix B) to provide the EFL teachers the opportunity to express their feelings and their motivation to teach within their working context (see appendix C for narrative interview

sample). The respondents mentioned situations that occurred in their careers that give me, as a researcher, a general idea of the contextual factors that affect teacher motivation.

3.3.4.3 Narration Focus Phase

The second phase was the narration focus phase, which focused on individual themes that had emerged in the first phase. Considering the exploratory nature of narrative research, it is worth noting that semi-structured interviews were employed to develop a topic guide that indicated areas of interest. The duration of this phase was six months of semi-structured interviews with the respondents. This phase aimed to understand the respondents' motivation and perspectives on a deeper level, granting respondents the opportunity to further clarify previous disclosures during the open-ended interview questions. A semi-structured interview functioned as a follow-up to their earlier replies, thus enabling the interviewer to seek clarification where needed, such as providing more details on specific contextual factor (see Table 4). Narrative interviews and semi-structured interviews were conducted monthly, thus enabling the participants to frame, think about, and reflect on their experiences before responding (see appendix B interview questions sample).

Applying interviews in research investigations is of significant value because this technique allows the respondents to create their own space in which they are in control of their stories. In particular, open-ended questions that allow interviewees to respond in their own words (Wells, 2011). During both phases, the researcher wrote down observational records during interview section which facilitated the data interpretation procedure. This process assisted the interviewer in developing a conversation throughout the sessions. These observational records served as a guide to guarantee a comprehensive memos or notes for the research during each interview experience and provided a customized and detailed account based on the researcher's needs (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018).

Table 4 Phase 2 Narration focus phase

Instruments	Duration/ Sessions	Participants	Aims
Narrative interviews/ semi-structured interviews/ Researcher's Field notes	4-5 months/ 4 sessions Per person	4 EFL teachers, purposive sampling/ homogeneous sampling	To answer the second and third research questions: RQ2: In what ways do internal and contextual influences interact to shape teachers' motivation?

Observations Document analysis			RQ3: How do EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia narrate changes in their motivation and professional identity over time throughout their teaching journeys?

3.3.4.3.1 Narration Focus Phase: Action plan

In this phase, data were collected from the period 1/2/2023 to 28/5/2023, at the English Language Institute. Before commencing with the data collection, the respondents received a comprehensive explanation of the project and were asked to read a participation form sheet and sign a consent form (see Appendix A), thus granting the researcher permission to utilise their data for this research. They were notified of the ethical guidelines regarding anonymity and confidentiality. The data collection plan was divided into two phases, which enabled the researcher to prepare for the subsequent phase. Data from the exploratory phase was transcribed and analysed first to prepare for this phase. Each teacher participant in this phase was interviewed four times. Table 5 presents the phases of the respondents' portfolios.

Table 5 Phase 2 Narrative focus phase: participants' portfolios

Participants and initials	Age/ nationality	Teaching experience	Education	Interview 1/2/3/ duration in minutes
Participant 11/ Mona	47/Saudi	23 years	MA in applied linguistics	21:04 44:30 22:07 30:18
Participant 12/ SARA	38/Saudi	8 years	PhD Modern Languages and Applied Linguistics	22:40 35: 52 18: 55 38:12
Participant 13/RANA	40/Saudi	12 years	MA in TESOL	33:04 54:14 35:24 20:08
Participant 14/ MAHA	39/Saudi	7 years	MA in TESOL	35:31 56:04 30:12 27:14

The above mentioned four EFL teachers agreed to continue in this study and participated in Phase 2. As in the exploratory phase, I scheduled a meeting with them at a time that was most convenient for them. During these six months, I tried to meet with each teacher monthly to give participants time to think and reflect about their teaching experiences. In the first interview, I began with open narrative interview questions (see Appendix B and C for narrative interview and questions sample). In accordance with the first interview feedback, I created semi-structured interview questions designed for each teacher as follow-up interview questions to provide clarification of certain aspects that were mentioned in the first interview. In the third interview, I asked respondents to discuss their initial and middle period teaching experience; in the final interview, I asked them to discuss their current teaching experience and asked them follow-up questions regarding the third interview (see appendix D for semi-structured interview sample). At this stage, I was able to supplement what I already knew by asking clarifying questions. I obtained a shared understanding of teachers' perspectives regarding the contextual factors that affect their teaching motivation.

At this stage of the study, I began to analyse documents and observations with teachers. For example, one teacher in this study complained about following the pacing guide and reporting progress of instruction to the teacher coordinator. Therefore, I asked the EFL teachers to provide me with a copy of the pacing guide to analyse the document. The guide includes detailed instructions for each unit in the book and the activities with page numbers for teachers to complete in class. It also included a timetable for teachers to follow for each teaching week and the units to be covered. When the EFL teachers discussed a curriculum issue, I scanned the all-course level books and test samples (writing, speaking, mid-term, and final). The coursebooks revealed various levels of skills activities; for example, the reading for level 1 students consists of two to three sentences, level 2 includes one paragraph; for writing, level three includes writing a one-page essay, and level four includes writing two full pages. A few respondents had issues with the writing assessment and speaking examination process; thus, I attended the examination and observed the process of the speaking and writing examination and observed the cross-checking correction process along with one of the teacher participants to make sense of what respondents meant during the interview. The correction process involves the class teacher first correcting students' papers and then exchanging the files of the writing assessment with another teacher; the other teacher reviews

the corrections of the first teacher to double-check and grade the papers. All teachers do this for each other's papers which is considered double the work for each teacher.

During the speaking exam, the teacher had to attend two examination sessions—one for her class and another session for another colleague—and both sessions had to be recorded. Moreover, I made observations pertaining to the English Language Institute every time I met EFL teachers for interviews. I walked through the corridors and observed students and teachers during teaching sessions. I observed the administrative offices as well as the teachers' offices and found that teachers rarely use their offices or interact with the administrative department; they come to their classrooms and leave after they finish the session. Thus, while the observation and documentation analysis in this study did not add data beyond respondents' narrative interviews and commentaries within the reported themes that emerged from the data. However, it played an important role in supporting and experiencing what the respondents had narrated, as it enabled me as a researcher to fully understand what the participant intended to convey and meant.

3.3.4.3.2 Narration Focus Phase: Respondents' background.

Gathering background information about subject respondents is an important step in interview perpetration (Dilley, 2000). Therefore, at the beginning of the first interviews, I asked the respondents to give a brief background about themselves:

Mona's Background:

Mona was born in Turkey in 1976 and is currently 47 years old. She began learning English in private schools from the first grade. She travelled with her family to the United States and studied in primary school there. When she came back to Saudi Arabia, she studied at a private school. Later, she joined the university as an English major. She was appointed for a teaching position at the University Language Center one year after graduation. She has been working at the English Language Institute (ELI) since 1998 and has 23 years of teaching experience. She has a master's degree in applied linguistics and is currently studying PhD in Applied Linguistics. She had extensive experience in teaching different subjects before joining the English Language Centre (ELC), which later became the ELI. She has taught in diverse educational contexts, including the university's medical school, nursing school, and business school. In 2009 she started taking teacher training courses, became certified as a teacher trainer, and now has her teacher training programme.

Sara's Background:

Sara was born in 1986 and studied English at a private school in her early school years, starting from grade one. She loved the subject of English in high school, and that led to her choosing European Literature and Humanities as a university major in 2008. She was appointed at the English Language Institute in 2010, and finished her master's in applied linguistics in 2015. She discovered that she enjoyed English linguistics, and this is when her passion for teaching English started. She took various courses to develop her teaching, such as CELTA and DELTA. Her passion for teaching and confidence as a language teacher increased after the training courses. She subsequently continued her studies and obtained a PhD in Modern Languages and Applied Linguistics in 2022 from a UK university.

Rana's Background:

Rana was born in Saudi Arabia in 1984 and is currently 40 years old. During her childhood, she attended public school. Her love for English began in intermediate school. She used to have a notebook where she wrote down Arabic words and their meanings in English. She also loved American movies, which increased her passion for the English language, and she decided to major in English at university. She graduated with her bachelor's degree in English literature in 2008 and began teaching at the English Language Institute (ELI) in 2010. She has been a teacher for 14 years now and has had an incredible journey. She currently holds a master's degree in TESOL, which has added significantly to her knowledge and experience as a teacher. She considers herself a passionate educator who loves her family, enjoys teaching, and believes in lifelong learning.

Maha's Background:

Maha, born in 1987, became interested in English from a young age when she was in primary school. While in high school, she engaged in reading English books from her father's library, which increased her enthusiasm for the language. Her father initiated conversations with her in English at home, and they practised correct English pronunciation. Her decision to study Physics at university stemmed from her participation in the science track throughout high school. However, she later switched to the English Literature department and pursued her passion for the subject. Subsequently, she began her employment at the English Language Institute as a translator but soon lost interest in pursuing an administrative role. In light of this, she pursued her master's degree in TESOL and completed her studies in 2016. She was promoted to the position of lecturer at the language institution within the university. Since

the first moment she began teaching, she developed a strong passion for the profession and a deep connection with it.

Once the final steps of collecting participant background and conducting the interviews were completed, I started the data interpretation procedure.

3.3.5 Data Analysis Process

A narrative inquiry research design starts by identifying a problem, then selecting respondents with knowledge and experience related to the issue, and next collecting their narratives as a data source (Ary et al., 2018, see 3.3.1). After the data collection process, the next stage was transcribing those stories into a written text.

3.3.5.1 Transcribing Interviews

Qualitative data is often collected through interviews, which are recorded in the form of interview transcripts; this common method of data collection and analysis is analysed using words. The data interpretation stage began by converting the recordings into text. One benefit of transcription is that it enables an understanding of the information being worked with (Dornyei, 2007). Once transcribed, the transcripts were compared to the audio recordings to ensure that the transcription was accurate. In general, researchers participate in this process to get a better grasp of the data to understand what took place and where and when it happened according to the stories of the participants (Nasheeda et al., 2019).

The participants were permitted to use the most convenient language for them during the interviews. Six interviews were conducted and transcribed in the Arabic language, then translated into English; the remaining participants preferred to speak in English, as they felt more confident doing so. When translating from one language to another, it is necessary to incorporate a “back translation” method, which implies that a multilingual individual is asked to translate portions of the English data back into the original language (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 299). In this case, I contacted one of my colleagues, who is a Saudi PhD student, and requested her to back-translate some of the text that was extracted from the data into the original language, Arabic, to ensure the accuracy of the original text. The more accurate the transcript, the more accurately the researcher can analyse the data.

3.3.5.2 Analytical Model Selection and Analysing the Data

After the interview transcripts were completed, the next stage was analysing the stories from the transcripts. In most cases, qualitative data interpretation is conducted inductively (Thomas, 2006), which is where the researcher sifts through the materials (e.g., data/transcripts/memos) and makes inferences from them. Using this information, the researcher can generate interpretations of the data and derive themes, concepts, hypotheses, and explanations that fairly and thoroughly describe the data or phenomenon (Cohen et al. 2018). Therefore, Thematic Analysis (TA) was employed to find categories and themes for narrative analysis (Riessman, 2008). TA is a technique used for methodically detecting, categorizing, and providing insights into patterns of meaning (themes) throughout a data collection process. This process assists the researcher in perceiving and making sense of common or shared meanings and experiences by concentrating on meaning across a data collection process (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Individuals who are new to qualitative research may benefit from TA because it gives an entry point into a method of doing research that might seem unclear, mysterious, theoretically difficult, and excessively complicated for them to understand. Moreover, it supports a qualitative researcher by teaching them the mechanics of systematic coding and interpreting qualitative data (ibid). Therefore, a Thematic Analysis (TA) model was selected for the data interpretation procedure of this study. Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach was adopted during TA to analyse the narrative interviews. All these phases were implemented in the action plan of the study data interpretation as explained below:

Phase 1: Familiarization

In this phase, I started to immerse myself in the data by reading and re-reading the interview transcripts and listening to and viewing audio recordings. I listened to the recorded interviews at least once while reading the transcript to develop familiarity with the data. During this stage, I took notes on the data being read or listened to. While taking notes, I began observing the data and identified some possible contextual factors that affect motivation.

Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes

After reading the data, I carefully started the coding process. This required identifying and categorizing aspects of data that may be important to the study's research question. I utilised NVIVO programme, which enabled me to organize the data interpretation process (see

appendix F). Following each interview, the researcher transcribed the interview, documented comments and insights regarding the data, and generated preliminary coding as appropriate. So, I imported each interview file into NVIVO and named it with the participant's initials and the interview number, and then created the coding folders and analysis of each interview separately. Then I extracted the text from each interview and categorized it into its suitable code files, which helped in categorizing the data and recognizing emerging patterns and themes.

Phase 3: Searching for Themes

As the process shifts from code to themes, the analysis begins to take shape. A theme captures some significant parts of the data relevant to the study questions and indicates some degree of meaningful responses within the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). At this stage, I read through the coded data to find similarities among the codes. Codes that seem to have unifying features were put together to create themes and subthemes in NVIVO. An example of the codes is "pacing guide"; various EFL teachers discussed the issue of following the pacing guide. Some of them find it stressful to keep up with it, so they rush the curriculum to cover everything before the students' exam. This code is categorised under the theme of rules and regulations of the instructional system. For additional examples of coding, see (appendix E) coding extracts from the transcribed interview sample.

Phase 4: Reviewing Potential Themes

The evolving themes are to be examined in connection with the coded data and the complete data set in this step, which is a confirming process (Braun & Clarke, 2006). At this step, I compared themes to the extracted data to determine whether the theme worked in connection with the data or not. Therefore, I went to each theme folder in NVIVO and read all the extracts again to make sure they belonged to the correct theme. For example, the theme "Student interrelationship with teacher motivation" is divided into "Level of students' interest in learning and its relation to teacher motivation, and "The impact of students' feedback on teacher motivation," and lastly, "Intrinsic religious teacher motivation". As these subthemes are very related in concept, I revised these themes and created subthemes, and again revised the extracts and ensured that each extracted evidence was placed in the correct theme and subtheme.

Phase 5: Defining and Naming Themes

Each theme should have its own unique and particular characteristics that can be expressed and defined (Braun & Clarke, 2006). At this stage, I extracted texts from across the data specific to the themes. In other words, explaining to the reader why a particular extract was important by interpreting the data and showing their hidden meaning. During this analytical stage, I included narrative as extracts of the data and aimed not only to paraphrase text, but also to interpret and connect to the research questions. The next stage was to choose a name for each theme. The themes and subthemes that emerged from the findings were as follows (see Chapter 5):

- Rules and regulations within the instructional system.
    - Instructional system.
    - Workload and prolonged teaching sessions.
    - Curriculum, materials, and pacing guide.
- A sense of teacher autonomy.
    - Classroom ownership as a source of teacher motivation.
    - Autonomy as a source of teachers' professional development.
    - The impact of lack of autonomy.
- Student interrelationship with teacher motivation.
    - Level of students' interest in learning and its relation to teacher motivation
    - The impact of students' feedback on teacher motivation
    - Intrinsic religious teacher motivation

Phase 6: Producing the Report

The final stage of the analysis is writing the findings. To answer the research questions, the report must go beyond just description to create an argument and discussion (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The findings of this study were reported to provide a convincing story of the data based on participants' narratives in the following chapters:

- Chapter four provides the initial findings about phase 2 (narration focus phase) participants' reflexivity and beliefs, along with their personal experiences and motivational as well as emotional dynamics throughout their teaching career, to deliver comprehensive data analysis from their perspectives.

- ·Chapter five analyzes all major themes found in this study from both phase 1 (exploratory phase) and phase 2 (narration focus phase) participants' interviews to identify key factors influencing teacher motivation in the Saudi EFL setting.

Finally, for trustworthiness, a copy of the report was sent and reviewed by the respondents to validate the accuracy of their stories used in the data interpretation.

3.3.6 Trustworthiness

When conducting qualitative research, a researcher's credibility is enhanced by adhering to the basic rules. For example, a project's credibility can be established by portraying the researcher's image to the audience. Providing descriptive details of how the results were accomplished, including the steps to collect and analyse data (e.g., the process of coding and creating themes), may be used to build readers' confidence (Dornyei, 2007). Readers benefit from the work's clarity and richness by being able to better comprehend and engage with its findings. According to Dornyei (2007) there are two widely used approaches followed by the researchers to incorporate validity checks into the study:

- Feedback from the respondents ('respondent validation' or member checking') is an essential part of the process. Participant commentary on the study's findings is a natural method because qualitative research focuses on revealing participant meaning. A 'validation interview' is an opportunity for them to read an early draft of the study report and then voice their views. Validity is increased if there is an agreement between the researcher and respondents. In this study, this validity check was established in phase six of the data interpretation process (see section, 3.3.5.2).
- Peer checking is also suggested for peer-reviewed reliability tests to be part of qualitative research. For the most part, this involves delegating some component of the researcher's duties to a co-worker in creating or testing a coding scheme and assessing a correlation between the two sets of results. (See 3.3.5.1 e.g., "back translation" method).

Utilising both strategies reinforce the research ethics and eliminates the issue of bias within the research study. Ethics has a significant role throughout the process of conducting a study, which is discussed in detailed in the following section.

3.3.7 Ethical Considerations

Human subjects must be protected in all research investigations by adhering to ethical standards. Two central research ethics committees needed to approve the study before it was conducted. The first committee was from the University of Southampton, which required that a study involving human subjects be submitted for ethical approval before being carried out. The researcher must apply to the Research Governance Office (RGO) of the university for review and accept. The researcher must then complete another application to gain permission to contact respondents for data collection from the ELI's Ethics Committee at the University in Saudi Arabia.

Before the data collection started, I applied for the ERGO application at the University of Southampton ethics Research Governance Office to start conducting interviews with teachers at the English language Institute and it was approved on 21/7/2022. After that, the researcher submitted another application to the English Language Institute (ELI) at the University in Saudi Arabia to get approval for conducting the research study with teachers employed there. The ELI Ethics Committee considered the ethical aspects of the application and approved the project on 9/8/2022.

Ethical considerations become more apparent when interviewing vulnerable people face-to-face. Nervous people afraid to express their feelings in an interview risk making things more difficult for themselves. Ethical guidelines for conducting scientific research were followed in this study. Informed consent was the most critical factor to consider. Understanding the study's purpose, as well as the ability to decide whether or not to join the study, is necessary for people to participate in research (Arifin, 2018). It was made clear to all the EFL teachers participating in the study that their information would be used for research purposes only. Before submitting their interviews, all the respondents gave their full approval. As part of the informed consent process, study respondents were informed that their information they disclosed was confidential. The respondents also needed to know how their data would be utilised and with whom it would be shared.

The respondents needed to know that regardless of whether they engage in the study or choose not to, any information that they submitted would not affect their employment or evaluations (Asselin, 2003). As a researcher, I understand the necessity of protecting the respondents in this way, as it aids in gaining their trust and creating reliable research findings. Thus, respondents comfortably share their perspectives regarding their motivation

within their work context. The discussed qualitative research design and methodology in this chapter considered the most suitable approach to provide in-depth data and answer the research questions. The next chapter presents a detailed analysis of the study's findings, focusing on teachers' perceptions and their narratives regarding motivational change in context.

Chapter 4 Dynamics of motivational change in EFL instructors

This chapter presents detailed findings from the Phase 2 (narration focus phase) data on Saudi EFL teachers' attitudinal orientations regarding teaching English, providing a comprehensive understanding of their motivational dynamics over time. The researcher took a broad approach to understanding the dynamic nature of the teachers' motivation and provided extensive explanations of their personal perspectives in Sections 2.1 and 2.2. Therefore, phase 2 was selected as the focus of this chapter because it yielded the most significant data on how the participants' reflexivity revealed their personal, motivational and emotional transformations within the educational context in which they taught.

A narrative inquiry approach was used to enable a deep exploration of how the motivational levels of four EFL teachers shifted throughout their careers and how their reflexivity shaped their motivational trajectories. It also allowed the participants to present their voices, leading to a profound understanding of their unique individual experiences. The person-in-context (PIC) relational model of motivation (Ushioda, 2009) served as the guiding theoretical framework for interpreting each narrative in light of the complex, dynamic interactions between the participants' personal beliefs, professional identities and sociocultural context.

Chapter 5 extends these findings through an analysis and categorization of the major themes that emerged from both the exploratory and narration focus phases and the narrative and semi-structured interviews. The categorization process enabled the identification and classification of the essential elements that influenced teacher motivation.

4.1 Instructors Storytelling Narration

The data provides valuable insights into the reflexivity and perspectives of the teachers in the Saudi EFL context. As part of the narrative interviews, the participants Mona, Sara, Rana, and Maha engaged in storytelling around their teaching motivations. However, the way this process unfolded varied among them as each one presented a unique picture of teacher motivation. In the subsequent sections, using motivational change as a conceptual framework

(Dornyei and Ushioda, 2021) and the Person-in-Context (PIC) relational view of motivation by Ushioda (2009), (see Section 2.1 and 2.2.6). From this perspective, this study evaluates participants' expression of beliefs and experiences as well as their evolving attitudes to understand their motivational development trajectories. The evidence in this section emphasizes real participant stories which reveal the dynamic interaction between evolving work contexts, autonomy factors and professional identity formation.

4.1.1 Mona.

Mona's Narrative Analysis: Initial Years of Teaching

Mona was one of the first teachers appointed at the ELC as a Teaching Assistant after graduating from the English department. At the beginning of her career, like most teachers, she expressed excitement and a natural teaching inclination to teach English:

> *I was excited. I'm a natural teacher and I love to teach and learn. So, it's just a very natural job for me. And it's something that I do passionately, and that I love. And just getting into this new world was exciting. It was exciting, and at the same time, a little bit confusing, because like, yesterday, I was sitting on a student's seat, but today, I'm sitting on the other side. And so that was kind of strange, you know. I did feel that it was so quick. (M.INT.1)*

Mona has a strong professional self-concept build on in intrinsic motivation. Mona describes herself as a natural teacher who loves to learn and teach. She views the teaching profession as something that comes naturally "*a natural job for me*." Having such view of teaching during her first year indicates a high level of intrinsic motivation. Although, the participant's quick transition from being a student to sitting on the teacher's side caused a bit of confusion; she remarked how it was strange that she felt like yesterday she was a student and today she is a teacher. However, embracing the new world "*was exciting*" and entering this new world of teaching provides her with a sense of anticipation and eagerness to embrace the challenges and opportunities that come with being a teacher. At the beginning of her career, she had a positive outlook on taking the role as a teacher and believed herself to be a natural teacher with innate skills that positively shaped the way she delivered her lessons. She used the present tense to express her passion to teach which indicates that she still admires teaching "*I love to teach.*" Mona added that the teaching context at the beginning of her teaching

career was quite flexible "*The context was very nice, there was a lot of freedom and flexibility. I did feel like a university teacher. And of course, this changed through the years." (M.INT.1).* Mona's strong concept of herself as a 'natural teacher' illustrates how professional identity development supports intrinsic motivation.

Mona appreciates the teaching context of the English Language Centre (ELC) at that time, which provided the teachers with a lot of freedom and flexibility; this suggests that she had a sense of professionalism and autonomy in her teaching and that those feelings were significant to her. This freedom probably allowed her to design and deliver lessons in a way that suited the needs of her students. Mona reflects on this further by providing an example when she was teaching English to medical students:

> *So, we used to teach the students in the medical school. And we used to give them intensive courses in reading, writing, vocabulary, medical terminology, writing medical reports. So, it was all you know, geared towards something that would help them, those students were really excited. (INT.2)*

Mona explained that the intensive course with "*medical terminology*", and scientific language equipped students with the language skills which would assist them in their respective fields of study. Such an approach enhanced the students' overall learning experience and gave them "*something that would help them.*" She was dedicated to supporting and helping her students to succeed in their future chosen fields of study. With an emphasis on teaching English for specific purposes (ESP), she highlights the positive impact she made as a teacher on students and said that "*students were really excited*" and this contributed to creating a conducive learning environment. Moreover, Mona added that the class timing worked well in terms of the teaching load:

> *The timings of the class were very appropriate. It was just flexible as we had lots of sections (classes) not like now we have like, 18 hours for one section. It used to be a three-hour a week course. So, we used to have several sections to cover our load … for the medical students. It was intensive for three weeks. We used to teach 15 hours, and it was a stretch of several hours a day. It was like they would move from a vocabulary class to a listening class, and to a speaking class. (M.INT.2)*

Mona suggests that a short three-hour class across various sections of different level students is more suitable for her than a long 18-hours of teaching one class with the same students. Having several sections to cover, her workload provided her with an opportunity to meet different levels of students and obtain more experience. However, even when she taught an intensive medical student course, they used to have a different class for each learning skill, so students physically "*moved*" from one class to another unlike the current situation where there is one four-hour long session. The change of the class timing indicates that a four long hour session allocated to a group of students is frustrating and tiring for the teacher. Mona also emphasized the sense of freedom she felt in her past teaching experience:

> *You have the whole subject, so, you're gonna teach grammar, vocab, writing reports etc. So, it was an intensive course, you know. But it was nice, because it had a time frame, and you want it to achieve, and students were actually really learning. So, they were happy. So that was for me, like everything, even the community was very nice. There was a sense of freedom, like you as a teacher are the queen of your class. You can assess your students as you want. (M.INT.2)*

Even though the course consisted of consecutive classes covering various skills, the "*whole subject*", Mona enjoyed the experience "*it was nice*" because the instruction was focused on and conducted within a specific "*time frame*", which allowed for a deeper exploration of the individual language skills and enhanced the student learning. Therefore, there were positive outcomes from the class and the students "*were actually really learning"*. Mona attributed the successful learning environment or "*community*" to the "*sense of freedom*" and the respect she felt, to her sense of responsibility as a teacher and how this made her feel metaphorically the "*Queen of your class*" in which she could assess her students using the approach she preferred:

> *We put exam questions, which gave a way to the teacher. So, I felt that I had a role that helped me grow and become creative in my teaching. I didn't have anything ready made for me; I have to do my own thing. I had to do my own preparing for the lessons, my own exams, my own tests, only the final was written by the exam committee, and there was an agreement. Also, the teachers were involved in the final examination, so the teacher was involved all the time. So, this was really, really motivating. (M.INT.2)*

Mona highlighted the sense of freedom she experienced when she started teaching at the ELC. She mentioned that she had the freedom to plan lessons and assess her students in the most suitable way for them. She contrasted this to the current teaching context: Back then "*I didn't have anything ready made for me*" and that now the exams are made only by the examination committee. Being autonomous in curriculum planning and evaluation allowed Mona to grow professionally and to feel greater ownership and a sense of control over what she did.

The shift towards a standardized modular curriculum system, including altered class schedules, diminished Mona's control over the decision-making process and illustrated how institutional changes can reduce teachers' autonomy, disrupt their sense of freedom and capacity, cause frustration and diminish their motivation. The previous curriculum structure provided Mona with autonomy, which she identified as a major motivational factor. Her early teaching experiences gave her control over curriculum design, assessments and student evaluations, which matched her autonomy requirements and competency needs while also functioning as a motivator for her intrinsic desires to teach.

In the past, she was involved in the examination process and lesson plan development as she said that the "*teacher was involved all the time*" in shaping the curriculum. Such opportunities gave her a significant sense of responsibility towards her role as a teacher and motivated her to create her own materials and allowed her to grow in her teaching approach. She provided an example of when she was teaching medical students:

> *When I was teaching medical terminology, I was not a doctor so I had to study for hours and hours, so I can teach my students, but it wasn't like that I was doing it in a negative way. No, it's just something new that I had to learn and get used to. So, I don't remember something like that bothered me. (M.INT.2)*

Mona faced challenges during her experience in teaching medical students as the subject was outside of her area of expertise "*I am not a doctor*". This was especially the case because she did not understand some medical terminologies. However, this did not affect her in terms of "*studying for hours*" with strong dedication, willingness and feeling of responsibility, she said "*I had to learn*" to provide her students with high quality education they needed. Investing time and effort to understand the content of the lesson and provide students with valuable insights which contributed to the students' success did not bother Mona "*I don't remember*

anything that bothered me" because study time and lesson preparation enabled her to be competent and confident to deliver the subject matter properly. Although Mona felt pressure, she was still pleased with the experience. She enjoyed the experience of learning new medical and business vocabulary that enhanced her knowledge in various fields of the English language which contributed significantly to her professional development.

However, one thing that caused frustration for Mona in the early years of her teaching was the lack of training and guidance, as she said "of course, there were challenges because we didn't have any training", as a newly qualified teacher. These newly hired teachers faced difficulties due to the absence of formal training, strategies and feedback from the teacher coordinator. Mona's innate teaching talent and desire to learn helped her discover and master teaching techniques independently and, eventually, supported her teacher identity formation. As she said, "but that didn't, you know, take away from my ambition, because like I told you, I'm a natural, you know, I love teaching, and I love learning." Despite the lack of training, the first years of Mona's teaching experience were fulfilling and exciting, and she felt a passion for teaching and learning. She said, "But that didn't, you know, take away from my ambition because, like I told you, I'm a natural, you know, I love teaching, and I love learning." The freedom of the teaching context at the ELC made her feel like a university instructor, and she was able to acquire experience in various areas. Thus, Mona's early teaching career was characterized by passion, autonomy and a positive work context. However, changes within the institution led to heavier workloads and less teacher freedom. This was when her motivational path started to change.

Middle Years of Teaching

However, as time passed there was a significant change in the ELC as it was changed into the English Language Institute (ELI). The preparatory year for students entering college became mandatory for all Saudi universities. The ELI unified all the English curricula and exams for all foundation year students. Mona took maternity leave for two years and when she came back to teaching, there was a huge change in the teaching context; teachers no longer had any autonomy over the curricula. She expressed the idea that the 'unification of the curricula', and the launch of foundation year at the university were the sources of dissatisfaction as she stated, "*the frustration began when the preparation year began*." The whole university was following a term system, but the ELI started to apply a modular system. Each term was divided into two modules, so the total is four modules in one year. Each module consisted of what

were supposed to be seven weeks of teaching and learning and one week of exams. This sudden and huge change into a modular system was problematic for Mona:

> *So, we had four modules. When the students would finish module one, you move them from the books which were level one, onto another level two book and the student didn't have time, and they weren't able to do it. So, the module was supposed to take eight weeks, but in all these 10 years that the modular system went on, not once were the students able to get more than five and a half weeks of classroom learning. That's the maximum. So, imagine that and they would get a curriculum of 18 full hours, you must finish it and then move to level two. When did they move? When did they assimilate this? So, we had a gap. Students moving in the levels were dropping and the results were showing that the students were failing…. you know, so it was a really frustrating time. It's still frustrating. Very frustrating. (M.INT.3)*

Such a limited time for each module course posed a significant challenge for students as they are expected to finish the curriculum which requires 18 hours a week within these time constrains, and so Mona believes it was extremely difficult for students to fully assimilate the textbook material in skills such as reading and writing "*When did they assimilate this?*". To go through the textbooks in this manner prevented students from fully comprehending the content of the subject matter before they moved to a higher level and that created a gap "*So, we had a gap*". Students were unable to build a solid foundation and struggled at the higher level. As a result of this sudden jump, there was a mismatch between the students' level and the taught materials which led to students underperforming and more students repeating the course level.

This situation did not just affect the students but also impacted the teachers. Mona expressed her frustration that in the past "*it was really frustrating*" and in the present she said repeatedly and with emotion, "*it's still frustrating. Very frustrating*". She witnessed the failure and the conflict her students went through over the years. Such negative impacts eventually led Mona to significant frustration and demotivation. Mona's sense of professional satisfaction eroded as she saw the adverse effects of the system she felt she could not alter.

Another significant issue that Mona faced as a teacher was the length of the class in which each class consisted of a 3–4-hour class-time:

For example, the hours of teaching are 4, which is too much, at the same time it is not 4 hours of recycling information. It is 4 hours of new information every day. Although I'm a good teacher, I´m going to just keep throwing information at them, and I try to do the best I can. I'm trying to do the best in such situations as much as I can but I'm rushing, I know that, I'm rushing, so the problem is coming from the curriculum, the way it's designed, the way it's structured, it is not attaining its goals, this is a big problem. (M.INT.3)

Mona highlights the importance of practicing new information and ensuring that students fully absorb the content before moving to a new lesson. The participant describes herself as "*a good teacher*" who teaches the content in-depth instead of "*throwing information*", but still she felt under pressure to rush through the content to complete the curriculum. She implies that the root cause of this issue was the administrative aspect of the curriculum "*the problem is coming from the curriculum*."

Rushing to complete the curriculum while ignoring the importance of providing students with opportunities to practise and enhance their language skills "*They're art students. And they're now using a new book. The problem is these students aren't required to produce any speaking and writing*", and without the focus on developing students' "*productive skills*" the curriculum may not attract the students' interests and effectively engage them with the content being taught and this will result in boredom and the reduction of the learning outcomes. "*So, all they're getting is like vocab and grammar. And it's just like, you know, information. So, it's really boring for them. And it's frustrating for the teacher*". Focusing on informative content rather than enhancing productive learning skills might also affect the teacher's motivation. Mona found that it is frustrating to teach a curriculum that fails to address the comprehensive needs of learners. Moreover, the students' focus was on passing the course without any interest in learning the language and they started to adapt to this speeded-up system. Mona provided an example from a reading comprehension lesson she gave to her students:

I found that they don't do the reading. I gave them reading and comprehension tasks, but I found that they don't read them. They just scan and answer. I told them that is wrong, but it is too hard for them, it is above their level, they can't do it. They try to

search information randomly. (M.INT.3)

Students rely on scanning key information to answer the reading question rather than engaging deeply to comprehend the reading text. Perhaps this is compounded by the lack of teacher' involvement in curriculum decision making. This leads to the teacher losing control of the teaching structure which in Mona's case has had an impact on her motivation to teach. As mentioned above, exams were ready-made by the exam committee and standardized for all students and teachers did not participate in creating exams:

> *As a teacher, I did not know what will come in the exam. There was no transparency from the administration side. I could not tell students what to focus on, or what is important etc. As a result, I did not know what to do and became frustrated. I had to teach the complete curriculum and could not leave out a bit even if I knew that this large amount of information was difficult for students to comprehend. So, this is a big frustration. Consequently, I was literally burned out. (M.INT.3)*

Mona expressed that it is necessary for a teacher to have open lines of communication and administrative "*transparency*", so that she can have some expectation of the exam content to align her teaching with the assessment. Clarity in this situation is crucial to help the teacher to identify the necessary skills and concepts that students need to grasp. Covering the entire curriculum created pressure on the teacher to rush through the textbook even though it was overwhelming for the students and "*difficult for students to comprehend*". Mona had to explain a huge amount of information within time constraints without guidance on what is considered important in the exams and this pressure eventually resulted in the mental and physical "*burn out*" for the teacher. This is a clear factor that led to teacher demotivation.

After receiving their grades, some students came to Mona seeking help as they had failed and repeated the course a couple of times, and they need to pass the English course to be able to enrol in their course at the university. "*So, there's a kind of a lost hope, they say… ask like, you know, please teacher help me! Do something! and I tell them, I can do nothing, I do not control grades. I have no say in anything*". She felt depressed because of the lack of control over grades and assessment. She says that teachers need to be trusted by the administration: "*As a teacher I'm trusted, but I must be able to test, I must have grades in my hand. This gives power to the teacher. We miss these advantages. Students ask us about matters we don't*

know about. The teacher lacks power." Mona clearly emphasized the importance of "trust" to empower her role as an educator, by having the opportunity to create exams and grade students. Such freedom allows the EFL teacher to meet students' needs, such as finding their weaknesses and providing feedback, which supports the growth of both the teacher and students alike. Mona believes that she must be trusted not just from the perspective of professionalism in teachers but also from the standpoint of religion:

> *I mean, haram, it's like, we're not really giving them a fair chance to succeed. So, it's against a religious practice against fairness, being fair to these human beings, and not giving them their rights, they aren't being given their rights this is why it's haram. This is like something that Allah will ask us about, you know, that we didn't give them their rights and we're ruining their careers, you know, and we're ruining them. This is demoralizing, making them feel like they're failures. I mean, these are students that made it to the university, and then you don't give them a chance to continue. (M.INT.4)*

Mona views the situation from a religious perspective; she refers to an Arabic word "*Haram*", which means actions or behaviours that are forbidden in Islamic practice. Muslims use this expression to address an action that is considered morally wrong. Mona applies this term to describe this situation as "*against fairness*" to students' rights and how it impacts their educational future. Mona refers to the Islamic concept of "*Amanah*," which refers to trust and responsibility that a Muslim has towards others. In the context of education, teachers must have Amanah in their obligations towards students and provide them with the proper education they need. Mona feels a sense of duty not just from a professional perspective, but also a religious responsibility to fulfil her students' needs and she believes that this educational system does not meet these obligations. Mona used cultural and religious views to try to understand students who failed multiple times before reaching their major courses, demonstrating her fusion of moral and religious beliefs. Mona viewed her role as a teacher through the lens of Amanah, which emphasizes trust and responsibility. In this context, Mona viewed the systemic issues she faced as violating her professional ethics and religious beliefs. Mona's experience and focus on Amanah highlight the significant impact of religious beliefs and ethical standards on teacher motivation in Saudi society.

Failing to enhance students' education as a teacher might have negative consequences not just in this life but also in the afterlife as she said, "*This is like something that Allah (God) will*

ask us about." She feels frustrated that some students had to leave the university after failing to pass preparatory year English courses and not getting the chance to enter any major course. She said that as a teacher, she did her best: "*I'm trying my best to give them whatever I can, you know, in whatever I can do*"; however, the lack of autonomy for teachers around testing is difficult to ignore:

> *"But then when the test comes, I have no say in the test, I don't know what's in the test. And many times, they're being tested, not according to the level, not according to what they have been taught." (M.INT.4)*

So, the tests that students take may be inappropriate to their level of proficiency or the teacher may not have focused on a certain point because of the rush to explain the lessons to complete the curriculum on time and these points may come up in the exam. For this reason, some teachers have recently been choosing to teach based on the exam passing guide to avoid such a situation. Mona shared an incident from the previous term when she taught during the month of Ramadan.

Recent Years of Teaching

In Ramadan the institute administration reduced the classes from four to two hours (online classes) and the weeks of teaching were reduced from seven to four, but the pacing guidelines and number of units for seven teaching weeks remained the same, "*I was the only staff member to talk to the administration and tell them that there is a problem; do the math, excuse me. How could I finish the curriculum in that short period of time?*" Therefore, the administration then reached out to the teachers and conducted a survey, and most teachers were ahead of the pacing guidelines. Mona was surprised at the situation, and she raised some concerns about the quality of teaching:

> *How can they say that "we are ahead". Teachers have said that they do not have any problem with too much or too little curriculum content. They go through the curriculum so fast, they explain everything quickly and tick..tick..tick they have finished. I have a colleague in the group saying, "I have finished"! This is what is happening. Not that, "I taught that part". I can't blame them as they lack experience. They have arrived in this confusing situation. I am sad for them as they do not know what real university teaching is. (M.INT.4)*

Mona questions how teachers are "*ahead*" of the curriculum when the teaching weeks and hours are reduced. She is frustrated that teachers were running through their lessons and explaining everything quickly without ensuring their students' deeper understanding of the content. One teacher in their group used the statement "*I have finished*" this lesson instead of "*I taught that part*", which indicates that the teachers' aim was to complete the curriculum rather than teaching it to enhance students' comprehension. Mona believes that teachers who lack experience might miss out on experiencing what a "*real university teacher*" is as it should entail such responsibilities as creating their own exams and grading them. She felt sad for those new teachers who faced this confusing situation and followed the system. They also might not engage with principles and practice of effective instruction. "*That's the saddest thing. You know, you have teachers who come to a point, I just do what I need to do, and I leave.*" She believes that teaching at university level should go beyond delivering materials and ticking off lessons and should involve in-depth practice and the enhancement of students' language skills. Mona perceives herself, her role as a teacher, and her professional identity in comparison to less experienced colleagues by understanding her responsibilities and having the freedom to engage in them. Mona states that continuous frustrations from the modular system over a long period of time led to her decision to request a transfer to the business administration department:

> *Every time we just start getting into a system of something. No, no, we're starting again. So, you never develop, you know, every time we have something, you know, in place, either the book, they change the books, or, you know, the system and whatever they change, how will we grow? When will we grow when we don't stay stable in one place, you know? So, it was like, I have a family. I'm getting sick because of all of these frustrations. And I had to make that hard decision of quitting. And at that time, I requested to go to the business administration department. (M.INT.4)*

Mona emphasizes her feelings of frustration and disappointment regarding the continual change within the system. Thus, every time a teacher makes progress, for example with a textbook, the administration changes it, and a teacher has to start all over again to prepare and get familiarized with a new textbook. She is questioning if there is a possibility to grow within a system that is not stable "*how will we grow?*". She believes that changing frequently hinders the teacher's professional growth and the need to adjust can lead to mental and

emotional frustration: "*I'm getting sick because of all of these frustrations.*" Unable to cope with the system, she made the decision to resign her position and request a transfer to a different department, she made the "*hard decision of quitting.*" Mona faced challenges to adapt to the instructional system, which resulted in emotional transformation that decreased her motivation. It appears that such a decision was quite hard for Mona as she had been teaching at the ELI for a long time and gained her teaching experience there

During the time Mona was teaching at the business administration department, she stated that it was the best period of her teaching experience:

> *When I went to the administration department, that was like, amazing, because, again, I was responsible for the exams for the level, I was given trust and freedom from the department administration. That just showed me how much I can give, you know, on the level of, designing my curriculum and testing my students and being creative with the curriculum. It just helped me grow. Yeah, not just the results in their tests, the results in our relationships with them. You know, I had one of those students from the law department. She became a lawyer. She developed an initiative that she called "Mona's Law Initiative" (pseudonym name); you can find it online. So, see how much they do when you can touch a student. I was very lucky at the time. (M.INT.4)*

Mona expresses a sense of relief and satisfaction during her experience in teaching at the business department. She emphasizes the significance of having trust and freedom from the administration, which was an "*amazing*" experience. It allowed her to create her own curriculum and test her students' progress and develop as an instructor. The positive outcome she witnessed from her students goes beyond test scores to creating relationships with students. She provides an example of one of her law students, who used her name to create a project called "*the Mona law initiative*", an online initiative on Twitter to educate society about basic law principles. This is a powerful example of how teachers can inspire their students and make a difference in society. Such success and achievements bring joy and motivation to Mona, who as a teacher has had a positive impact on students' academic journey and life "*I was very lucky at the time.*" Her success stories about student achievements through the Mona's Law Initiative demonstrate her significant influence on learners which extends beyond language education to personal progression and wider societal development.

After that, Mona had to swiftly adjust to online teaching when, as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak in 2019, the administration informed the instructors to teach through the Blackboard virtual learning environment and sent them instructions on how to use it for online classes. This was a sudden change and the instructors, and the students were unfamiliar with the situation: "*The students were frightened. We were frightened. We had no idea what comes next. It was stressful, emotional during that period.*"

Mona experienced initial tension and confusion due to lack of familiarity with the online learning environment. In the subsequent module, the situation eased as instructors and students grew more familiar with the online learning environment. They started to understand the protocols and were able to attend properly and the students participated in online sessions: "*the next module, things were smooth as we understood the system, the protocol and everything. Students were attending, they were excited to have online sessions*." Mona mentioned some of the advantages of online classes: "*you're more relaxed you're at home, giving your session, it's recorded for them. They can come back at any time just to revise the whole thing*". These advantages offer convenience and adaptability for both educators and learners. One thing that frustrated Mona was that the coordinator used to enter the class session to check if the instructor was giving the class or not. Mona seemed to perceive this monitoring as invasive and superfluous, leading to feelings of irritation. However, after one year of online teaching Mona's perspective changed. Mona first felt joy upon meeting the students in person following the online sessions and now found long-term online teaching to be both irritating and tedious:

> *Well, it was exciting. It was meeting students after about one year and a half of online classes, and it was exciting… I mean, long term online teaching, it's bothering and it's boring. I like it for the short term. It's good, but I think there should be a mix between the two methods online and in class or on campus… for the art students it's good for them to have online classes for two days a week. And then the rest of the week they can come to the campus, they can experience attending the campus, sitting in the chairs facing the teachers. (M.INT.4*)

Mona has a predilection for a mixed methodology, which entails integrating both online and in-person instruction to foster a more captivating and diverse educational experience. To sum up, in her last years of regular face-to-face teaching, Mona encountered difficulties when

shifting from a semester to a modular system and then to online instruction, and annoyance linked to online classrooms. She also developed an evolving viewpoint that teachers should have autonomy and class ownership. Mona eventually decided after long years of module system and extensive teaching experience to escape this confusing and tiring instructional system and to study a PhD. "*And last year, I made the decision. It's either I'm going to have early retirement, or maybe just leave my job, or go for a PhD and thank God the university gave me the permission to study for a PhD*". Her choice to obtain a PhD indicates a dedication to her enhancing professional skills and advancing in her field.

Mona's decision to move departments and her eventual pursuit of a PhD illustrate her reflexivity and emotional frustration in a demotivating context, underscoring the importance of a dynamic person-environment interaction over time. Overall, Mona's narrative shows how external changes and internal processes shaped her teacher identity and led her to evolve in terms of her beliefs, emotion and search for meaningful autonomy within the context of her work. In contrast, in the following case, Sara found her motivation to teach through professional and career development.

4.1.2 Sara.

Sara's Narrative Analysis: Initial Teaching Experience

Initially, Sara was not so keen on teaching as a career choice. Her dream job was to work within foreign affairs and become an ambassador for her country. In the past, socio-political and sociocultural challenges limited women's career opportunities in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, she perceived teaching not only as her first career choice but also – and more importantly – as a viable and socially acceptable profession:

> *I wanted to be an ambassador. Yeah, and join the political science department. But then, at that time, it was before the women empowerment policies were put in place. We, as women, we didn't have a lot of opportunities. Either it's teaching or joining the medical career. And I hated the idea of the medical pathway. I hated science, all science, but I love languages. I love English. I really love English. So, I used to read a lot in English. So, it was the only and the best opportunity for women at that time to join the profession, especially those who majored in arts. So, it was the best thing to do, to major in English and become a translator or, or a language teacher. (S.INT.1)*

She stated twice that she "*loves English*" language and loves reading a lot in English. Therefore, she found herself considering a teaching job as a viable option, particularly teaching English language. She found that it was joyful to assist individuals in learning a language. Sara characterised her initial teaching as being motivated by a mix of emotions, love for the English language and a strong ambition to make a positive impact on the development of students:

> *I loved the idea of helping students or helping people to learn something. And I was good at it. I was good at explaining grammatical rules. And I was good in delivering meaning and delivering information. So, I thought that I have the skills. And from that time on, I loved it. (S.INT.1)*

She also noticed that she was capable of delivering and explaining grammatical structures in an easy and enjoyable way. This realization sparked a genuine interest in education and motivated Sara to further develop her teaching strategies. Her passion for teaching English language led her outside the university where she taught her cousin the reading skills that were needed to pass the TOEFL exam:

> *I remember I taught my cousin to pass the TOEFL exam and develop his reading skills. And I saw him developing. So that thing excited me like okay, helping somebody or delivering a strategy or teaching somebody a strategy. And I saw it in my students, also, some of my students. So that excites me and that keeps me coming to teach. (S.INT.1)*

Sara was so excited when her cousin passed his exam, and this gave her a huge push to adopt teaching English language as her career. She realized that she enjoyed helping people to develop and this sparked her interest in educating students and in enhancing her teaching skills further and she said, "*I saw him developing*".

Sara's impulse to teach originates from her satisfaction in making a huge impact on her students' lives. She was motivated when experiencing her students' joy in learning new concepts and in her ability to deliver the lessons in effective ways so that her students were engaged throughout the delivery of the lesson. She also had the desire to contribute to the language and educational development of her students and this become a source of motivation to teach and this "*keeps me coming to teach.*"

After finishing her bachelor's degree, Sara took her first step towards her teaching path when she was appointed as a teaching assistant at the University's English Language Centre. During the first two years of her teaching, she was not confident and was uncertain of her teaching skills:

> *At first, I wasn't very confident about teaching in general, and especially that I didn't get any training, in teaching, and I relied on advice from experiences of other teachers. So, for example, a senior teacher told me that don't do this to students and be punctual about timings. And I mean, I heard bits and pieces of advice. And I tried to apply them in classroom. And that wasn't like a good strategy to teach. Because it mostly depends on personalities. For example, if a teacher is punctual and strict, so she gives you her point of view or her own experience about teaching, but I may not relate to such a piece of advice, and it might not suit my character either. So, in doing that, I would lose some of my teaching personality. So, I was like, okay, the words that could describe me are 'shilly shally'. It means like okay, being in between. (S.INT.2)*

As a new teacher, Sara had doubts about her teaching skills and because of the lack of teacher training, she relied on shared experiences and advice from other teachers "pieces of advice". After applying other teachers' advice in the classroom, she realized that such advice did not represent her teaching personality and that it was difficult for her to relate it to her classroom as "*it might not suit my character either*". She was aware that teaching methods can vary depending on individual personalities and teaching styles which allowed her to grasp the uniqueness of the skills that a teacher should have. She recognized that by adhering to the advice that other teachers gave, may not reflect her own character as a teacher and this could lead her to lose some of her personal teaching qualities and authenticity "*I would lose some of my teaching personali*ty". Having this in mind, she then decided to balance any valuable teaching advice she took from other teachers with her own teaching style. She felt confused, however, and was not sure if this strategy could represent her identity as a teacher. She used the word "shilly shally" which describes her uncertainty. However, Sara faced a fundamental conflict between her personality and emerging teacher identity and the guidance she received from teachers and peers who had different personalities and used teaching methods that did not represent her teaching identity.

Middle Teaching Experience:

Sara noted that the English Language Institute (ELI) changed from a semester system to a modular system. This change impacted both the administration and the instructors:

> *When the ELI shifted to the modular system, they forced the module on us and, as teachers, we didn't have any voice, and they just shut us down when we started to question the shift. And when we started to question the textbooks, and I mean, imagine being confused, like now I'm confused, but I don't have answers. And I don't find any support from the administration. That was really, really, really bad. (S.INT.2)*

Sara stated that the implementation of the modular system took place very quickly and without the involvement of the teachers themselves, as Sara says, "*they forced the module on us*." As a result, frustration built up within Sara, who felt left out of important academic decisions. The unprecedented transition to a modular system caught Sara unaware, and due to a lack of training, she had to seek regular assistance from the management. In addition, the lack of assistance during the transition process increased stress for Sara as she said, "*imagine being confused*." She then compared her present and past experiences. In contrast to Mona, Sara pointed out that the current administration is more responsive to the teachers' questions and more supportive. She reports that it is easier for her to adapt to the change because the current administration is more willing to help and find solutions. The change in the administration's approach has made it easier for Sara to adapt to the change. She states that "*for example, now I'm confused, but the administration is supportive and, and when I ask questions, people give me answers. So, it is just like okay, it makes it easier for me to adapt*".

As results of the conflicts between the administration and the teachers, after switching to the modular system, Sara pointed out that students may also experience challenges in connection with comprehending and adjusting to the changes due to the new system.

> *A lot of students repeated the course itself. And for example, I enter the class and I find five, six students who are repeating the course. And when they ask me about the exams, I don't have an answer about the exam. For example, I don't know what will come in the exam, but at least they give you a sample. And I know that it's about skills. So, when they ask me about the exam, I know what to tell them. And I know how to tackle the exam, but at that time, like, okay, imagine all these questions from*

everywhere. And you as a teacher are like, okay, just 'at sea', literally, being in the centre of a sea of loss. (S.INT.2)

When students asked questions, Sara became frustrated because she could not provide clear answers which then caused confusion amongst the students and made it harder to respond to their exam-related queries. She then compared the past with the present situation, where there were sample questions which helped her to advise students on how to handle the examinations and what to expect. Students had many questions because of the unclear exam content and general uncertainty brought on by the change. Sara recounts feeling overpowered by the incessant barrage of inquiries and unsure how to offer direction during teaching which resulted in "*lot of students repeated the cours*e" and describes the confusion and powerlessness that teachers felt throughout the shift. Sara employs the metaphor of being in the centre of a "*sea of loss*". A sense of being lost as an instructor and unable to provide students with the essential direction was exacerbated by unclear information, uncertainty regarding tests, and persistent queries. The metaphor Sarah uses to describe the situation when students ask questions indicates an emotional frustration as a result of institutional lack of transparency and rigid structures. The speaker recounts how they instructed students who had retaken the course multiple times yet failed:

Once I taught three-time repeaters. Oh, that was really frustrating for me, because three-time repeaters usually they are demotivated like okay, the most demotivated students I've ever met. And they just have this idea that we can't do it and we will not pass, and we just want to have a 60 or a D or whatever. And they're not interested in learning the language mostly and whatever, whatever I do, they are still demotivated, and it keeps me demotivated as well. Those classes, I started to be passive, just like okay, teach the content and go home. And that really keeps me demotivated They are passive and impassive as well. (S.INT.2)

Sara feels that instructing three-time repeaters is a source of dissatisfaction. She stated that these learners lack motivation and believe they will fail the course. Given their lack of optimism in studying the language, the interviewee finds it hard to encourage and engage these students. She then connects her feeling of being demotivated to the learner's lack of interest and drive for language acquisition as she says, "it keeps me demotivated," since they do not respond to her efforts with active involvement. She suggested her teaching style was

impacted by teaching students who are repeating the class. Due Sara's emotional dissatisfaction with these sessions led her to adopt a passive teaching style. Specifically, she said, "'I started to be passive", and she began teaching only from the textbook and finishing assignments without interacting with her students. Furthermore, Sara's students were consistently disengaged and unmotivated, which led to a change in her teaching approach and an emotional shift, as a result, a decrease in her motivation. This situation demonstrates the powerful influence of teacher-student relationships on educators' motivation levels.

Additionally, changes to the institutional structure and the new modular system led to fewer professional development opportunities. The unexpected introduction of standardized curricula and assessments diminished Sara's sense of control, which became the main factor impacting her intrinsic motivation. Sara's reflexivity highlighted how external institutional influences served as destabilizing factors that shifted her motivational trajectory. Another reason for Sara's demotivation is heightened stress and conflict. Sara's previous role as a coordinator gave her access to the Dean and the university administration where she was able to talk about several conflicts and issues with the administration of the department throughout the transition to the modular system.

> *What makes it worse for me is that I, I faced a lot of clashes with the administration, a lot of troubles, especially because I was a coordinator before that. And I had access to the administration, and I have access to the dean. And in just one year, I moved from the loved one to the hated one. And that made it worse, worse for me and after that, I took the decision to just focus on teacher development, and I didn't focus on teaching because I wasn't happy with the module system. And when I took the teacher development courses, I decided to focus on my teaching skills. And another part of me will just focus on pursuing my PhD. (S.INT.2)*

Sara stressed that implementing the module system demotivated the other teachers and she saw herself as being moved from being an important member of the educational structure to someone who is not valued. According to Sara, the new module system limited opportunities for decision making for teachers and thus strained the relationship with her colleagues and management. This is because Sara's previous role as a coordinator gave her unlimited access to the Dean's office and the administration to discuss the problems teachers faced. The challenges and conflicts during the transition period further exacerbated the tension between

Sara, co-workers, and management. It was a challenging period for Sara, and she felt that teaching was becoming intolerable, and she said, "*that makes it worse for me"* and she had to rethink her situation. She had to work out a means for gaining instructional skills that would aid her in achieving professional status in the education field. Sara's process of reflexivity proves to be key to her professional learning and growth. Eventually, her decision to work further and prepare herself to study her PhD showed her willingness and dedication to upskill and engage in more significant opportunities for further development as a scholar in the field. It could also move her away from the challenges that the module shift had generated.

In order to deal with instructional challenges, Sara talks about her encounters with a strict curriculum and her desire to seek more training:

> *Even though the context was very strict, and I didn't have until now a problem with that. I really don't have a problem with, with having a strict curriculum. I can't find the word to describe such a curriculum, but I don't, I don't have any issue with that. My issue was that I hadn't received any training, that was my issue. And I solved that issue by myself when I when I took the course. I think I spent only three years and after that I got some training from Cambridge, CELTA and DELTA, and that really empowered me and made me discover my teaching. (S.INT.3)*

Although Sara is aware that the modular work setting of the system runs alongside the curriculum and the syllabus, she stresses that her problem is not curriculum related. However, the issue as Sara highlights it is the lack of crucial professional development to aid in developing her teaching methodology. The British Council 'CELTA and DELTA' training that she took helped her to recognize the importance of a methodology to teach language skills and to improve her language teaching more generally. "*All these teacher development courses, just to keep myself happy and to keep myself motivated in my career…through research and through these courses, I've I found my way in teaching". (S INT 3)*. Sara decided not to passively accept her institution's limitations. She sought to shape her personality, develop her teacher identity and create her own teaching methods by focusing on professional development courses and certifications. She tried to realign her professional goals with her values of professional growth and competence to overcome systemic challenges.

The courses had successfully given her enough knowledge and skills for her to keep her motivation and drive in teaching; these skills and knowledge enhanced her knowledge and skills and were the reason for her motivation and enthusiasm in her career as an English teacher. She feels more confident and content in her profession as an educator. She said that she was dissatisfied with the conventional way of education where learning focuses on testing and memorizing:

> *So as an institution, they just want the students to pass exams and gain skills. And if we look at the exams, the exams don't test knowledge, the exams measure skills. So, if you take an exam, you will find 20 marks for reading, 20 marks for listening and only 5 marks for grammar and vocabulary. So, and this tells you that, okay, the exams measure skills, so it doesn't matter, it doesn't measure, it doesn't measure content, it doesn't measure grammar, and it doesn't measure vocabulary. And from that, I just decided that I will only teach skills, and I became happy as a teacher, and happy and confident with my performance after I teach skills. (S.INT.3)*

Sara embraced a change in her teaching philosophy and instructional approach due to her dissatisfaction with the system and lack of acknowledgment. However, training has encouraged her to modify her teaching practice and focus on new pedagogical approaches that emphasize developing students' language skills instead of focusing on curriculum content in the pacing guide, "*I decided that I will only teach skills*". Sara figured out what she needs to teach for her students to pass the exam and started focusing on teaching language skills. Her academic and professional experiences, which gave her the essential direction and comprehension of the significance of skills-based education, influenced this change and enabled her to characterize her teaching style which resulted in emotional satisfaction and motivation, "*I became happy as a teacher*". Sara concluded that exams at the institution assess skills rather than content knowledge. She started to be become more experienced and created effective exam preparation techniques by closely examining the exam samples, learning objectives, and pacing guide. This made it possible for her to clearly comprehend the exam structure, type of questions, and areas to concentrate on:

> *I know what's coming in the exam I do know, I do know the types of questions and I do know, for example that What skills do I have to focus on? For example, I know that the most marks go to listening and reading skills, so I teach students reading and listening*

skills. So that's why I'm telling you, I don't follow the book, I do my own way to maneuver the system. I teach skills rather than teach the book, the book is only for me, it's just a content or a sample, or you can call it a worksheet. So, this is how I treat the book. (S.INT.3)

Sara acknowledges the need for practical learning and a skills-based approach to language acquisition in which learners can learn to utilize the language successfully in real-life circumstances and have a fulfilling educational experience. She may use the book as "*a sample*" or resource to help teaching instead of following it word for word or she can use it as a reference point or as a compilation of resources to customize and add to her lesson plans. She adjusts her teaching strategies to match the unique requirements of students, by "*maneuvering the system*" and by going beyond the book and pacing guide to customize teaching strategies that emphasize skills above content. Using this method helps English language learners be prepared for assessment and to master everyday language acquisition. This method satisfies Sara's professional needs as an EFL teacher and is consistent with her view that language acquisition is the primary goal. Observing her learner's language proficiency development proves that her teaching approach is working effectively:

I mean, my teaching aim is only I teach skills, I don't teach exams. In the past, I used to teach exams, like, okay, this will come in the exam, and this will not come in the exam. But when I started to teach skills, I felt my students are really good. And I'm happy with my own teaching that I'm teaching language. I'm not teaching the syllabus or I'm not teaching a book. And that keeps me happy, to be honest. Yeah, like I get satisfied with my own teaching. And my students do well in the exams because they know how to write, how to read, and how to listen. (S.INT.3)

Her mid-career years thus show very clearly how motivation gets dynamically reconstructed because of professional development and teachers' professional identity formation. Sara finds motivation in developing herself as an educator and being satisfied with her teaching techniques. Her method of teaching involves dedicating time to teach each language skill. She offers students a solid basis in listening comprehension by setting aside time to teach linguistic abilities like listening for essential concepts and paying attention to details:

I remember the first three hours of the first lecture where I taught listening skills, I just play the recording, and tell the students Okay, before you listen, read the questions. And when you read the questions underline key words after underlining keywords now what you think the listening will be about. The following week, I taught students how to listen for details. I tell students now read the question and tell me what are the questions that are specifically or aim for listening for main ideas? And what are the questions that aim for listening for details. Because of that, my students don't get bored. They are seeing that they are learning new skills. I told my students if you master those skills, no matter what recordings or whatever listening questions you have in your exam, you have the key. (S.INT.3)

Sara prioritized teaching specific language skills and productive learning over speeding through the subject sections and following the textbooks, which required her to teach grammar and vocabulary. Students will grasp the methods and approaches involved in deep listening "*to master the listening*", if these abilities are broken down, and clear guidance on how to teach them is given. She actively includes students in the listening process instead of just playing a listening tape and assigning homework. Sara shares an example of how she approaches language learning. She breaks down the learning process and ensures students understand and reach her expectations. Sara also uses pre-listening activities to enhance understanding and retention. These approaches have created an engaging environment for students who view language learning as an interactive session with the teacher "*students don't get bored*". The approach has aided the students to be more prepared to develop language skills and pass exams. These results made Sara more satisfied and motivated. Furthermore, the development of her teacher identity allowed her to use her agency to effectively manoeuvre through the curriculum requirements. She gained confidence and expertise in evaluating the educational system and the curriculum, which enabled her to intentionally modify her teaching methods to enhance student achievement.

Recent Years of Teaching:

More recently, Sara has been teaching a higher-level English course called "103". This course does not involve teaching basic listening and reading skills but comprises teaching academic skills and students are introduced to essay writing concepts. Students begin learning about academic writing genres such as cause-and-effect essays, to develop higher-level language and academic abilities among the students:

This semester, because I'm teaching 103. And in 103, these skills are not only like listening and reading, but it's also more academic. And it's very hard for me, and I'm busy, I'm facing a lot of problems. It takes me a lot of energy to teach the students' academic skills in such a short time... And this is the first time I am teaching 103. For example, I have to teach students how to write a cause-and-effect essay. And still, I need to teach them what is an essay. So Academic Skills takes a lot of my time. But before, working on the module system, it wasn't academic, so it was easier for me to give students the skills like okay, it's just reading for detail. That's only, but now it's reading for detail, making sentences, writing a summary. So, it's the skills are more and I'm not sure if now I can say that okay, there is no time or not, because I'm still at the beginning of the semester. It's just my second week. And I feel like, okay, I'm a bit stressed. And this affects my students because they see me like okay, grumbling all the time. I'm trying to deal with skills. So, I feel like there is a distance developing between me and my students, because most of the time I'm busy with skills and how to deliver them. I don't really know their reaction, maybe because it's only the second week. (S.INT.3)

Sara expressed that she faced challenges and concerns while teaching academic skills as they are very demanding and difficult. This is due to many problems that she encountered including, limited time and the time needed for preparing and delivering of the lessons. Sara maintained that she had done well with her students when she focused on teaching basic reading and writing skills. Nevertheless, transition to academic skills during the current course, requires her to teach a broader range of skills such as writing sentences, summarizing texts and reading for various purposes. Such a transition in the classroom context has led her to feel overwhelmed with the increase in the workload and the additional demands on her as she says, "*it takes me a lot of energy to teach*". Sara understood the fact that there is not enough time to cover the required materials during the term. This sort of constraint has put more pressure and stress on her. She affirmed that being in the early stages of the semester makes her feel stressed out, and that she struggles to manage the workload. Being stressed out affects her interaction with students and could potentially create a perceived distance between her and her students.

Sara mentioned that although they had started the second week of the semester, there had not been enough time to gauge the students' engagement and their reactions. This is because she, like other teachers, is so busy in preparing her lessons that this could impact her ability to fully connect with their students and recognize their responses, "*there is a distance between me and my students. I can't get their reaction*". Sara acknowledges the fact that there are many challenges that teachers face; however, she confirms that teaching academic skills assisted her in developing her professional skills. Indeed, it was not easy to teach this type of programme for her, but she managed to do it, and she acquired new knowledge, developed her teaching strategies, and expanded her expertise in this specific area of instruction:

> *The duration of the semester makes my teaching and my academic life a bit difficult. Every semester I have to shift. I believe this is something that teachers need to cope with. Changing students, curriculum and changing from modules to modules could give the teacher a better teaching experience. But maybe for me, because this is the first time it takes me a bit more time than other teachers who have taught the same curriculum last year, for example, maybe next year, I wouldn't be that much tired. (S.*INT.4)

Sara knew that the changes in curriculum and students drove some teachers to adapt new teaching techniques in the classroom. Therefore, they were able to attain various teaching experiences due to such changes "*a better teaching experience*". Initially, such changes in the curriculum and students could be frustrating; however, they can eventually contribute to professional growth and a profound understanding of diverse teaching methods.

Sara recognized that teachers who have been teaching the same curriculum for a longer period of time could have a greater advantage in relation to familiarity and efficiency than those who taught it for a shorter time or had a break; "*it takes me a bit more time than other teachers*". Nevertheless, Sara is enthusiastic and realizes that the more she teaches the more efficient and comfortable in adapting new higher-level curriculum she will be. Sara acknowledges that the nature of the teaching profession is challenging, and teachers encounter numerous challenges each semester. Embracing these challenges and recognizing them as part of the teaching journey, will enable teachers continue developing their skills and progress effectively. Although Sara expressed her frustration and tiredness, she still has confidence in her ability to navigate through future challenges and reach a solid ground: "*next*

year I wouldn't be that much tired". This sort of determination shows a willingness and mind-set to learn from every teaching day in order to boost her teaching capability.

Furthermore, after the module had finished, Sara used an anonymous survey to get input from her students, out of curiosity and hoping to identify her strengths and weaknesses. Nonetheless, when she received their answers, she found they were delighted with her instruction. Despite this favourable feedback, she felt disconnected from the students, maybe because she was too busy teaching and developing academic abilities simultaneously:

> *When the students took the writing exam, I was surprised by their grades, I mean, they really had high marks. And at the end of the semester, I gave them a survey about my teaching. I was a bit hesitant of giving them the survey. I think, because I was scared of their feedback. But when they replied to the survey, they were happy with my teaching. But it's like, because it was my first time. And I couldn't umm. I mean, I was so busy during the semester of like, teaching the academic skills and, and learning about teaching the academic skills. I think that's why I didn't feel any connection between me and my students. But They were happy. I mean, they were happy of the teaching. So it was from my side, I guess. And this semester, I'm also teaching 103 so I feel okay, this semester, I would be more confident maybe. Yeah, so that was the conflict. It was like, okay, I am seeing something like, okay. And the students on the other hand, are seeing another thing I mean, another side of the of picture. (S.INT.4)*

Sara found teaching academic skills to be a difficult and exhausting experience in the beginning, and she was not happy with her teaching. On the other hand, the excellent scores that her learners received on their writing assessments pleased her "*I was surprised by their grades*." Students' excellent writing test scores indicated how successful and efficient her teaching methods were. These results showed that she can teach students the fundamental skills and knowledge and this helped her recognize that students' success reflects the ability of the instructor.

As a teacher, knowing that your students could indicate in the survey that they were not satisfied with how you teach was worrisome for Sara who was "*scared of their feedback*". However, their positive evaluation results were beneficial for Sara and improved her teaching style and she gain confidence: "*I would be more confident*". Despite her students' positive

feedback about instruction, she did not feel she had a close connection with them because she was in the learning process of how to teach academic skills to students. This indicates that Sara finds teacher motivation mainly when she develops her teaching strategies and her teaching skills in her profession. Sara's narrative shows that a teacher's professional motivation is not static or determined by the individual solely. Instead, it is a relational construct influenced by institutional structure factors, relationships and interactions with peers, personalities and beliefs, which all change over time. Another participant, Rana, found her motivation to teach by observing her students' language learning development.

4.1.3 Rana.

Interview Transcript analysis: Initial Years of Teaching

Like Sara, the sociocultural norms in Saudi Arabia which restricted career opportunities for women formed the external basis for Rana's initial decision to teach. Her English language academic achievements along with her professional experience became essential in her decision to pursue a career as an EFL educator. She decided to pursue a career in teaching because it was one of a very few options for females in Saudi Arabia, as society did not approve of females working with the opposite gender in the past. She added that getting a teaching job at the institute was aided by her practical experience from her Bachelor's program, as the institute hired her after recognizing her abilities as an educator when she started work as a part-timer. Initially, she felt alienated because her study background was in English Literature rather than English language teaching:

> *The thing is that it was very strange to me because I'm a literature major and it's not language teaching. But then for me, it was really different… I mean, I enjoyed teaching the students and they were really good, excellent students we had. I use these ideas that I had in drama, for instance, like we had some roleplay and these things. And they really enjoyed that. (R.INT.1)*

Despite having a degree in literature, Rana used new teaching strategies to make learning exciting and fun for students and adjusted to the circumstances, such as role-playing, and that made her realize her teaching abilities. Inspiration drawn from the teaching strategy made students excited to learn, which increased Rana's confidence in her teaching ability: "*The students were wonderful. We talk about a different generation. The students were so*

enthusiastic for learning. There was no absenteeism. They really wanted to learn the language." (R.INT.1)

Students' passion for learning English through questions about reading and developing their language skills inspired and motivated Rana to teach and contribute more to teaching English. Asking questions and creating conversation in the classroom can play an essential role that encourages and promotes the learning process. In addition, she mentioned that teachers were highly motivated by administrative attitudes at that time:

> *The work environment at the language centre was relaxing but it changed later… For example, they gave me the authority to keep the exam papers a day before exam. They trust you as a teacher. You had marks in your hand. Now, there is nothing of the previous powers. I don't want to keep the exam papers as it is not a problem for me. But I don't have scores. Even the writing, you don't correct it for your students. You just teach students but don't correct their papers. They don't trust your judgment on your students, so they make other teachers correct your writing. (R.INT.1)*

According to Rana, the previous learning system created a "*relaxing*" environment and showed trust in the teachers. As an instructor, she had more control over the learning material and examinations and always looked forward to evaluating students through tests. However, she was upset about the current setup since it prevented them from accessing exam papers or being able to grade their pupils' writing. According to Rana, implementing the module system with its changes showed a lack of trust in instructors' "*judgment*" in grading and impeded providing constructive feedback to students' work, as they unable to view their pupils' exam papers or respond to inquiries regarding their performance. The administration failed to engage instructors in the implementation of the module system, thus causing frustration and job dissatisfaction.

In addition, Rana reflects on her motivation to teach, which stems from the student's willingness to learn. According to her, teachers create an effective learning process through the utilization different teaching approaches and meeting the needs of the students:

> *The motivated students are those who have the desire to learn. You feel that the curriculum goes smoothly and time elapses fast. There is interaction between the two*

parties. You feel refreshing all the time. For other students who do not interact with you, you feel that they are demotivated and don't like the course; they even hate it. They just want to pass. They don't have questions to ask. When you ask them, you know that they did not understand. At the same time, they want the lecture to end fast because they don't like the course. There is a small number of students who become motivated and respond to you when you use the native language. I noticed this much with the low-level students. (R.INT.2)

Rana highlights the significance of learner motivation in boosting teacher motivation. Students who genuinely want to learn are usually motivated; and because of their excitement, the classroom has a pleasant vibe, the curriculum moves smoothly, time passes quickly, and there is lively student-teacher interaction in class which is "*refreshing all the time*". She lists several signs of unmotivated pupils, such as not asking questions, and notes that this might make them refrain from engaging with the instructor. They might also show signs of wanting the lecture to conclude fast, and exhibit poor understanding of the lesson.

According to the participant, students who lack motivation frequently need help with understanding the subject matter. They need guidance to comprehend the material even when the teacher speaks in their native tongue (Arabic). Some students—especially those with lower competency levels in English— start to participate more and become more motivated. Caring that students benefit from the class, Rana changed her teaching techniques to match students' needs. Rana provided insight into how student motivation affects her motivation and the learning process.

However, Rana questions the difficulties of continuously instructing the same class of students for four hours. She points out that increasing workload can overload teachers' and learners' brains, it takes more work to continue to offer high engagement and add value for four hours:

We used to teach two hours and two skills like listening and speaking and for two hours students go to different class with different teacher to learn reading and writing, for example, even the students enjoy change. But when the teacher stays four hours, you feel that what can you give more after 4 hours. The load would be so high, and their brains would hang up. However, when another teacher comes with a different style and skills, that will be refreshing for them. (R.INT.2)

Rana compares the past and future to underline the benefits of having diverse teachers with distinct methods of instruction. The educational atmosphere is refreshed when a new instructor adopts novel teaching methods and makes the classroom more enjoyable for both teacher and students. This diversity can offer fresh viewpoints and ideas and foster student involvement. Rana mainly thinks of what is best for students and how to develop their learning:

> *After that we taught the science students, we had a late evening schedule. We did not get monthly salaries, but we were paid according to hours... However, it did not affect my teaching to the students. I want them to learn the language. In teaching you seek your student's satisfaction in the first place. (R.INT.2)*

Rana showed dedication to ensuring that students acquire the language efficiently, notwithstanding the payment arrangement. This commitment to the students' education implies that financial concerns did not affect the participant desire to give high-quality instruction and assist the learners in improving their language abilities. Rana described her students as her primary focus and the main source of her teaching motivation. During the early stage of her teaching career, trust and professional respect were the motivational factors that fulfilled Rana's psychological and emotional needs for autonomy and professional competence and directed her career and personal aspirations. Her initial motivation relied heavily on the trust she received from the administrators regarding managing exams and assessments. However, this situation changed when the module system stripped her of grading control, leading her to feel demotivated.

Middle Years of Teaching:

The language centre has been transformed into an English language institute. There was an organizational structure shift and a possible greater emphasis on official accreditation and academic standards:

> *The modules matter was somehow hectic. You had to finish a full book within eight weeks. You feel that you are running in a marathon to finish. When we had shared sections, some students told some teachers that certain topics were not explained by other teacher. But the teachers want to finish the curriculum. They did not care about students understanding. They just cared about finishing the curriculum. (R.INT.2)*

According to Rana, the need to conform to specific educational standards or rules may have been the leading cause of this pressure. She commented on how busy the module structure was, which might be stressful for educators. Students complained that some teachers had inconsistencies and incompleteness in material distribution. She thinks that rather than focusing on meaningful comprehension, the teachers may have prioritized covering the material in the textbook. Rana suggests that teachers' feelings of tension and the time limitations to finish the books made them feel as if they were "*running a marathon*". They finished the program beforehand but should have considered verifying if the pupils understood it. This shows Rana's concern about students learning experience:

> *The placement test orients every student in the right level. We have four levels. You are expecting students in level one to be weak but at the same time, this is their level. When you teach level 4, you feel that they are so advanced. You feel you are teaching advanced students. You feel more relaxed as you don't have to repeat everything once, twice, or three times because the student could understand you. When you have so weak students and review their background, you find that they had not the basics of English in the elementary school. If they don't pass the English course, they will have to leave the university. This is a huge pressure on students. (R.INT.3)*

According to Rana, teaching advanced students is more "*relaxing*". The higher language competency of the students further supports more in-depth explorations of the material used in class. This may include complex conversations, critical thinking, and advanced use of language in the classroom setting. However, she noted the difficulties in instructing students who have poor English proficiency. She sympathizes with them and blames their weakness to their foundational English in primary school. She draws attention to the heavy burden students bear "*huge pressure***"** as it will impede their ability to proceed with their university education if they fail the English course. She believes that instructors must counteract this pressure by creating a motivating atmosphere for students:

> *I have to do my job whether they like or don't like the class, they are motivated or demotivated, you have to give them the material. I add materials that help them with grammar or vocabulary. You finish everything and you cover the whole thing. I try to cover everything in the curriculum at the same time. I don't let this affect the students.*

I mean the teacher's ethics. She must be self-motivated because they are students, and the test depends on the explanation the teacher gives. (R.INT.3)

Despite the negative impacts of system, Rana carries on with her teaching duties and offers assistance to students when they need it. Even if her students lack interest and her own motivation levels differ, she still "*helps them***"** and gives them the instruments and resources necessary for academic success. She believes that teachers must meet the ethical standards of the teaching profession by being "*self-motivated***"** all the time. Therefore, she is willing to promote resources and opportunities to all learners. Rana is also passionate about her work and is focused on preparing the students for standardized testing. She feels a responsibility towards students as "*the test depends on the explanation the teacher gives.***"** This significantly impacts pupils' engagement and interest in the classroom. She urges students to care more about what they are learning by encouraging them to develop enthusiasm for the subject, and tries to provide a positive learning atmosphere that allows students to feel confident enough to pass the exam. She talked about student exam experience:

In the speaking, you used to test your student and give them the marks you see suitable according to the rubric. Now, when you test the students face to face, another colleague must be with you. Such colleague has a grade and gives a mark without showing you. When you finish the test, you compare your grades with hers. Well, you have to meet with her grades. for example, when I give a student 10 out of 12, she may give the same student 7. My grading depends on the fact that I know the student's speaking and participation in class she might be confused on the test day, but she was doing her best during the whole module. I know that this student can do well, but she is frightened of the test. However, my colleague does not know that. So, she gives marks based on the performance she sees. She may be right, and I may be wrong. I don't know. If my colleague gives 7 and I give 10, we change our grades to meet with a mark either eight or nine as I cannot give ten nor she gives seven. We have to change the grade whether she was convinced with my idea, or I am convinced by her idea. We have to meet in the middle. (R.INT.3)

Rana outlined an incident during a live face-to-face speaking examination where students' abilities may be evaluated under different circumstances. Rana and her colleagues must evaluate students other than their own during the speaking exam; her colleagues'

perspectives may differ from Rana's because she might see the situation from a different angle, such as from a professional perspective. Her colleague might have rated her students solely on what happens during the test itself. However, Rana might have also taken into consideration her students' speaking skills and how they perform in class over the whole course. She thinks exam anxiety has to be taken into account because she believes that it can affect how well a student might do on speaking tests. Caring abouts students' anxiety shows how much she sympathizes with her students "*After that, in the online speaking test, we have to record it. Such recording may be in favor of the colleague or me. I don't know or they don't trust us to give fair grades to the students." (R.INT.3)*

Rana is implying that the precautions related to exam integrity taken by the administration might be because of lack of trust in teachers' fairness or competence in grading students. It can become challenging when there is mistrust or a lack of confidence in the instructors' ability to assign grades fairly. Rana also provides an example of writing assessment:

> *They don't trust us to give fair grades to the students. Let's skip the speaking to the writing issue. Why do I teach my students writing with the basics I give, while another colleague grades the papers of my students, I may ignore certain mistakes. When a student complains about the grading, they call you as the class teacher and the teacher who graded the test. Why am I called? Because I grade students not of mine. I also do cross checking for my students, double work. As I told you, students' number has become large; 48 to 50 students. Why do I do this work? Why do I do the cross checking for my class? Why do you ask me to revise if you don't trust me from the beginning? As you don't trust me to correct my students, why do you ask me to cross check their papers? Just finish what you start. (R.INT.3)*

Rana's unhappiness and worries regarding the checking of students' papers and the marking procedure, closely relate to the weak sense of autonomy and the lack of trust that administrators show teachers. This frustration is caused by the fact that administrators do not trust her to evaluate her students' papers. She mentions how hard she found the checking procedure last semester. She commented that they have to rely on a second instructor to correct students' papers. Both, then, had to compare and talk about both classes grades by exchanging exam papers with the other instructor. They had to discuss and change the grades,

so this procedure took additional time and "double work" in the grading process; however, Rana believes that class teacher is the most suitable choice for grading students:

> *First semester, I couldn't correct my students' writing scripts, and it has been going on for a while now. You cannot correct or mark your own section, another teacher who is correcting the other section, and then you are switching the envelope with the one who corrected your envelope. And then you compare the grades and you're discussing the grades of your students and her students. But, last semester, Hamdulillah (thank God), they gave us our students' envelopes, we corrected the whole thing according to the criteria, of course, and the rubric they provided. And it was Hamdulillah much, much better. (R.INT.4)*

Rana argues that less proficient students, especially those enrolled in lower-level courses, should receive some help with their grades, particularly in writing. Even though everyone might not agree, she is convinced that raising these pupils' grades would be beneficial since they require more help. The lecturer stated that being accurate while correcting these students' exams will not help them in learning:

> *Students in level two or level one, we should take in consideration that they are weak students, so we have to help them a little bit with the grades. In my opinion, maybe it's not approved. But this is my opinion in that we need to help them in the writing at least. (R.INT.4)*

Rana conveys an incredible feeling of welfare, concern, and obligation to her students. She stresses that teaching is about caring about the success and well-being of the students, not merely giving them a lesson and grading and then walking away. As an advocate for her learners, the interviewee tries to persuade the administration that these specific students are not a good fit for the existing system:

> *English should be an optional subject for them, not a mandatory one that might affect their future. I mean, my students now, they are not going to pass I know they are not going to pass, and they are not going to receive any bachelor's degree. They will be rewarded a diploma degree instead. So, they are not going to, although they are good at other subjects, such as math, science, Arabic etc. They are good at them, but not at*

English. It is not their fault; it is because they have not learned the basic language skills at school. So, they cannot be blamed for that. (R.INT.4)

Rana feared that students who fail the English courses would have to settle for a diploma degree instead. She points out that her students excel in all their other classes such as science, arithmetic and Arabic suggesting that they are weak only in English, which does not mean that they are failures as students. In addition, she talked about the way she treats students as if they were her siblings and sees them as being like family. She genuinely cares about students and wants to see them succeed. Rana feels contented and happy when she sees her students advance and progress in their English: *"When I look at them, like my sisters I mean, I have sisters and daughters, I feel for them, and I just I want them to pass, I want to see some kind of progress in them, and it makes me happy. It makes me feel good, really*" because the success of her students is her source of motivation. Rana's initial identity as a caring and concerned teacher was central to her application of intrinsic strategies, such as offering emotional support to students. Overall, during her early and middle teaching years, she was moved by a deep sense of empathetic connection to her students. She emphasized this sense of connection and tried to fulfil the psychological needs of a caring teacher, most notably a sense of relationality to her students.

Recent Years of Teaching:

Recently Rana stated that student's level and interest in learning English is decreasing. The learners need help connecting with the material. She mentioned that they were facing a "*mental block*" to learning English which may be due to students' lack of motivation. The instructor and the pupils face a serious issue because of this linguistic barrier:

The coordinator made the annual evaluation. The last evaluation for me that I had to speak in the native language because the students' level was too bad. They had something like mental block against English. They did not want to learn as if they were enforced to learn. They wanted to finish and leave. How do you do with students like them? They did not accept English. (R.INT.4)

Rana explains that she utilizes Arabic terms in her lessons to cut down on time and to aid students in understanding the content. Teaching only in English may be the best approach;

however, occasionally, utilizing Arabic might improve students' comprehension. The speaker puts the understanding of the pupils ahead of strict linguistic criteria:

> *To save time and facilitate the learning process, I had to speak Arabic words…when the observer official comes, I cannot pretend to speak in English only. No, my method is right. The observer asked me "Why do you speak in Arabic? You explain in English. When you re-explain in Arabic you miss your effort." I answered her "No, when I discussed with them after explaining using English, I found that they did not understand, although I discussed the subject in detail on slides and the board." It was grammar and the students did not comprehend. I am keen on their understanding even if I speak a few words in Arabic." (R.INT.4)*

The evaluator did not accept Rana's use of Arabic in class and wrote a note about it in the evaluation feedback. She did not have the same viewpoint and does not consider the students' comprehension and enjoyment reliable measures of good instruction, yet Rana used Arabic for students' comprehension of the lesson: "*After that, I told the evaluator that there are many studies that show that you can mix such as the codeswitching of language. But she said, "You talked too much Arabic." I justified that by the students' bad level "Below the level" they are repeaters. In addition, they don't like English and. They are forced to take the subject and do not come to the class by their free will."*

The evaluator sees things in the classroom completely different from the way Rana sees them. Therefore, Rana was frustrated and demotivated by the evaluation. However, she highlights how crucial students' development and comprehension during the lesson and the learning process is for her. She contended that positive responses and increased engagement result from students understanding the material and finding it simple; this is more important to Rana than the evaluation feedback:

> *I can give the material and cover the basics as required and leave without caring about students understand or not. But you want to convey the message. I want students understand and feel that the subject is easy. I want to see this reaction "oh! Ok! It is so easy, etc. " However, the observer did not like it although it was not all in Arabic. (R.INT.4)*

Rana argues that teaching English language course for repeating students requires a different strategy than teaching non-repeaters. She thinks that to address course repeater students' particular difficulties, teachers should be allowed to modify their approaches, such as by using Arabic. Code-switching between English and Arabic was a fundamental strategy that Rana adopted to facilitate her students' understanding of the lesson. Even though her institution had an English-only teaching policy, Rana prioritized her students' comprehension of each lesson. She was able to determine what her students understood and change her approach as needed based on this information. This approach signalled a change in her teacher identity; she was becoming more assertive about challenging institutional practices in response to her students' needs.

Rana was teaching repeating students who repeated the course for the third time during an academic year. This suggests that these students are repeating the curriculum due to previous struggles in completing their courses. Rana's repeated engagement with these students over several terms points out that she is dedicated and willing to foster their growth and development:

> *I mean Harram, It's over for them. Although I have students who are attending the classes. They are trying, I'm trying to motivate them. I'm trying to give them some hope. You know, I don't know the system might change, you might have a chance. Yeah, most of them say what's the point, we're not going to make it, we still have level two, we still have level three, and I tell them maybe there will be exception from this in this system. I think maybe it should be an optional course for them, not all the students can speak, or they can learn English, not all of them, especially the government students who come from the government schools. (R.INT.4)*

Rana demonstrated an understanding of the challenges that repeating students experience. Similar to Mona, Rana believed that students should receive no blame and expressed her feelings of pity using the Arabic term "haram". Her students' repeated struggles left Rana feeling depressed. Rana's sympathy showed that she understood her students' difficulties from cultural and religious viewpoints. She tried to give students who needed to repeat classes a sense of hope and motivation by suggesting that the system might transform or that certain exemptions could exist. Rana suggested that systemic issues could lead to repeating students.

She also believed that making English classes optional would help support weak learners by restructuring the educational system.

Rana revealed her emerging identity as a caring teacher through her frustration with protocols and her efforts to enact change through her own teaching strategies. She rejected the system's policies and explored new methods to enhance learning and make it meaningful for her students. Finally, as Rana's main source of motivation comes from students, of course, she prefers face-to face classes. She reflects on her time as a teacher during the COVID-19 pandemic and the switch to online learning.:

> *I like I like interacting with students I like sitting with them. I mean, I sit in the chair beside the students, but not at the front of the class. Like I sit beside them, I touch them we talk together. I mean, we're kind of close, you know, like I put my hand on the shoulder and back to say very good and something like this. They're like daughters to me. So, with this kind of barrier, which is the online thing was really hard at the beginning of COVID-19. And you just didn't know if they're with you actually, were just names on the screen. But we just got used to it. I think after a while you just get used to the situation. I mean, you make the best of it. (R.INT.4)*

Rana explains that when teaching students, face to face is her preferred mode of engagement. This reflects Rana's identity as a teacher who emphasises relatedness. Her preferred teaching style face-to-face enabled her to relate to her pupils on a more personal, interactive level, providing both academic and emotional guidance. She loved talking with students while seated next to them and in physical closeness so she could provide physical comfort by patting on student's back or shoulder. Maybe this intimacy and close relationship are made possible because Rana sees her students as her daughters. In this comparison, the connection and bonding "like daughters to me" is an innocent expression of mutuality, similar to the relationship with her daughters. When she moved to online classes she could not determine if students were paying attention or if they understood her explanations during lessons. Rana prefers face-to-face interaction over the virtual teaching methods which dominated during COVID-19.

Moreover, she has the capacity for flexibility and adaptability to the situation finding the bright side of things "you make the best of it". In general, Rana's empathy and irritation on

behalf of repeating pupils and their attempts can be seen as an inspiration and hope for better classroom teaching. Her deep concern for students' welfare which she views as her primary teaching drive leads her to become more passionate and committed to deliver excellent teaching performance. Rana's journey shows that a teacher's identity and motivation can evolve by integrating empathy into flexible and autonomous practices. It also demonstrates how motivation can change based on emotional frustration and institutional barriers. In addition, it shows how Rana's religious beliefs and values helped her assist her students in their learning. Rana's story contributes to an understanding of teacher motivation as a complex, context-sensitive construct, moral beliefs and relational aspects.

4.1.4 Maha.

Interview analysis: Initial Years of Teaching

According to Maha, the teaching profession mainly requires teachers to provide support and, in many cases, offer love to others. In this context, most educators are only satisfied once they share information and educate people. Maha's motivation for teaching in her first-year falls under the category of giving knowledge:

> *Because teaching is a profession that I love. I believe that teaching falls under the umbrella of giving, and I love to give. So, when I teach, I feel like I'm giving something to people who need it and who need to hear what I have to say and what I inform them about. So that's my primary motivation in teaching. And when I started teaching, I found that I enjoyed it and decided to continue, that's all...When I started teaching, I loved it. But now I can't say that anything excites me. (MH.INT.1)*

Maha's account suggests teachers' interactions with institutional and sociocultural contexts shape their professional identity, where she positions herself as a passionate educator who views teaching as "giving." She talked about working for a for-profit training facility where learners had to pay for their courses. The students were motivated in this environment since they had to develop particular skills to complete their studies and increase their chances of employment. Since the learner's desire to learn was reflected in their excitement for education, the instructor considered this situation fulfilling and motivating:

When I started teaching, I started working for a private training centre, which used to be a lot of fun, because it was private, so students had to pay for their studies. And it was a summer kind of program. So, people were 100% motivated to learn…It was like a qualification, something that they can be used to get a job. So, there was a lot of students who were motivated because they really needed the degree. So, because they were motivated, I felt motivated to teach and it was very rewarding. That's why I was enthusiastic about it. But now I can't say that anything excites me" (MH.INT.1)

Maha described how satisfying it was to be a teacher at the private learning facility. In this context, the learner's intense drive to attain a certificate and find a job made the classroom environment conducive to learning. In other words, the students' inspiration sparked Maha's passion and commitment to her work as an instructor "*I was enthusiastic*". Despite the initial motivation, Maha added that teaching excitement is no longer as much as it used to be "*But now I can't say that anything excites me*". Although many factors have brought about the disparities, the teacher believes that the earlier enthusiasm was correlated with the unique setting and ambition of the students in the classrooms.

After that, Maha got a job at the university's English Language Centre as a translator and then got promoted as an English language lecturer. At first, Maha noted that the instructor's teaching load was quite light. She mentioned that the teacher just taught a one-hour class to each group of students on daily basis:

Just one-hour period per day every day, but it was nice to teach the same a class, see the same students and be able to focus on the same class for one term. I mean I got to know the students well and didn't have to deal with a situation where the students keep changing. There was only one book to teach..., but at least we only had to teach them two levels of English in one full term. We didn't have placement tests. So, you would have a mixed-ability class. So, it was good for the teaching process. I remember, I mean, even when the books were not that good. We didn't mind because you had 16 weeks to finish and test the students. So, you felt like okay, I'm spending at least 12 weeks teaching them the book. So, it was getting you somewhere, you and the students…Honestly, this phase only lasted a year. (MH.INT.1)

Maha stated that teaching a single class helps the teacher encounter the same learners for the entire term. As a result, it was easier to understand students and powerfully connect with all of them. By focusing on the same students for a long period of time, this helped her to see students develop throughout the learning processes. She found it helpful not to keep dealing with new students over the term comparing the past with what happens currently. She noted that the classroom within that one term had "*variety in a class*" of students with varying levels of English proficiency. This language proficiency range gave her a present teaching experience where weak students learn from the stronger ones and help each other which according to Maha, can facilitate "*the teaching process*". Maha admitted that there were occasions when the book was not interesting to students. They had a reasonable period (16 weeks) to complete the curriculum and used extra materials to evaluate the students' advancement, and therefore, they were not bothered. In summary, Maha had a favourable initial teaching experience. This came from the system where students were taught the whole term. It allowed the teacher to know the students more closely than when they could only deal with new ones. Maha stated that this situation lasted for only one year and then the modular system started.

Middle Years of Teaching:

Maha's reflection on new experiences when implementing the new "module system" into the English Language Institute was not an easy thing for teachers as it surprised them. Teachers were forced to teach and complete the pacing guide quickly in this context. According to her, this gave the teachers little opportunity for in-depth study and introspection:

> *Teaching started with the module system, which came as a shock for me at first because it was as if I was covering the curriculum on the run and the students were desperately trying to catch up from the get-go and then came the finals. For me, as I have always said and still say that this is a key problem in teaching, because you are not given the opportunity to observe the context…for example, that certain students always needed some extra teaching effort on your part, you don't have the time even to make a power point presentation or to arrange an extracurricular activity. You did not have time, nor did the students have time. (MH.INT.2)*

According to Maha, most students found it challenging to align with the high speed at which the module system was conducted. This was evident immediately after the program was

launched in the institute and caused a "*shock*" to Maha. In other words, the teacher faced additional difficulties attempting to maintain the students' level of learning according to the syllabus and guidelines expectations. According to her, the speed and brief duration of the module system had an unfavourable impact on the overall quality of the learning environment. The teacher noted that creativity, individualized instruction, and extracurricular involvement were not given enough time. In this context, Maha could not interact with the students and establish the stimulating and engaging educational setting she expected and that resulted in demotivation for her:

> *With the modular system, we had several problems. They want us to teach the students of four levels. Now, ideally, a level requires 90 plus hours. So, when we said how are we going to finish 90 plus hours in one level? Like they said, I know you can because you will teach them three to four hours every day. Now, the thing is that it's scientifically proven that you cannot teach students more than two hours 15 minutes or 10-minute break. So, that was the objection that we can't teach them English more than two hours every day. That means 10 hours a week. And you're asking us to give them 20 hours a week or 18 hours a week. That's not fair. But nobody listened to us, and they just had a plan (MH.INT.2)*

Maha discussed various challenges teachers experience when using modular systems in the classroom. First, she noted that they had to teach the learners in four different levels of the modular system. However, she doubted whether it would be possible to finish more than 90 hours of instruction for every stage in the allotted time. Second, she emphasized that time constraints were an issue with the modular system. In this context, she noted that the ineffectiveness of teaching students for longer than two hours straight is supported by scientific evidence. The three and four hours of lessons each day required by this system left both the educators and learners exhausted. Third, the participant clarifies that sufficient instructional time is needed to instil a skill, like learning a new language. She added:

> *That means after the first two hours, you're too tired to teach and they're too tired to absorb anything. So, like 50% of the effort and time and everything is lost. So, the level goes down. And the thing is we're not teaching them science, we're teaching them a skill. So, when you're teaching a skill, it requires time to practice, and there is no time to practice. (MH.INT.2)*

Nevertheless, there was not enough time for real practice the language in class or integration using what they learn in class. Maha linked this challenge to the demanding timetable of the modular system.

This issue was raised as the teacher explained that her worries about the program were ignored. The idea of a teacher teaching all four levels in the new structure appeared inflexible and was made without taking into account the difficulties it caused to both teachers and students. In this context, a rigid schedule would adversely affect the instructional quality. Besides, it would impact the learner's capacity to grasp new information and ability to apply it. Maha also noted that no one acknowledged the teacher's concerns when implementation was being planned.

> *At the beginning, it surprised us, we asked ourselves, is it possible? If you were a schoolteacher, you would have more authority because you can evaluate your students in a proper and real way. But not here, they take only two exams with auto-correction, and it is being monitored. I mean, even if you have a hint for a student and you want to give it to her, you can't. They strip you of that authority. But because this feeling is old for me, I can't talk about it now. So, it happened, and we don't show it to people because we don't have the status of university professors, and we all know that. As long as you are not a university professor, you don't have this status or prestige that applies to this type of work like other colleges because when you enter, you find the test is already set, and you just test them, and you have marks distribution for each question, and you can't manipulate with it. At the end of the module, you find that some of your students fail, and you can't help them. (MH.INT.2)*

Although Maha enjoyed flexibility in private teaching in her early career, she was stripped of that authority when the modular system removed her control over assessment and curriculum pacing. This loss of power, along with administrative distrust, eroded Maha's authority, contributed to her demotivation and led to her burnout. This situation underscores the importance of autonomy in sustaining intrinsic motivation. In other words, a modular system limits the teacher's role in offering targeted support to the learners. This aspect ignores the fact that teachers are generally well-equipped and have developed many ways to assist students. She added that the modular system strips much of the teacher's authority in the

class which even schoolteachers have. For instance, educators cannot adjust the learning process according to their wishes. This tendency prevents them from giving individualized help, especially in what exams or requirements entail; not even "*a hint for a student*." As a result, teachers feel worried because they cannot assist students who fail in the exams. On top of this, the system worsened the existing position of university professors. For Maha, the inability to grade students or create exams meant the loss of her '*status or prestige*' as a university instructor and led to social embarrassment and, eventually, demotivation. This situation illustrates the conflict between Maha's need for feeling of belonging, status and the lack of autonomy she experienced in her teaching context interfered with her desire to form an emotional connection with her students.

However, her insistence on having some level of connection with her students reflected her strong intrinsic motivation to positively influence her students, even when there was no systemic support to facilitate this. She also linked this issue to administrative lack of trust in the teachers:

> *There is a lack of trust, but sometimes when I think about it in general, I conclude that we are more than 200 teachers. Even if I am trustworthy, they cannot give this trust to others because we are so many. Sometimes, I find excuses for them for what they are doing, but I would have liked the interaction to always be individual. You are a professor, and your teaching style is known, and they attended my lectures, knowing that I am an excellent professor in the classroom, so they should not treat me as a contracted teacher who they don't want to give the trust to. This is what made me sad. But reorganizing things is difficult. If you say, change the rules for my sake, this is nonsense. (MH.INT.3)*

Maha states that there was a widespread absence of faith in the system. She emphasizes that this can be attributed to the involvement of many teachers. In other words, despite their trustworthiness, Maha understands that the huge number of teachers "*200 teachers*" in the institute requires a control system as it may be difficult for the administration to have such widespread trust. Maha wishes to have more interactions with administration where each instructor is treated individually. For example, experienced teachers must be regarded differently from newly hired instructors who are unlikely to possess a trusted reputation. This is due to the fact that they could have gained trust because they are "*excellent professors*"

with a proven instructional method and record of accomplishment in teaching. As seen, Maha is disappointed "*it made me sad*" with the limited trust and lack of individual recognition of language teachers offered in the modular system. In other words, Maha fully knows that it might be unreasonable or impossible to seek modifications on an individual basis.

Regarding time constrains, Maha expressed her increased experience within the modular system. She stated that after teaching in the modular system, she started to have better knowledge of how to manage time. In this case, the teachers now are aware that several modules may need extended time for profound learning, however, at the same time, some can be accomplished quickly:

> *I became more experienced than I was at first, because I know for example that this level, or rather this module may need longer time to cover, while another module may be covered faster. So, it is all up to the experience factor, which enables you to teach better but not slower and you get to feel a little less nervous because you have had enough practice and got used to it. (MH.INT.4)*

Practice within the system has made Maha's teaching better with time. In this context, she developed newly gained skills to help her engage with the modules. This means that they are no longer the way they were at the beginning in terms of competencies. Since her knowledge has increased, she was no longer anxious about work. It is emphasized that she now has comprehensive familiarity with instructional content and this "*enables you to teach better*" since she enhanced her teaching techniques to teach faster but at the same time better. As a result, she now believes in her abilities as a trained educator and copes with the module system as she "*got used to it*."

During this time, not only teachers faced difficulties with the instructional system but also students. Maha noticed changes in students' attitude towards the English courses after the preparation year started and English was mandatory to all students who enter the university:

> *I mean, a prep year, to be honest, is a waste of time, and a waste of effort. And the student thinks that she's a university student, once she steps in, she doesn't know that after a year, if you do not pass all the levels of English, you will be expelled. And you won't major. So, it's such a shock for them and for their families when they go back*

after a year. And they're not a student university student anymore. So, it makes me really sad. And it's really disheartening. (MH.INT.3)

Maha expressed frustration and sadness with the preparatory year and how these aspects affected students' learning. She emphasized that the preparatory year has utilized much of the teacher's time and energy. Besides, this program is not suitable for all students' preparation nor does it inspire them for future learning because some students want to study Arabic or Islamic studies as their major. The whole experience is depicted as demotivating. In this context, no teacher is inspired to teach learners who end up not achieving their desired educational goals "*I'm doing all that effort. And these students might not even make it to their major"*. She finds it unfair that English, a discipline that could potentially not have been valued highly in school, will now play a significant role in someone's future: *"English was never an important subject in school. And, and suddenly, it's the subject that determines your future. That's not fair.*" The key idea here, which has to be addressed, is that it is not the teacher's mistake that some students fail. However, there is that aspect of feeling personal guilt due to the feeling of responsibility in teaching. Maha felt as if she was negatively affecting the students' future "*I feel like I'm destroying their dreams, when they don't pass. I know it's not my fault that they didn't pass, but I feel bad*;" She described her feeling like if she is "*destroying"* students' dreams when they don't succeed. When students fail, the emotional burden Maha bears creates feelings of grief and guilt and eventually demotivation in teaching:

There were two important factors that made me lose enthusiasm. The first was the students themselves, not motivated. They're because you know, the culture around here is that you don't like English. Nobody likes English language... They don't come on time. They're on the phone, they're busy. They're talking. They leave the class in the middle of a lesson, and, they have a lot of attitude issues. They don't study. They do really bad in homework, they plagiarize a lot. They copy, no matter how many times you tell them no matter how many zeros you give them. It just nothing goes through, you know, it's the quality of the students that has gone down" (MH.INT.3)

Maha linked students' behaviour and attitudes towards learning and its impact on teacher morale. She expressed frustration at the same time disappointment with the behaviour and attitudes of the students, which has led her to a loss of enthusiasm for teaching. Students are not inspired and have a negative attitude towards the English language. Maha believes that

students create a "*culture*" of English as an unfavourable subject which is passed down through subsequent groups of students over years. For example, former students pass on their experience of the four levels of English courses to newly entered students to create a negative assumption about the course subject. Therefore, some of the undesirable behaviours that students have, such as lack of interest to learn and being disrespectful to the teacher stem from this culture. Maha noted that the general quality of the pupils had decreased. Therefore, the main ideas here are about the challenges that teacher face. They experience insufficient motivation, problematic conduct, lack of focus, and student deceit in classrooms. As a result, the teacher has reduced passion and dissatisfaction in their teaching profession.

Recent Years of Teaching:

During Maha's recent years, she talked about her experiences in teaching English to art students. She found that the curriculum contained a great deal of gaps, especially between students moving from level two to three:

> *When I was teaching up until last year, I was teaching art students…The gaps between level two and three were really bad. The shift of information was not gradual. So, it was frustrating. So, when it comes to curriculum, again, whenever I see that we don't have enough time to practice in the modular system. That's frustrating because I see that I go to a class and I just talk, talk, talk, talk, and then I leave. And I can see that the students are not benefiting, they don't have time to practice. (MH.INT.4)*

Maha's voice showed dissatisfaction about the difficulty of teaching due to a lack of a stability in curriculum and information being given to the students without comprehension, and that made both the teaching and learning challenging. According to Maha, the modular system denied instructors enough time to practise the English language with students. The primary method entailed just lecturing: "*I just talk, talk, talk, talk, and then I leave*", and chances for training, especially in language skill development was not possible. She highlighted that providing pupils with enough time to develop their language skills is crucial for them to actually improve their language skills. It is thus seen as a serious concern since students are denied what it takes to develop their linguistic skills. Maha believed that these problems are linked to some administrative rules:

Honestly, there are problems, and I don't want to go into every problem because there are many, but at the top of the list is that you are just an actress. It is said to you: enter the play and do some acting then leave…If you are stripped of your authority, this embarrasses me in front of my students. I once said that to a teacher who interviewed me: We don't have a position or prestige, and we don't show it to anyone. Don't ever tell anybody that you don't put questions or correct them, and that the test file is taken from you and given to someone else. This is just nonsense. No one can say it, but we don't show this. I reached a point that too much frustration makes you indifferent. But to be honest, I tell my students from the beginning of the module, that I am not the one putting the exams and I am not correcting, so if you fail, it is your own responsibility. I am just here to help you understand but I am not the one who evaluates you. (MH.INT.3)

Maha compared her role of a teacher to that of a performer on the stage. She metaphorically used the word "*actress*" to represent her idea. Teachers have little influence or authority in this context and are only expected to play their part and do the tasks, just like an actress does. It is evident that teachers lack power in their capacity as educators. Whenever her authority is challenged, she displays her discomfort and irritation. This might affect how they interact with the learners: "*this embarrasses me in front of my students*". Maha believes that EFL teachers are not given a proper position or prestige. Therefore, she noted that losing her powers as a teacher should not be publicly highlighted in front of co-workers from other departments or students: "*Don't ever tell anybody*." Maha is embarrassed that she, as an instructor, is unable to develop exams or not trusted enough to correct her students' papers. As a result of such disappointment, which has led Maha to reach a stage where she is frustrated and not motivated to teach. It means that these annoyances will have a detrimental effect on teachers' commitment and work as she said: "*So, you can't just throw the information at the students and walk away, but that's what we have to do*". She was forced to clarify to the students that she is not the one who sets or grades the exams. The reason for this is to ensure students take the module seriously and be in charge of their learning. At this stage of her middle-level career, Maha's intrinsic motivation shifted from attempting to emotionally engage intensely with student to having a more pragmatic strategy for meeting extrinsic obligations. The fact that teachers are not recognized in the new system is the main concern here. It also entails the inability of the system to give them a role in the

implementation of the grading approach to practice the teacher role effectively and that has caused demotivation:

> *Repeated frustration in life in general leads a person to become indifferent even in relationships. They say to you, "Why were you interested?" Yes, I was interested, and I lost interest because of the frustration you caused. This thing happens in the same way. You frustrated me and you didn't value me as a teacher and as a class leader. At the end, I don't care. At first, we used to cry with the students who cried because they failed, but now we don't cry because something inside us has been killed. So, the student says, "I failed, Miss, and I'm diligent, and you know me." And I say to her, "I'm very sorry and that's it." (MH.INT.3)*

Maha discusses how being repeatedly frustrated by daily life can result in disinterest, especially in social interactions. The teacher also believes her worth as an instructor and classroom leader was not acknowledged as a result, she "*lost interest*." On one occasion, Maha recounts a situation where a student complained to her that she failed despite being diligent, and as a teacher she could not do anything except apologize and express her sense of resignation. She was frustrated since there was no sense of independence or trust in her role as a teacher. The main reason why the teachers, in this case, lost these valuable aspects is the constant frustrations caused by the system that sometimes made them feel helpless. Maha's emotional journey from an enthusiastic to an indifferent teacher illustrates the importance of autonomy. Early in her teaching career at a private training centre, Maha's students' intrinsic motivation fuelled her own. In contrast, the modular system, with its rushed curriculum and unmotivated students, affected her emotions, leading to feelings of frustration – because "I can't say that anything excites me" – and indifference – because "something inside us has been killed". Maha's experience shows that unmet autonomy and competency needs can lead to emotional exhaustion.

After that, the time of COVID-19 pandemic was another period that increased stress among teachers. For example, this teacher was disappointed as students could not physically go to the classroom, and the ones who did so, were never engaged:

> *Teaching during COVID was disappointing and frustrating that not many attended your class and only a few girls would answer your questions or do their exercises and this*

way you will end up with none of the girls in your class having understood anything. That was how I felt at first, but then I stopped thinking this way and said to myself "You just do your job and explain things right. If they answer your questions, well and good, but if none answered, what could you do... What is good about online classes, you may ask? The good thing about it was that they were more comfortable and less demanding, because I was teaching from home." MH.INT.4)

In this context, students' performance and participation were consistently low. For instance, most girls never did their assignments or even answered questions from the teacher. As a result, Maha was concerned if the content taught was hard for the learners to comprehend. At the beginning, she was somehow worried due to the impact of the pandemic. Maha's emotional connection diminished because she was unable to create a level of connectedness with her students in an online setting that was similar to the level she cultivated in an on-campus environment. Additionally, it was challenging to assess student involvement in an online setting, and this undermined Maha's competence. However, she had to adapt to this reality. The teacher said they had developed a new perspective and did their best to teach content explicitly, instead of complaining. For Maha, reflexivity to this context is just to do her job with no motivation or demotivation and cope with the system. Maha's change of approach in teaching demonstrates her reflexivity to such challenge and shows emotional frustration. The advantages the teacher felt during COVID were that working from home was very easy as there was less time spent on transport and other resources:

It's easier that way, not least because you don't have to make the trip to the university. Teaching from home is more comfortable. I mean that saves me an hour-long trip in the sun to go and come back from the university and half an hour to get dressed. That saves me two and a half hours per day at least and of course this comes at the expense of the quality of teaching. (MH.INT.4)

Maha added some benefits she saw to remote learning. The elimination of the teachers' daily drive to campus allowed her to save energy and time. This made it more convenient and enjoyable for her. For example, the teacher calculated and revealed that online modules saved at least two and half hours daily while teaching from home. However, the teacher noted that working from home may affect the quality of instruction:

Then they told us to come back and teach face-to-face classes at the university. That was physically stressful of course, but sometimes interacting with students is psychologically stressful as well. Why is it psychologically stressful, you may ask? Because I see on their faces that they do not understand a thing or that they lack the right attitude. I mean most art section girls are chronic underperformers and the mere sight of their blank faces could be frustrating, and the best thing is not to look at their faces and go on with your teaching without feeling just as a robot, and say to yourself I'll just teach and if they want to participate, well and good and if they don't what can you do. But seeing that blank look on their faces frankly frustrates you. (MH. IINT.4)

Maha had to go back to the traditional physical classrooms after participating in the remote system for a while. She acknowledged that switching to in-person instruction caused not only physical strain, but also psychological effects too. The teacher could tell by students' body language that they did not comprehend the content as they had a negative attitude towards learning. However, dealing with them proved to be emotionally exhausting to Maha. The teacher claimed that it got frustrating to observe the blank expressions of the art students because most of them were underperformers. To cope with this, Maha tried to ignore the students' facial emotions and continue lecturing without seeming robotic. She may feel as a "*robot*" down deep in her emotions; therefore, she reached the mindset of teaching regardless of student participation and interest in the lesson. This indicates that Maha reached a stage where she teaches the lesson and leaves without motivation.

However, Maha stated that some positive changes took place recently in the institute. Last semester, one rule was changed, and each teacher was supposed to correct her students' writing tests and grade them. Maha expressed her feelings of this experiences:

Now the writing, this is the first time that we invigilated and corrected our own students' papers. So that was nice, but we didn't know before, because when I teach, I look for certain things, I was able to judge them in the exam. But when someone else is correcting my exam, my students can lose a lot of marks just because she focuses on things that she considers important. Because when you teach writing, there are important things. But because we don't have enough time, I stress on some points that I don't know that the other teacher is looking for or not. And then my students lose a

lot of marks.... but now it's better for both of us, because I can do something I can, I can add something. It's like, it's right now. It's not just spoon fed. (MH.INT.4)

Maha found it an advantageous reality to grade her students' writing, as she is more familiar with her students' background of writing abilities. Through this process, Maha was able to understand students' weaknesses "*I was able to judge*" and provide them with feedback according to their needs. As an instructor, Maha stated that because of the time constrains she sometimes stresses on certain points during teaching writing that other teachers may not prioritize and then "*students lose a lot of marks*". She compared this grading approach to the past where teachers "*spoon fed*" the curriculum to the students without helping them develop. The fact that she had no input in students learning gave her a sense of helplessness. However, by taking the responsibility of marking her students' papers, Maha's sense of ownership increased her sense of accountability of her own teaching outcomes. Similarly to Rana, Maha believes that this grading approach is more motivating for her and more beneficial for students. Maha found herself recovering from her loss of control over her classroom environment

When Maha was able to return to the classroom and have a more engaged relationship with her students, she regained the level of autonomy that she lost during the pandemic. Maha explained how alterations to the grading policy gave her a sense of power, involvement and investment in her students' learning. Her account shows that motivation and demotivation are not consequences of individualized weakness but are found in relational, emotional and institutional contexts. She experienced emotional labour in teaching and professional identity collapse and demotivation to teach when the changes in the instructional system reduced her autonomy.

4.1.5 Conclusion

This chapter's narrative analysis approach provides valuable insights into the complex ways in which personalities, beliefs, institutional structures and prevailing sociocultural values interact and shape the motivations of EFL teachers in higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia. Although the four participants offered diverse perspectives on how the system and social forces shape identity construction and teacher motivation, all of them showed that teacher motivation is not a static or unidirectional construct. Instead, it evolves over time and

place as a result of the dynamic nature of negotiations between individual aspirations and institutional policies within the teaching context.

The narratives showed how intrinsic and extrinsic motivational dimensions function as dynamically interrelated elements with contextual fluidity rather than as binary opposites. Conflicts between the teachers' sense of autonomy and institutional reforms recurred repeatedly across the four narratives, showing that systemic pressure can suppress educators' independence. Relational dynamics and student engagement also emerged strongly from the narratives, underscoring the importance of teacher-student relationships in developing and sustaining teacher motivation.

Collectively, the four narratives strongly challenge a generalized or universal concept of motivation, which argue that it is a linear function. Instead, in line with PIC theory (Ushioda, 2009), the narratives indicate that teacher motivation is a dynamic and evolving construct embedded within unique institutional contexts. The insights in this chapter from the participants' narratives and teaching experiences provided the foundation for the identification and categorization of the major contextual factors that affect teacher motivation in Saudi Arabia. Chapter 5 explores this topic further and identifies the major themes that have been found in this study.

Chapter 5 Contextual Factors Influencing EFL Teacher Motivation

This chapter presents the results pertaining to the major contextual factors that affect Saudi EFL teachers' motivation and de-motivation. At the outset of this chapter, a thematic categorization of contextual factors obtained from the data during the fieldwork are given. These offer a comprehensive understanding of instructors' participation in this study, specifically, in terms of how the context has affected their motivation and attitudes towards teaching throughout their careers. The PIC theory comprehensively supports investigating motivation by accounting for personal, micro and macro contextual influences, making it an effective framework for understanding teacher motivation (Ushioda, 2009). This chapter presents the main contextual themes and findings of the exploratory and narration focus phases of the data collection and analysis process. It also explores motivating and demotivating contextual factors. Furthermore, this chapter focuses on Phase 1 (exploratory phase) data from 10 participants and relates the emergent themes to the four participants in Phase 2 (narration focus phase, which was discussed in Chapter 4) to draw a complete picture of the themes that have been identified in this study.

The first major theme concerned the rules and regulations of the instructional modular system and their effects on teachers' motivation levels. The second theme was the impact of a lack of autonomy on EFL teachers working in the ELI context. The third theme was how teacher-student relationships affect teacher motivation.

5.1 Rules and Regulations within the Instructional System

The first theme that emerge from the data relates to the rules and regulations. Of course, it is vital for any instructional system to have its own set of rules and regulations that are shared with teachers. However, not all EFL teachers working within the same context adhere to that set of rules or perform according to the system.

5.1.1 Instructional System

The EFL teachers in the study share their views about the rules and regulations of the institute. One major factor that the EFL teachers expressed feeling dissatisfaction with is the Modular system of instruction. Each course level at the English language institute is taught in an eight-week module. In terms of preferences for teaching systems, most participants stated that the module system was not as rewarding as expected:

> *We have students with different skills and from different backgrounds. How can you reach all of them in only seven weeks? It is a challenge to do achieve all your goals in only seven weeks. Yes, it causes pressure. You cannot get to know the strengths and weaknesses of your students. If you feel that something needs more time, the basic guide requires you to finish a certain part. Frankly, over a trimester, the situation becomes better because you have 11 weeks, and you can see students over 11 weeks. you can at least revise things that you feel your students did not master. (Phase.1, Dalia)*

Dalia points out the time constraints she experienced in the past; however, now she receives a full semester contact with students. Things have improved since the teaching has been extended to 11-weeks, which offers EFL teachers sufficient time to evaluate their learners' growth. It allows EFL teachers to review ideas, re-teach important points, and attempt to efficiently meet the varied demands of students. In a four-term Modular system, time constraints might make it difficult to implement various instructional methodologies.

One participant, Shahad raised concerns about the modular system at the ELI, demonstrating the challenge of trying to cover a substantial quantity of content in a constrained length of time. These EFL teachers consider it difficult to finish the curriculum because of the time limits placed by the module system and other disruptions such as assessments, unfavourable weather conditions, and summer vacations:

> *When you give me a textbook that has seven or eight chapters and ask me to cover it in six to seven weeks, you have one non-teaching week, which is the exam week for students, you have long weekends, and you have other issues such as weather, a lot of*

stuff that may affect the module teaching. If you count the actual weeks that you're teaching, it's almost one month. (Phase.1, Shahad)

Shahad described that the assigned textbook would usually include an extensive number of chapters, which are difficult to cover over a short time. Consequently, the EFL teachers are forced to skip and speed through topics. In reality, the actual teaching time comes down to four weeks. However, Shahad, stated that she must continue with her instruction despite the challenges:

You must do it. I have to skip a lot of things, not because I'm a bad teacher, or because I'm just fooling around with the students, but because I have to give them as much material as possible in this short amount of time. I didn't face this problem this year when we had the trimester because we have the time. When you give me 12 weeks, it's totally different than six weeks… If you don't have time, you feel that you're just running, and I don't know if they actually understand or not. (Phase.1, Shahad)

In this context, the additional time makes it possible for students to absorb and comprehend the material better. It is difficult to give enough practice, projects, and assessment to encourage learning. Moreover, going over topics quickly may lead to insufficient comprehension: *"I don't know, if they actually understand or not?"* This uncertainty is frustrating for the teacher as it affects students' progress.

On the other hand, Hanadi was honest about the fact that the Modular system offers greater time off from school that allows EFL teachers to have more personal time:

For me, as a person, or as a mother, it's better because we have more breaks, we have more non-teaching weeks, and vacations. Definitely, it's better. (Phase.1, Hanadi)

Hanadi did not concur with the other EFL teachers as she did not have any issue with time shortage during teaching. However, she argued that the Modular system was restrictive and undesirable for the growth of the students and the connections between them and their teachers:

For me, as a teacher, not as a person, it's not because of time limits. We don't get to know the students enough. By the time we memorize their names, and we know their difficulties and their language problems, and what areas we should concentrate on, it's already past the midterm. The final is almost there. We don't get to see that development. So, in terms of student development, and in terms of working with students step-by-step and accomplishing a lot with them, the Modular system failed us. (Phase.1, Hanadi)

Hanadi believes that time restrictions make it more difficult to build strong relationships with students and provide them with the development aid that they need. She also explained that although they have sufficient time to teach and tackle the curriculum, time constraints make it more difficult to observe and acknowledge student growth and foster positive student-teacher connections. The EFL teachers conveyed a need to witness students advance and reach learning benchmarks. For example, the EFL EFL teachers want to see students write entire sentences instead of just simple phrases. However, working with students one-on-one and seeing their progress is difficult because of the time constraints of the modular approach. She used the word "*failed us*" that indicates her frustration to contribute to student learning.

Most of the language EFL teachers like Dalia, Shahad and Dana compared the Modular system to the trimester system during the interviews. Dana mentioned that over a semester, EFL teachers must deal with various learners with distinct needs, creating learning opportunities for teachers. This approach allows EFL teachers to modify their methods and apply new teaching techniques in contrast to the Modular system:

In one semester, you see different types of students with different needs, you adapt more skills, you try to differentiate your instructions, according to these students. As a teacher, I am challenged and learn more in one semester, more than having these modules that we have now. You can supplement materials without looking at your watch every 10 minutes to ensure you're not running out of time. Even games in the classroom such as Kahoot or Padlet, whatever we're using, we have time for it. (Phase.1, Dana)

This approach gives Dana the freedom to include extra resources, such as movies and games. She emphasized that one needs not to continually worry about losing the opportunity to

engage in such tasks. This approach engages students, enhances individualized teaching instruction, and improves in-depth comprehension of the material.

5.1.2 Workload and Prolonged Teaching Sessions

The EFL EFL teachers expressed a concern with prolonged teaching sessions that lead to the students' exhaustion. Manal noted that students often feel fatigued after three or four non-stop hours in class. Although every lecture of 50 minutes is followed by a 10-minutes break, many students prefer one long break and two extended sessions instead of three sessions:

> *Frankly, the classes are long, and students get tired. When students sit for three or four hours, they get tired. But what are we doing to solve this problem?... The students say that we don't want breaks. They want to accumulate all breaks at the end to leave early. (Phase.1, Manal)*

Manal perceived students' desire to leave early and avoid breaks as an indication of disengagement or lack of motivation. However, she highlighted an important point that teachers must remain in the class for the students to return after breaks rather than return to their offices during the breaks. As a teacher, she must answer frequent inquiries for students and provide explanations during breaks:

> *It is tiring to stand up for four hours explaining. As I said, the breaks provide some rest, but I, as a teacher, don't enjoy them. I am unable to rest during these breaks because there are students with questions and things they don't understand. So, I work even during the breaks. I am not allowed to go to my office during the breaks; I just sit in class and wait for the students to return. After the break, I complete my lessons. So, it is tiring. (Phase.1, Manal)*

Additionally, Daila stated that it is difficult for an instructor to maintain students' interest and focus on extended sessions of three and a half to four hours. Therefore, EFL teachers must figure out how to keep pupils engaged for these extended periods:

> *The time it is too long for them and for us. Research shows that student's attention lasts for 15 minutes. So, say what you want during these 15 minutes. However, what*

will you do when you sit for three hours with the students? If you see us in the classroom, I use all treats, games, magazine articles, even unrelated to the academic aspect, just to keep their attention. I cannot blame them for being bored. (Phase.1, Dalia)

Dalia also discussed the significance of applying instructional strategies for active learning that promote student engagement and communication in class, which may entail creating enjoyable classroom activities. In this context, it is challenging for EFL teachers to maintain students' attention and become actively involved in their educational experience; this issue is also faced by Rinad:

Sometimes when I feel that the girls are sleepy, or bored, I try to move them around in the class, saying, "okay, let's do a group work, every six students, let's do a circle, let's play a game." Time is a really important factor in the teaching process when you see that students always check their phones and watch or look outside the windows, you know that they're bored. So, I have to do something to get them out of this boredom. Because when students are bored, you'll feel down, and you actually feel that the time is just moving slowly. It's gonna kill you, I swear, sometimes. (Phase.1, Rinad)

Rinad addresses this issue by implementing active instructional techniques or a collaborative learning approach that encourages learner motion and participation, such as through role-playing exercises, debates, and group activities. However, after facing long hours classes every day, Rinad discussed the impact that boredom can have on the teacher. She emphasized the negative effects with a strong phrase such as, "*it's gonna kill you.*" This reflects that the teacher's emotions and motivation are closely related with students' engagement and enthusiasm. Moreover, Hanadi, like Rinad, also noted that keeping students involved during four-hour afternoon sessions is difficult and that students start to be bored during the second hour. Instructors are said to feel frustrated when learners stop communicating:

In the afternoon class, students get bored and often skip the second hour. We, as teachers, would only have one class that day. So, we're not as exhausted as they are. But sometimes, they start their day at eight, and we meet them from 11 to 4 with an hour break in the middle. So, by the end of the second hour, the students are tired, bored, which is when we lose them and when they stop interacting with us. We feel as

if we are just explaining to robots, not to them, which is a bit demotivating for us. (Phase.1, Hanadi)

The EFL teachers feel like they talk to robots as students are not involved in the lesson, and this absence of interaction may be discouraging for the teacher. She emphasized how the absence of student interaction because of boredom may negatively impact her motivation as a teacher. Feeling ineffective in engaging students can be disheartening for teachers. It may be beneficial to implement methods to divide the class or incorporate interactive and stimulating activities during a four-hour session to sustain student engagement and involvement, while also reducing the teacher's sense of demotivation:

I tell them that they will only use their phones during the break. Sometimes, they cooperate, they move their phones, they try to interact, and then they get that reward. Sometimes, I try to explain the difficult part of the beginning of the lesson and maybe just revise or use the workbook in the last hour… If you interact, and you finish with me, I will give you the last half an hour for yourself, maybe do homework, or would just chat about something in English, do speaking exercises, which will be easier. (Phase.1, Hanadi)

Hanadi integrates different aspects of motivation to enhance the learning atmosphere such as the reward system strategy (e.g. students are permitted to use cell phones during specified pauses) to engage learners in a prolonged lesson. To create a supportive environment, Hanadi mentioned that the lesson plan was modified to explain complex topics, such as grammar. Then, simpler tasks came afterwards, which included easy activities as a final revision. Her strategy aids in reducing the difficulties of instructing lengthy classes and the effects that it might have on student involvement and teachers' drive to teach. On the other hand, some participants highlighted issues related to the curriculum, resources, and coursework that affected their instructions.

5.1.3 Curriculum, Materials, and Pacing Guide

The instructional system in the English Language Institute requires the language EFL teachers to follow a fixed curriculum. Shahad pointed out that the available materials and curriculum were inappropriate for the learners' level. Many incoming university students, particularly

those from public or government schools, do not have a strong basis in English. Therefore, the material that students see at college level differs significantly from what they studied in school. This difference is a problem for educators:

> *English is not a main subject in school. They give them the basic, like, the most basic stuff that they can learn in English. But when they enter the university, there's a huge gap between what they learned in high school and what they're being taught at university. So, it's either you put 200% of the effort and the time and the knowledge as a teacher, or you just teach the textbook as it is. It's up to the student whether they want to learn to get high scores or not. (Phase.1, Shahad)*

According to Shahad, it is not easy for the students to read three page long materials. While stimulating texts can make students want to read more, texts in general do not attract learner's interest. As extended reading texts mostly overwhelm the students, they are unable to digest and explain the content as expected:

> *When you have a reading passage that is three pages, it's a lot to digest. Sometimes the topic is nice, and the students are engaged, and they actually want to give you more information. Sometimes, it's just too much for them. When I give them a three-page text about space? No one is interested in space now. (Phase.1, Shahad)*

According to Kenda, only the textbook is used to teach; as a result, it is very challenging for EFL teachers to supply lessons with extra support materials as needed. For example, EFL teachers cannot even integrate multimedia resources such as audio and films into their lessons:

> *For example, I had a writing class two days ago with level 3 students. The writing was about endangered species. Students had talked about animals that they liked and others that they hated. They also talked about the organizations caring for domestic and wild animals, such as camels. There are students who didn't have any background in these matters, but you can't show them anything out of the textbook, even the videos. Recently, we have not been allowed to use YouTube. Although it is breaking the routine, you create a lovely learning environment. It is not a condition to teach every word in the book. I may give them information to use in the future. (Phase.1, Kenda)*

In this context, even if there are videos to supplement lessons, EFL teachers cannot enhance their teaching with any of them. For Kenda, students understanding of real-world applications of the target language is hindered by these restrictions, which is negative since the diverse perspectives in the actual world help students more accurately understand the content.

Lara proposed introducing "Easy English" classes with an uncomplicated curriculum for students who are re-taking specific levels several times:

> *I don't know why we don't think in the same way as international schools; they have special classes for non-Arabic speakers. Why don't we have Easy English for students who are repeating for the third or fourth time? Maybe we could teach them the curriculum from high school because it will be the only textbook that they study in English. Maybe they want to major in something in which English is not required; we have many students like that. (Phase.1, Lara)*

These insights show a commitment to meet the unique needs of each student and denote the teacher's desire to give learners a more productive and engaging educational experience. Additionally, Amera mentioned that the pacing guide details the content to be taught. EFL teachers utilize this guide as a reference to guarantee that they address the essential content. However, she discussed her attempt to enhance classes by adjusting materials and developing activities based on them:

> *We have to follow the Pacing guide, but if I know what students need to understand from a certain passage, then I can tweak it, perhaps make an activity out of it, and they're still doing the same thing, but just in a different way. However, sometimes there isn't even space for that because it requires a little more time. And if we are under time pressure, and there is a quiz next week, you become less explorative. Like, you don't want to risk not doing any of these things. (Phase.1, Amera)*

Amera faced some difficulty in matching the curriculum requirements with student engagement in class. For example, if the lesson is boring in the textbook, Amera adjusts the materials "I can tweak it" and creates activities to enhance students' interest and focus. This indicates that she can practice creativity in her teaching methods. However, she recognized

external influences, such as pressure to follow the pacing guide within a specific time that can sometimes restrict her ability to be explorative as she considers not completing the curriculum is a "risk." On the other hand, Hanadi provided a different viewpoint, stating that pacing guides and unified assessment are essential for effective teaching:

> *I feel that I am with the unified system. I agree with the Pacing guide. I like that they organize things for us. I don't mind that they choose the book, they choose the unit; I feel that I am relieved that I have all of it done for me. I don't mind. Unify the exams. I have tried to write my own exams. It's difficult to process and it's a lot of responsibility. (Phase.1, Hanadi)*

In this context, Hanadi supported the regulation of these guides and believed that unified assessment is more convenient than assessments created by the teacher. To her, the prescribed guidance plan is more structured and orderly, particularly as it lists the areas and units to be covered. Pacing guides thus aid EFL teachers in lesson planning to ensure that the required material is covered within the available time. According to Hanadi, these decisions can minimize the difficulty of having to choose and create a curriculum or exam from scratch.

Maha expressed dissatisfaction with one situation where they had once to submit a report update that followed the Pacing guide. Even if a pacing guide is useful in some circumstances, it should not serve as the exclusive basis for teacher evaluation:

> *I like to have the Pacing guide in the draft, but I don't like to send a daily report to tell them how many pages I have finished. Yes, we are asked to send the report to the administrative coordinator. You have the report link, and you have to state that the teaching time and pages. There is also an option whether you are ahead of, behind, or with the Pacing guide. What makes me sad is not the Pacing guide. They should say the following: "Here is the Pacing guide. It states the model procedure, but you know you may be late or not in the form on certain day. But you have to finish all units. It's up to you". (Phase. 2, Maha)*

According to Maha, submitting updates to the administration is unnecessary and a waste of time. Similarly, the pacing guide should not be mandatory and should be only a primary support document. For example, the guide can help the teachers' time management in the

required seven-week period. It is, thus, not a judgment tool for teachers' efficacy. According to Maha, the issues have some ethical aspects; as a teacher, she is aware of her responsibilities. She suggested that every teacher deserves some freedom in terms of how they manage their work and time. Therefore, the second major theme in this study is teacher autonomy.

5.2 A sense of Teacher Autonomy

The second theme that EFL teachers discussed during the interviews and demonstrated during the transcript analysis was teacher autonomy (see 2.4.1.1)**.** The results of the data analysis show that the EFL teachers' lack of freedom may result in their de-motivation.

5.2.1 Classroom Ownership as a Source of Teacher Motivation

The nature of autonomy depends on the degree to which the management trusts teachers. In this context, the language EFL teachers want the freedom to decide on the teaching approach that they will take in their classrooms. Like Mona and Maha, Amera emphasized that the trust that they receive from administration is critical to their autonomy as educators.

> *Well, one thing just came to my mind is about control, if you, as a teacher, want to feel trusted, because after all, you didn't just take a course; you have studied, you have degrees, you have skills. And if you are not able to use those skills, you feel that, to some extent, that you're not being trusted, right? So why is there a need to control me this much if I come with all these skills, all this education, and all this experience? So why do you have to direct me everywhere? (Phase.1, Amera)*

Amera argued that the use of her skills would be maximized if she had sufficient autonomy in the classroom. She questioned the excessive control put on EFL teachers despite their experiences in the field which shows that administrators do not recognize or trust teachers' abilities. Eventually, the EFL teachers feel demotivated and lose interest in their work. Moreover, Rinad, Like Mona, also clarified that EFL teachers must have a central role in and be in control of their classroom and teaching processes:

> *I think personally that I'm supposed to be responsible for my class, my students, and my teaching from A to Z… Why should I, as a teacher, see the exam on the exam day*

with my students? Why should my students ask me about their final grades when I don't know about that? I actually don't know the final CBT; I have nothing to do with it. Why should I as a teacher wait for the writing exam on the same day and check and see the type of essay they receive? Or what type of paragraph are they going to write about? Some EFL teachers are happy with this. They're like, okay, I just have to correct this, and that's it. Okay, I don't mind. I don't mind correcting, but why don't you show us these things before the actual day of the exam? I should let my students train about these questions or, or just know the level of questions that they're gonna get. (Phase.1, Rinad)

Like Amera, Rinad is questioning the system regulations and expressed a desire for a greater sense of ownership over their teaching processes and outcomes. Insufficient information and a lack of detailed explanations about exams are seen as significant problems. Specifically, EFL teachers become frustrated since they do not understand the pattern or structure of the exams. The issue of transparency in terms of how students are assigned marks is deemed a critical concern. In this context, EFL teachers are not part of the team that decides students' final grades. Thus, it was argued that the EFL teachers must have access to exams in order to help students more effectively. The idea that EFL teachers are not trusted enough to have access to this information might decrease their motivation. In Chapter 4, Mona described how a transfer to the business department reactivated her motivation. She said, "I was given trust and freedom [...] it helped me grow." Thus, even after demotivation occurs, environments that foster autonomy can restore professional engagement, reaffirming the contextual sensitivity in relation to teacher motivation.

However, Norah thinks that a Pacing guide is a suitable entity since the university serves a huge number of students, and there is a formal curriculum to consider. In this context, educators acknowledged that it is necessary to follow some regulations while teaching:

Because you have over 3000 students, you have to follow a Pacing guide. At the end, we're all teaching the same books. It's not like when you get specialized in a certain field. It's different. The teacher has 100% full power to do everything. But for me, I think we have to follow a Pacing guide when planning the lesson. You can plan your own lesson with your own pace and your own regulations but follow the Pacing guide. (Phase.1, Norah)

Norah stressed the importance of following a pacing guide, proposing that while EFL teachers should have autonomy in designing their lessons, they should follow the guide. Nevertheless, Norah emphasized the importance of a balance between autonomy and guidelines. She suggested that EFL teachers might teach their classes according to their own preferences "*your own pace and your own regulations*". This statement suggests that maintaining a degree of flexibility in teachers' approaches increases their motivation. Hence, EFL teachers should have the option to award students' grades, such as in class participation marks:

> *When it comes to grades, at least give 10 marks in my hands that I can distribute the way I want to. We used to have participation marks; they took them away. Why is it important for students to know that they actually have marks that they need to participate, so the class will be motivated, and students would want to be active, which is nice for the teacher and the students. (Phase.1, Norah)*

Hanadi does not see a problem with exams being recorded because it can serve as proof if students have objections about their grades. However, she acknowledged that having another instructor involved in the evaluation of students could be interpreted as a lack of trust in her competence to grade students, which results in demotivation. She questions whether having an additional instructor is necessary. EFL teachers feel that their skills and expertise need to be valued and that they should have the right to evaluate their students' work without being micromanaged:

> *It shows a lack of trust in me. I don't mind that nowadays. They record the assessment. I'm fine with recording. If a student complained that they would find something documented. So, it's not that I think I don't make mistakes, or I'm not trusted. It's about why another teacher who has the same level of education, and sometimes less, would be there sitting next to me and assessing my students. (Phase.1, Hanadi)*

Moreover, like Rana and Mona, Hanadi shared past experiences in comparison with the new system. For example, there was a period when EFL teachers could create personalized final and mid-term exams:

We used to design the midterms and finals. Of course, someone would observe that or read it and offer modifications. We had a rubric that we had to follow. But I used to design my midterm, my final, and it was a lot of work, much more than now. Writing a midterm is not a piece of cake, and neither is writing a final. So, we used to have 10 points for attendance, which motivated students to attend. And other assignments, like one of the classes I remember, we were able to give students a presentation that was out of five. I remember those days; I remember how hard it was for me, though I gained more insights into those students' needs. So, when they performed poorly, or when they had a problem in the midterm, I would work on it until the final, which would make them do better. As I said previously, if they all performed poorly in reading comprehension, I would be able to help them develop more reading before the final. (Phase.1, Hanadi)

Hanadi admitted that a significant amount of labour and effort was required for creating exams. However, after students had taken the exam, it was easy to note where to help the students and adjust instruction as required. The feedback on the mid-term tests helped the teacher to adjust her instruction methods for the final exams. For instance, the lessons after grading mid-terms could focus on improving reading skills if the teacher noticed that students had struggled with reading questions on mid-terms. However, she highlighted changes in the existing system in relation to teaching assessment techniques and the content in the book:

Now, teaching is mostly concerned with having to cover everything in the book, regardless of what the weakness of the student is because I don't know what's coming in the final. I teach exam skills, and I'm more concerned with covering every vocabulary item, every word, so that the student won't face information in the exam or a question that she has no idea about. So, it's mostly about quantity of teaching, not quality, if you understand what I mean. Before, it was more about the quality of teaching. (Phase.1, Hanadi)

Similar to Rana, Hanadi said that this system does not emphasize the nature of instruction. For instance, it does not concentrate on the learners' needs. Instead, instruction focuses on quantity "*cover everything in the book*". The old model gave the language EFL teachers more independence, allowing them to design exams creatively and in the way they thought was most appropriate for their students. As a result, teaching was more flexible as EFL teachers

could use diverse methods to support students' learning. The primary idea is that EFL teachers had more power over how to assess students in the past. They had enough time to interact with individual students to determine their abilities and areas of improvement. They could tackle areas for growth by modifying their pedagogical approaches and offering specialized instruction. Students would learn more effectively as a result of this individualized strategy.

Moreover, like Rana, Mona, Maha and Rinad, Hanadi strongly advocated for the teacher's voice in the grading system and emphasized that the teacher's role should be prioritized in students' assessment. She suggested that EFL teachers should be given control over a specific percentage of the grades, say 30% of the total marks, to provide students with individualized feedback and assessment:

> *I believe that we need at least 30% in our hands to be able to assess our students. Now, most of the grades are computerized. At least give me a full control of speaking, writing, and maybe another 10% for classwork. Let the students work with me. Let me design any type of daily or weekly assignments. Although it's more work for me as a teacher because I have to mark, observe, think and create. However, as a teacher, assessing my students, checking their outcomes, and giving grades would develop my teaching and raise my awareness of students' needs. (Phase.1, Hanadi)*

EFL teachers should control how students' language skills, such as speaking and writing, are assessed. This approach will allow the assessments to be tailored to specific student needs and provide insight into students' strengths and weaknesses. According to Hanadi, feedback should be prioritized in education because it is the only way to identify areas of learners' weaknesses and their needs. She noted that weekly assignments were formerly in place but were subsequently withdrawn. This teacher expressed gratitude for the concept, even though it put more work on teachers; however, this approach can result in developing both students and teachers' teaching skills.

5.2.2 Autonomy as a Source of Teachers' Professional Development

Hanadi argued that If educators create customized exams, they might be able to learn a lot about their teaching skills such as means of identifying learners' areas of strength and weakness during instruction. In this context, EFL teachers may evaluate their instructional methods and make necessary changes when using tests as a tool for self-examination. She also emphasized the value of independence and professional growth for EFL teachers to an even larger extent:

> *We sometimes need to write our own assessment. As a teacher, I am not developing as much because everything is done for me. However, it's easier. It's more fun, to be able to have more breaks and have time at home to enjoy myself. For students. It's better for everything to be unified. So, you make sure it's fair. However, I forgot how to write an exam. I don't know how to write an exam, which is a skill I would like to develop. So, yes, I like development in that area. I wish I were in an ideal world. I want to know how to write a perfect exam and that comes with practice. (Phase.1, Hanadi)*

Therefore, she supports giving EFL teachers the freedom to prepare individual tests provides them with an opportunity to exercise critical thinking skills. Mona's reflection in Chapter 4 further supports this theme, as she explained how being excluded from test creation demotivated her: "I had no say in the test... I became frustrated." Her experience illustrates how externally imposed assessment structures eroded her sense of ownership and autonomy. It allows them to understand their own weaknesses and to work on eliminating them in order to enhance their skills and improve their own instruction. The availability of freedom in assessment is a critical competency that EFL teachers wish to have "I wish I were in an ideal world.". She also believed that experience in how assessment tools are designed may help EFL teachers to efficiently develop tests that have minimal errors when measuring student abilities. Nevertheless, she realizes that it may be difficult for educational structures to ensure fairness among students and at the same time provide space for teacher independence and development. While Hanadi admitted that standardized tests benefit students and guarantee fairness, she also emphasized that greater autonomy would be more effective because it would offer chances for individual and professional development for teachers.

In concurrence with Hanadi, Shahad prioritized greater flexibility and creativity over curriculum development. In this context, the significance of teacher innovation in the classroom was emphasized by this instructor. EFL teachers ought to have the freedom to incorporate their own teaching styles within the curriculum, which will make it possible to use creative teaching strategies outside of the prescribed pacing guide:

> *We should be given time and space to leave our mark on the curriculum, but it's not allowed. We must follow the Pacing guide, so we cannot be creative. I want to be experienced more in doing activities, creating exams, go beyond the book. (Phase.1, Shahad)*

In this context, a pacing guide is a fixed plan that denotes the time within the term to teach selected topics; it does not allow EFL teachers any "space" to put their fingerprints. This teacher noted that these tools effectively ensure that every part of the curriculum is completed. However, Shahad thinks that pacing guides restrict teachers' creativity, and she would like the freedom to gain more expertise in creating projects that encourage students to participate in active and experiential learning.

Additionally, Amera addressed a need for creativity in teaching noting that there are vital factors to consider that may restrict EFL teachers from being creative:

> *I'm analytical, I'm visual, and there are just some external factors that hinder me. Well, it could be just that I want to have perhaps a certain pedagogy in certain ways of teaching and have more room to be more creative. But, because of the time constraints and material restrictions, there are less opportunities. However, it's very easy to just dive in, imagine you like driving and, because you're now in this lane, there are just too many cars in front of you, and you can't move. So, you use force to shift the lane, and this new lane is faster, but you don't get to see all the things like you do in the other lane. (Phase.1, Amera)*

Amera prefers analytical and visual instructional approaches to deliver effective lessons. However, these approaches are only applicable if adequate pedagogies are used. If the teaching is flexible and adaptable, it can serve the learning preferences. Even if the teacher is motivated to be innovative in the class, a lack of time and resources act as significant barriers

to this objective. In other words, there may be less room to express teachers' creativity and innovation in the classroom due to time limits and inadequate resources. Amera employed a driving analogy to explain her point of view. To adjust to the educational environment, the educator draws comparisons between 'shifting lanes' in driving. Changing lanes may lead to quicker advancements or help overcome problems, but it may also result in missing out on a unique view or chances present in the initial lane. EFL teachers adjust their teaching approaches to fit the limitations that could lead to missing learning skills for teaching opportunities.

Amera was worried about the amount of work and insufficient time, which affect EFL teachers due to the challenging curriculum. She pointed out that too much information can make it difficult for educators to try out new activities and instructional techniques. There might not be time for investigating creative teaching strategies because of the urgency to finish the required material in time:

> *You're, like overloaded with material that you must cover in class. So, you have like less experimenting? There's no space to experiment to the same extent because you're just jammed packed with what you need to cover this day or this week because there is sometimes perhaps a gap or glitch between different parts. So, those people sitting and deciding what needs to be happening or needs to be covered may not see what's happening in the classroom and with the students. And then, sometimes, I think we move away from what it is that we want them to learn and just focus on which book we need to complete. (Phase.1, Amera)*

Similar to Mona and Maha, Amera mentioned that there is also the possibility of a disconnect between the individuals who decide on the curriculum and the practicalities of the learning environment. This response implies that those in charge of choosing the curriculum might not have a thorough awareness of the daily difficulties and situations that instructors and students deal with. The language teacher said that the most important task is to find a balance between teachers' needs to investigate and a reality that impedes the use of their methods. EFL teachers need to develop a way of working within the reality imposed on them by the institution:

You try to make changes, but you can't swim against the tide. You just, to a certain degree, you stop doing anything. You need to cope; you can't exhaust yourself just because you want to do it a certain way. So, it's the balance here. If they are not allowing EFL teachers to be explorative, if they are not giving room for that, then of course, there is also going to be that consequence that students will not have that part of the experience. So, you can't have both. (Phase.1, Amera)

In this context, the curriculum and the system's restrictions cannot be continually pushed against by the teachers, and they may eventually experience burnout. Moreover, Amera emphasized that not allowing instructors to be creative and exploratory could deny students important learning opportunities. Any restriction on instructors' freedom to try new things can make it harder for students to learn, which could affect their learning outcomes. Amera proposed that EFL teachers figure out how to work within the limitations in place. They might have to modify their strategies to fit within the constraints to offer students engaging learning opportunities.

5.2.3 The Impact of Lack of Autonomy

Successful collaboration among educators, administrators and policymakers and requires a culture of trust. Similar to Sara, Rana Maha and Mona, Amera shared an example about what it means to have a lack of independence and trust among colleagues:

I didn't feel trusted. I felt micromanaged. It's like, make sure you do this. If you don't do this, then this is going to happen if this is the deadline... I'm a professional teacher. You don't need to threaten me and tell me everything I need to do. I felt that it was a bit strange. But then, I also grew into understanding perhaps that it was, to some extent, needed because otherwise some people, they just don't do their work. (Phase.1, Amera)

Amera reported that it seemed like her decisions are often controlled. This degree of supervision is likely to hinder teachers' autonomy. To Amera, if directives and support are given respectfully and EFL teachers are treated as professionals, then the goal should be to move away from micromanagement to a friendlier and more encouraging environment. However, specific requirements and objectives are necessary to maintain standards and

ensure that every teacher completes her tasks. Amera talked about necessary requirements for an external reward 'incentive' to make people want to fulfil their tasks:

> *I don't quite understand how it would be seen an honour to work more. I just spend my time at work. Yes, I like it, I enjoy it, but I don't live for it. I have my family, I have my kids, I've got my hobbies, I've got my interests. So, it's not that I think like, oh, yes, I want to join this and work 10 more hours a week just for the honour of it. So there needs to be an incentive. (Phase.1, Amera)*

Amera thinks that extra incentives may significantly stimulate individuals to work hard. Incentives, from pay increases and recognition to more opportunities for career advancement, can maintain teachers' motivation and eliminate cynicism:

> *I want to grow personally, but there are many people who don't have this intrinsic motivation. Like, they will become very cynical if they are not motivated by other things that are external. It could be anything from salary increase, an acknowledgement, to being given more responsibility etc. But you can't be expected to just keep on doing the same thing and keep your own intrinsic level of motivation. (Phase.1, Amera)*

According to Amera, there is a risk of lowering teachers' internal drive to teach if other options are not considered. A key to maintaining motivation over the long-term is through a supportive education atmosphere that consistently rewards effective performance. Additionally, EFL teachers should be given more opportunities to learn and grow as professionals. The motivation that most EFL teachers start with may be temporal since they mostly lose their initial enthusiasm over years of teaching. Amera stated that one key reason for this is that most educators may feel that their efforts are not acknowledged or valued. Eventually, motivation levels decrease, and they cannot accomplish what is needed:

> *I think If I keep comparing, how it was when I first became a teacher, then I come up with all this, like you're fresh with new ideas, you have all this energy, and you want to explore and use all this new knowledge. However, as you go, some things you realize are not sustainable, like you still have to survive the trip, right? (Phase.1, Amera)*

Like Maha, Amera added that over time, EFL teachers also start to manage their time better, and it becomes easier to prioritize work. Specifically, she described how exposure to the work culture contributes to the de-motivation of new teachers. Being able to see the lack of regard or respect for their work can be harmful to a novice teacher's morale and confidence. In addition to shaping the energy and enthusiasm of novice teachers, the mind-set and attitudes of experienced EFL teachers might shape this culture:

> *When we used to have new EFL teachers joining more frequently, you have a very positive teacher coming, and she's joining the ELI, and you just see her positivity disappearing slowly. Then there's something wrong somewhere because she learns to see that, oh, this effort that I'm putting in, doesn't matter. It's not appreciated. I would rather do something else with my time. Her focus changes then and she gets affected by the mentality of others who are already in this work culture. Yeah, so you can see the snowball effect of that. (Phase.1, Amera)*

Amera called coping with the system the "*snowball effect*" – the classic feedback phenomenon that grows exponentially from a tiny initial idea that EFL teachers share due to their disappointment and subsequent shifting of energy, which influences others and negatively impacts their work. She suggested that the absence of acknowledgment and opposed work culture combined may result in substantial alterations in a teacher's thinking and attitude as time progresses:

> *You know what I figured out, like, as the years have gone by, and I've learned the system that it doesn't matter. You do it, you don't do it, it doesn't matter. (Phase.1, Amera)*

Dana examined the current condition of teaching at the ELI and shared thoughts on the benefits and drawbacks of the standardized curriculum. She acknowledged that every aspect of the institute setting is arranged and consistent. For example, the number of units, dates, and assessment schedules are all pre-planned:

> *To be honest, everything is organized and unified. Even the exams, the dates, the number of units are unified. Earlier, we had like 10 units, let's say you have the freedom to choose the date for the exam and everything. You owned the classroom, and had*

the ownership to decide everything, but now, you don't have this. So, there's no pressure on you. Everything is set up for you, you're just pushing the paperwork, you're just finishing the units that you're supposed to cover before the exam. Give the students practice revision. And that is it. (Phase.1, Dana)

Like Mona, Dana also noted that autonomy and responsibilities have been reduced since the new system came into effect. For example, EFL teachers no longer create or revise assessment tools as before. The teacher argued that this development has lowered the teacher's workload. However, she shared a memory of when educators controlled their classes more. She misses preparing tests and questions customized to meet pupil's needs. In other words, the teacher missed when they could customize their instruction and feel more in control of the educational environment:

I'm saying, right now it's easier for us as teacher who are at the same time mothers and housewives, to be honest, and you don't have a lot of things to do besides teaching. We don't even correct exams. Of course, I miss having ownership of my classroom, and I need to practice because, I feel that If I'm not given the opportunity to set my own exams or questions that suit my students according to their level and abilities, we don't like it as teachers. (Phase.1, Dana)

Dana acknowledged making personal sacrifices, such as traveling overseas, to advance her teaching career. This response suggests that she has dedicated a significant amount of time and effort to her job, and she deserves the "*ownership of my classroom.*" She preferred a personalized teaching strategy that resulted in professional development. She believes that it is more appropriate for the class teacher to examine students and enhance their skills in learning, thus creating effective learning for both EFL teachers and students.

5.3 Student Interrelationship with Teacher Motivation

The third theme that emerged from the data analysis is the relation between student and teacher. It is an important factor in the student learning process and at the same time teacher motivation. This section discusses the interrelationship between the students' level of interest in learning the language and engagement in class and its effect on teacher motivation.

5.3.1 Level of Students' Interest in Learning and its Relation to Teacher Motivation

The level of interest students have in learning English can significantly influence teacher motivation. In this context, a learner who is motivated will be eager to study. This, in turn, makes EFL teachers feel inspired to teach. Students' desire to learn directly correlates to the teacher's morale to instruct. Norah suggests that students' motivation to learn can directly impact her motivation to teach:

> *The motivation from students. Either they're motivated to learn, or they give you the motivation to teach them; the more motivated the class is, the more positive the teacher is. The other thing is that when you actually go to the classroom, and you see a full house, students are actually waiting for you, and they're participating and enjoying their time, and keep asking you questions, you feel that there's a nice energy in the classroom, you feel motivated and positive. Once you're motivated, you're going to be positive, and once you're positive, it's going to affect the way you teach. (Phase.1, Norah)*

To Norah, motivation among EFL teachers is influenced by the degree of student participation as EFL teachers may feel more fulfilled and satisfied when they see students actively participate in their classroom activities. For example, students can express genuine interest and pose questions, which increases teacher motivation. Norah added that she is inspired to provide more details and cover content in the syllabus when learners show eagerness and a desire to learn:

> *Sometimes, the content is boring, but I see the students feel excited. So, I get excited even more. Their participation, enthusiasm, facial expressions, and the desire to learn motivates me to give more. On the other hand, when students' facial expressions and actions say that it is enough and to stop, I just give them the curriculum. But when I feel that they want to know more than the curriculum and are motivated, I give them more than the curriculum. (Phase 1, Norah)*

Similar to Rana, Norah stated that students' interest and enthusiasm appear to impact her teaching methods. In this context, EFL teachers are motivated and ready to modify their method of instruction and deliver beyond what is prescribed when students show interest in

learning. This student-focused strategy shows that the instructor respects the demands and aspirations of the students and acts accordingly. Similarly, Hanadi not only gives extra materials, but also adopts more creative teaching strategies and promotes open conversation:

> *When I get high-level students, I feel motivated, I give more than I should, I elaborate, I become creative, and I open discussions because they are interacting, especially when we teach science students. They always have better language command than art students. I even try to go out of the box, play some games, and so on, and this is very enjoyable for me. (Phase.1, Hanadi)*

Hanadi and Norah aim to provide higher level students with a motivational educational setting, which is evident in their willingness to go beyond the curriculum, use creative methods, and the pleasure they take in instruction. According to Manal, it is difficult to teach pupils with strong language backgrounds or higher levels of language expertise. Nevertheless, this challenge motivates her to work even harder to engage them, offer them new resources, and ensure that the classes are prepared:

> *I like to teach students of science and medicine because they are enthusiastic and make you aware of your value. The girls in lower levels do not understand what you say, which makes you unenthusiastic. I feel so enthusiastic and interested when the students are of high levels, specialized, or with good linguistic background. It represents a challenge; I have to convince them, bring new information, and prepare the lessons well. Students with low levels, they don't like your course. They wait to finish and go. (Phase.1, Manal)*

Generally, being a teacher for lower-level pupils who do not actively interact with the instructional material may make the educator less motivated. Shahad stated that when students fail to indicate that they are interested or concerned with what they are studying, the teacher could start to doubt the value of her time and effort. This approach may cause the instructor to become frustrated and question their level of dedication:

> *If the students are not motivated, and they're not willing to learn, you don't feel that there's something that you want to give them and you just give a lesson and leave. I still feel that these students are not getting you, and you start questioning yourself and*

doubting yourself, or they just don't care. And at that time, you're like, why am I putting in all of this effort if they don't care? (Phase,1, Shahad)

Shahad thinks that students' lack of interest in the lesson or of concern about what they study, might affect the teacher negatively. She mentioned students' attitudes and pointed to a subgroup of preparatory year students that act in a way that defies control and regulations, showing a lack of responsibility and demanding little work from the teachers. This mindset may make teaching challenging for the instructor, increasing dissatisfaction and decreasing the desire to teach:

Another issue is that the prep students, we don't want to say all of them, let's say about 30 or 35% of them, think that okay, now I'm an adult, I don't have to follow rules. I'm not in school anymore. I can do whatever I want. I can talk to the teacher as I want…So, this the mentality of some of the students. I ask them the simplest question, why didn't you submit your homework? She doesn't give you answers. She just looks at you. And like, she gives you this feeling that she doesn't care; that she doesn't have to. You're not my mom. (Phase 1, Shahad)

Similarly, Lara stated that although she put enormous energy into the classroom, the students do not engage with it, so she becomes frustrated and discouraged. She added that students are less interested in classroom learning because social media impacts students who frequently get absorbed by their phones in class. As such, the teacher expressed doubts in the efficacy of her teaching and wondered how to get students' attention. She wondered if the lessons were dull or did not engage students enough:

I don't like when I make a lot of effort inside the class and don't feel that they appreciate it. And I can see that after social media, students are having their mobiles, playing or checking their social media accounts. They cannot stop, even for one hour just to focus with the teacher. This issue actually makes me wonder if I'm boring or what can I do just to let them, you know, to take their attention more in the class? This makes me feel that I need to revise myself. What can I do just to draw their attention more to me? (Phase 1, Lara)

Lara desires to change her strategy and show how genuinely she cares about increasing student curiosity and refining her teaching strategies. Just as Sara's experience with repeated students frustrated her and led to her becoming passive, Hanadi shared insights into teaching repeating students during the summer term. The teacher, however, called the experience the "worst" of her career. Learners were disengaged and did not even listen, and often refused to do the work assigned. The entire experience affected the teacher's motivation and energy:

> *We usually teach repeaters during summer courses; these classes have been the worst classes of my whole life. The students were bored. They didn't want to listen; they didn't want to work because they had already repeated the same course twice, which was demotivating. I was motivated to make sure that they passed because after failing a specific number of times, they would be expelled from the university. So, I tried my best; I tried to motivate them and talk to them about their careers and that there is hope. I did my best with them, but it drained my energy. (Phase 1, Hanadi)*

Moreover, similar to Rana, Lara mentioned the amount of work that English language instructors put in to meet the linguistic requirements of their students. The teacher explains grammar or English standards and repeats them in Arabic. To ensure that the repeating students comprehend the material, the teacher must make a significant effort while using this bilingual technique:

> *I speak with them in English, and it's actually more effort for me because I have to speak both in English and then I just complete in Arabic, particularly with grammar definitions and giving directions about the exam instructions. I feel that they are more active with me when I speak in Arabic. When I explain grammar rules or read a passage, I read it first in English, then repeat it in Arabic, and then ask questions in Arabic…Can you imagine the amount of effort that this takes? You know, I don't think that, because they are repeaters, it's okay, they are not going to understand their words. No, I feel more responsible that they need to pass. (Phase.1, Lara)*

Lara feels accountable to repeating learners. Even though she may encounter difficulties because of language issues, she has a great sense of duty to assist her students. She acknowledged that repeating students deserve the chance to comprehend the subject matter and she as a teacher is prepared to make additional efforts to support their education.

5.3.2 The Impact of Students' Feedback on Teacher Motivation

Rinad, like Mona, conveyed her love for imparting knowledge to students and her enthusiasm for teaching. They described teaching as rewarding due to students who are interested and open to learning. This implies that Rinad feels satisfied in promoting learning and assisting others in gaining new information. According to Rinad, instruction is not restricted to a single discipline or area. Rather, it is a passion derived from teaching that makes a difference in students' comprehension and development:

> *Teaching is a passion, and I have found that I like to give other people information. It doesn't matter what kind of information as long as they're listening to me, and they're adapting to what I'm telling them. So, my passion comes from there. (Phase 1, Rinad)*

According to Manal, the language teacher's job is to provide individuals with the information, abilities, or direction that they need. This viewpoint increases instructors' enthusiasm for teaching and assures their resolve to remain in this line of work:

> *I think that teaching is giving, and I like to give. When I teach, I feel that I give people something that they need. So, being able to give is my first motivation for teaching. When I started teaching, I enjoyed it and decided to continue. (Phase 1, Manal)*

Both EFL teachers expressed that passing on knowledge is a meaningful way to give back to the society. Under this belief of giving and enhancing students' learning, EFL teachers expect to receive feedback from students. EFL teachers may benefit greatly from positive comments, which may even be a consistent source of their inspiration. When students remark positively about teachers, they feel accomplished. In this context, language EFL teachers are more enthusiastic and develop a sense of worth in their work. Dana provided an example of students' positive feedback:

> *The other day, I was on the campus, and I saw a student that I taught three years ago who was about to graduate. She said that she had learned a lot with me, and that she owes me. I mean, the feeling that you get is priceless. (Phase.1, Dana)*

Dana described a conversation that she had with a student who came over and said that the instructor's lessons aided in her development. Dana said that the student's comments are valuable and a strong source of intrinsic motivation. Another example was mentioned by Lara:

> *I was at the airport, and someone was calling my name. I didn't recognize her because she was covered. And I asked her how she knew me. She told me that she had been my student seven years ago and that she still remembered me. She told me that I was the best English teacher that she had ever had. It was really touching. (Phase.1, Lara)*

Dana and Lara emphasized the long-lasting influence that educators may have on their pupils. The students' admiration and memory of the teacher's teaching skills show the deep impact on the student, even after seven years had passed. The experience is a constant reminder of the beneficial effect and deep relationships that education may create. Her emotional reaction to the situation highlights the importance of students' remarks even more.

Similarly, Norah noted that her pupils stay in touch with her, suggesting a relationship and influence that extend outside of the classroom. She received comments from students at the end of the course:

> *I have a folder in my mobile of comments and notes made by my students. Up to recently, my students have contacted me to say that I was a teacher that they would never forget, that, even after graduating, they would not forget my kindness, that I spread affability despite teaching a difficult class. (Phase.1, Norah*)

Norah expressed her positive feelings by posting a message she received from one of her students on social media: "*I have a sweet saying that no teacher can deny the effect of the words said to me by my students*". This response emphasizes the importance of the feedback received from her students:

> *These comments make us teach happily. When I teach a module, I remember the words of previous students and treat as it is the first class I have ever taught with the same love and care. I am interested in this much. As I have a lot of motivation, I don't talk about it. I feel that it is something that belongs to me." (Phase 1, Norah)*

Norah stated that these remarks make her “happy” and contribute to her wellbeing as a teacher. She treats each lesson with the same affection and concern as her initial one, remembering the expressions of her past students. Norah felt that the collection of students’ remarks represents something special and intimate, and she keeps it hidden as if it is something precious. The significant influence of kind words from students to a teacher inspires the teachers’ motivation and affects how they teach.

Similarly to Norah, Rana aimed to demonstrate the significance of unexpected compliments. For example, she explained that she felt happy and grateful for a girl’s surprising comments four years ago, also showing the importance of acknowledgment and approval:

> *Once, while I was going to the office on the elevators, I saw two girls talking. One of them said "Rana ****(last name)” is excellent teacher.” She does not know me, and I do not know her, but we met by chance while I was walking. It was a wonderful feeling that I will never forget. (Phase.2, Rana)*

These kinds of interactions can act as a reminder of the positive impact that language EFL teachers can have on students. Furthermore, Rana’s experience in this situation highlights how important it is to consider the consequences of her teaching, such as creating a valid reputation among students. Rana did not teach those students that she encountered at the elevator but realized that the power of her teaching affects people’s lives significantly, which gives her motivation to continue teaching effectively. She mentioned a second example:

> *I had a new situation last term, namely a student of mine with special needs. She can see with one eye and hear with one ear. She is 60 years old. This student went to Admission and Registration and asked to be with me for next term. They asked her about the teacher's name, and she said "Rana ****(last name).” Admission office told her that students always come and ask to join her class. I was very happy to learn that. (Phase.2, Rana)*

Rana described being delighted with the excellent track record that she has achieved. Although she has no personal contact with the deanship and admission office, that her credibility that had spread so far was unexpected and she is happy. The teacher appreciated the recognition of the positive influence that they have had on their pupils. She felt

appreciative and inspired by the acknowledgment from the deanship and admission office, which increased her intrinsic teaching *motivation* "*I am happy about this reputation reaching deanship and admission department whom I am not related to. They heard about me. I was so grateful*". She described an emotional satisfaction that results from unexpected appreciation and recognition.

Another experience was shared by Hanadi who had seen a former student on a bus who thanked her for some valuable advice. The student had even mentioned a particularly valuable teaching skill. Like Rana, Hanadi considered the value of these tales, emphasizing how they stick with EFL teachers and help them become more confident in their capacity to instruct:

> *We were on the bus between the terminal and the plane. She came to me, she talked to me, she reminded me of a class that she enjoyed with me. Those stories always stay with you as a teacher. And I still remember it, I don't remember the student. I mean, when she came to me, I apologized that I didn't remember her. And she said, "I know you don't remember me you're teaching a lot of girls. But you influenced me. I remember you I remember your class, I enjoyed it. And I benefited a lot from it. Your explanation of grammar made me love it for the first time, thank you for that. And that was like six years after me teaching her. So, this story has stuck with me until today. (Phase.1, Hanadi)*

Hanadi highlighted how this anecdote has stuck with her for many years and demonstrates the long-lasting benefits of having substantial discussions with students. The admiration and gratitude from the students are an ongoing reminder of the instructor's impact and the importance of their position in education. Her memory of this interaction indicates that such experiences stick with her for years, which gives her courage and inspiration in her teaching and motivation to enhance students' learning. Since their praises are not linked to immediate rewards or privileges, learners' feedback has even more authenticity to provide honest feedback on the learning experience:

> *Students know that we don't have control over grades. So, the relationship is authentic. If she's complimenting my teaching or talking about how she enjoyed the class, she knows that she will not get any outcomes because of that. She says it because she believes in it. (Phase.1, Hanadi)*

Lastly, Shahad experienced teaching a class full of repeating students who were almost expelled pending another failure. It is not easy to instruct a group of students who are mostly repeaters:

> *I was so sorry for these students. I can't forget them. I remember their sad faces. They said they were about to be dismissed from the university. At this period, I had no marks, and they knew that I could not help them. They were studying the same book twice or three times, and there was no enthusiasm, happiness, or optimism. (Phase.1, Shahad)*

Given these learners' lack of hope and excitement, it may be challenging for the English language instructor to connect with them and inspire them. Shahad expressed concern and care for such students. She felt empathetic and compassionate about the students' critical situation which resulted in developing a creative instructional methodology:

> *They lose their excitement and enthusiasm. So, I offered to try something different, and the girls agreed. We looked up 20 words in the dictionary and applied them in conversations outside of the context of the book. Because I had to teach the book, I used half the time for the curriculum and exercises and the other half for this dictionary work. By the end of the week, they had much knowledge. The term at that time was 14 weeks long. The vocabulary that they had learned began to excite them and help them speak with each other. (Phase.1, Shahad)*

The teacher's made the choice to adopt a different methodology by adding vocabulary-building activities to the prescribed text. This method sparked students' interest, promoted teamwork, and assisted them in honing their language skills in a real-world setting. This example shows that Shahad is dedicated, and the students' learning outcomes were thus significantly impacted. At the end of the semester, the students' excitement and desire to support one another had grown, and they had gained a remarkable amount of vocabulary. Many pupils passed the class to prove that this teacher's creative teaching strategies were successful. Shahad said that what she encountered in that class was still fresh in her mind even after 10 years:

Thanks to Allah (God), they all passed except for one student… I was so happy. They also came and thanked me. I remember their tears of happiness when they succeeded. They still text me occasionally, although this happened ten years ago. (Phase.1, Shahad)

This response suggests that the influence of positive instruction can far exceed the educational setting. In this context, positive instruction may continue to inspire both the teacher and the learner as even when the course is over, they still feel motivated to develop. Furthermore, teachers' intrinsic motivation may be affected by their religious beliefs as discussed in the following section.

5.3.3 Intrinsic Religious Teacher Motivation

Religiously inspired intrinsic motivation often involves moral and ethical teachings of religious beliefs. It can shape a teacher's style of teaching, encouraging honesty and responsibility in their work. Any teacher who possesses intrinsic religious motivation believes that making their work more meaningful is possible. For example, Dalia discussed how teaching and interaction with Allah (God) are related. The emphasis here is that education is a personal affair between Allah, oneself, and students. In line with her religious beliefs, Dalia wants to be evaluated in this life rather than the afterlife and takes teaching as an act of service to her students.

Teaching depends on your relationship with Allah (God). I mean, when the classroom is closed, no one knows exactly what is going on inside except you and Allah. I wish I could be judged now before the afterlife. I want to know my mistakes. Should I make a greater effort to create a structure for students? (Phase.1, Dalia)

In line with her religious beliefs, Dalia wants to be evaluated now and live with a relieved conscience before she is held accountable by God in the hereafter. She takes teaching as an act of service to her students as her religious beliefs motivate her to structure effective lessons for her students. In this context, Sara talked about how Islamic beliefs shaped her methods of instruction and brought up the idea of "Amana," around which Sara's teaching methodology is centred. This approach alludes to her sense of accountability and trust regarding her duties as a teacher and is an incentive that drives her to embrace her teaching responsibilities:

My motto is that it's part of my job and an Islamic way of saying Amana. So, I have this Amana, which means that I must come to class, no matter what. My negative feelings are kept shut at that time, because it's just like, okay, the motto of Amana is to go to class, but I don't make extra effort; I just teach the content to make sure that students pass their exams, and that's it. (Phase.2, Sara)

This feeling of responsibility represents Sara's commitment towards her students and her desire to live up to the expectations of her job as a teacher. Her spirituality helps her to find meaning and motivation in her work as a teacher. Sara discussed using a curriculum content-based teaching strategy to deal with students who lacked interest in learning English and only prioritized exam accomplishment. This method focuses mostly on teaching the material required to pass tests. Sara agreed that in such situations, the main goal is not to foster a profound comprehension and love for the language, but to assist students in passing the exam.

Moreover, Rana discussed her sense of religious duty to Allah as the main source of her instructional duties. She tries to exceed herself by carrying out her responsibilities as a teacher and giving her all in delivering high-quality instruction. Rana's efforts demonstrate her dedication to integrating religious principles and beliefs into the classroom:

Sometimes, it's like, we don't want to do discussions, skip the discussion. However, I say no, I will feel guilty because it can appear in your writing test. Sometimes, they pick some topics from their discussions, and I will feel really bad if something comes in the exam and we didn't talk about it before, even if you don't want to do it. We're just trying to find some ideas. We just have to do it. (Phase.2, Rana)

The teacher expresses awareness that some students may not see the benefits at first. Generally, Rana does not give up on students despite their difficulties. Rana feels guilty when students refuse to participate in the discussion or tasks that she considers crucial for their learning and exams. Her sense of self accountability and care for her students are reflected in her comments:

They didn't want to, but I insisted and said that they would regret not taking it. I have to make sure that I am doing my best; I have to say Alhamdulillah, I did what I had to

do. Most of them passed, and luckily, only one failed. But still, I felt so good because I did my best and did not not ignore anything that's important for them. (Phase.2, Rana)

Rana seems satisfied to see her students succeed. Her use of the expression thanks to God points to a strong feeling of purpose in her educational work, relation to God, and an overall feeling of personal achievement and satisfaction. Rana is satisfied and fulfilled with her duties as a teacher and shows joy in her students' achievements. Despite learners' resistance, Rana finds gratification in the knowledge that she did her utmost to teach and offer the appropriate instruction.

Additionally, Rana discussed how she incorporates religious ideas and beliefs into her pedagogy. It is preferred to follow Hadith, which are the sayings attributed to the Prophet Muhammad that emphasize the value of doing one's finest work and advocate asking God for assistance. She also referred to *Duaa* (prayer) and the significance of it to enhance learner motivation:

I always talk about religion. We have Hadith (لا تعجز واستعن بالله) "seek help from God and do not be unable" and do your best and keep your relationship good with Allah, I give them like supplications. I once sent students a YouTube video about sheikh Ayman, who was talking about this very important Duaa, he said that if you pray and say this Duaa, make sure you're accepted. I try to make them understand how learning is important for them and for their life. I tell them all the things that I faced when I was a student, and how I was able to overcome the problems and obstacles in my way, and that they shouldn't let anything stand in their way. If you do your best, you're going to be successful. If something happens and you're unhappy, you never know it's going to be good. Maybe Allah is gonna direct you to another place that's better for you. (Phase.2, Rana)

Rana stated a belief in God's plan and her efforts to encourage students to believe in it as wall. She promotes the idea that it may be for the best if something goes wrong that upsets students. It is suggested that Allah (God) might lead them to a different route or chance that is more conducive to their success. This perspective emphasizes a viewpoint based on faith and confidence in the purpose and design of a higher power. Furthermore, like Dalia, Rana mentioned *Amanah* toward students' comprehension of the lessons:

Other than that, I feel that Amanah means that I must be careful that I actually prepare everything to the fullest. I mean, I try to make the students understand the value of this lesson. Oh, you have to learn, you have to pay attention to me. You will see all your work in your test scores. (Phase.2, Rana)

Similarly, Kenda remembered a situation where students objected to studying a certain section of a book, but she persisted in covering it since she was worried that the subject would come up in the test. She is driven by the desire to make sure that instruction is in line with her values and principles and that their pupils are ready for the test:

I remember that before this, I was teaching a textbook, and there was this little part that students didn't want to work on, and I had to tell them that we had to. If they had brought it up in the test, they might lose only one point. Although they were willing to forgive me for that point, but I couldn't forgive myself. I want my money to be halal. (Phase.1, Kenda)

In Islamic ethics, the term "*halal money*" is frequently used to refer to income obtained in a way that complies with Islamic law and is, hence, acceptable. When Kenda states it in relation to the earlier discussion that she would prefer the funds to be halal, she wants to make sure that her earnings as a teacher are gained in a way that is legally and morally acceptable. Hence, her professional activities, including teaching, are consistent with her ethical and religious perspective.

In this context, Amera stated that individuals in places of power or duty, such as those in the government positions, should be aware of their responsibilities to carry out their jobs before God and the constituents that they represent. She noted that students should be the focus of every teacher, which means putting the students' needs and well-being first in education:

There are some people that don't meet expectations, and greater demands should be made of staff. And if you don't live up to it, find yourself another job. We can't keep you because you're not doing the job. It's not charity; we're here for the government. We're representing the people and are working to earn money. It's like a responsibility, right?

> *Because of Amanah, you will be responsible for this in front of God and in front of the students. (Phase.1, Amera)*

Amera's inclusion of religious guidance and teachings served as a source of motivation and support for her students. Amera's experience shows how teaching can be informed by intrinsic religious motivation. However, Amera, who was a Muslim American teacher, had a different perspective on religion when she was asked to take on additional tasks and extra teaching hours, as shown in the following statement:

> *You cannot use Islam to not appreciate me. Right. Like, I have, I have my rights here. This is my contract. So, you need to, like, honour that. As I told you before, incentives are needed, like, to get a certain percentage or a certain amount of increase in your salary.* (Phase 1, Amera)

Amera highlighted the tension between religious discourse and workplace equity. While Saudi teachers, such as Rana, referenced Islam as a source of intrinsic moral motivation and a means of overcoming demotivation due to external contextual factors, Amera used it as a basis for asserting her rights. She recognized the importance of "Amanah" and responsibility in her teaching duties; however, when it came to putting in more effort, she took a more professional stance and followed the contract she signed with the institute and required more incentives as a source of motivation for extra working hours. Her statement complicates the theme of intrinsic religious motivation by demonstrating how religious values may be experienced and mobilized differently depending on a teacher's position within an institution and their cultural background.

Some of the Saudi teachers, such as Rana, described their motivation as being deeply rooted in internalized Islamic cultural norms and expressed as personal or religious values, such as fairness, patience and a sense of duty. The theme of religious motivation emerged strongly in Rana and Mona's stories, as shown in Chapter 4 (see 4.1.1, 4.1.3). Mona described the lack of fairness in the assessment system as pity using the Arabic term "haram" and emphasized her duty to provide students with opportunities. This analysis shows that intrinsic religious values may have been a more sustainable motivation for Mona and Rana (Saudi teachers) than for Amera (American teacher). It also highlights the importance of understanding the relationship between religious beliefs across cultures and institutional power dynamics in terms of

inclusivity. Amera's beliefs helped her maintain her motivation, but an external interruption caused her to approach the matter from a professional standpoint. Therefore, there are various factors that affect teachers' motivation that emerge from the data analysis (see Table 6).

5.4 Teachers' Motivational vs De-motivational Factors

The contextual elements that influence teacher motivation vary among EFL teachers and across different contexts. thus, these research findings summarise the main factors that motivate and de-motivate EFL teachers desire to teach in a unified instructional system standard in Saudi Arabia. These factors illustrate what a complicated phenomenon teacher motivation is, and how many different contextual factors can operate to either bolster or erode individual teachers' motivation to teach. The following table 6 represents a list of these factors which were dominated mostly by the ten participants of phase 1 (exploratory phase):

Table 6 Factors that affect teacher motivation

De-motivational Factors	**Motivational factors**	**Mutual factors**
Students lack interest to learn	Students positive feedback	Exams and grading
Repeaters of the level	Students interested to learn	Pacing guide
Rules and regulations	Students' development	Coping with the system
Lack of trust	Successful Teaching strategies	
Modular instructional system	Self-professional development	
Correcting writing assignments	Religious intrinsic motivation	
Curriculum and materials		
Long classes		
Lack of classroom ownership		
Lack of professional development		
Lack of appreciation and teacher prestige		

Based on the table, it is apparent that the factors that have a negative impact on teacher motivation outweigh the factors that have a positive impact. As these factors indicate, the interplay of personal characteristics (religious attitudes) and contextual characteristics (student engagement, and institute policy) together create the circumstances under which teacher motivation emerges. The findings support the Person-in-Context view (Ushioda, 2009) that emphasises the need to consider the 'person' of the teacher within their particular 'context' of teaching. Individual differences are evident mostly in mutual factors. EFL teachers perspectives regarding unified exams, grading, and pacing guide differ. Some participants believe this level of control is reasonable to achieve fairness among students in the institute and more convenient, while other believe that it is lack of trust of the class teachers. The same factor can simultaneously act as a motivator and a de-motivator, depending on how it is processed by individual teachers.

This chapter explored the contextual influences shaping EFL teachers' motivation and demotivation within a Saudi institution of higher education. Drawing on thematic data from Phases 1 and 2, it examined institutional structures, autonomy and sociocultural factors through the lens of the PIC model (Ushioda, 2009). The analysis demonstrated how policies, curriculum demands, administrative communication and cultural expectations intersect to impact teacher motivation. The participants faced contextual pressures that created both demotivation and adaptive motivational orientations. The participants narratives presented in Chapter 4 validated and expanded on these themes. The lack of grading authority, which hindered how Mona and Sara adjusted to the administrative changes, is also presented in Norah and Rinad, which illustrates how contextual constraints shape and shift individuals' motivation. Together, Chapters 4 and 5 provide in-depth insights into how language institute where EMI implemented affect teacher motivation. Chapter 6 expands the evaluation of the major themes and factors to draw conclusions from the findings.

Chapter 6 Discussion

This discussion builds on person-in-context theory (Ushioda, 2009) as well as broader sociocultural perspectives on motivation (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2021). To understand teacher motivation holistically, it is not only intrinsic individual beliefs that must be explored but also extrinsic contextual and institutional influences. Chapters 1–3 outlined how autonomy, identity, beliefs and professional values shape motivational trajectories. Chapters 4 and 5 provided narrative and thematic evidence that motivation cannot be seen in isolation but must be viewed through the lens of these interacting factors. This chapter seeks to blend those insights by recognising that motivation is not static but rather a dynamic interplay between person and environment.

The findings of the data reinforce the importance of the concept behind person in context theory (PIC, see 2.2.6) that every individual is unique and differences between people must be examined (Ushioda, 2009). Consequently, it becomes necessary to investigate the underlying reasons for their distinctiveness. It is important to delve into the experiences and characteristics of these unique individuals and address them in this chapter. This chapter addresses the motivational journeys of the EFL teachers who all had different reflections on facing challenges or seeing transformations throughout their careers. It examines the role of individual motivation (e.g., love for teaching, to help students succeed) versus institutional pressure (e.g., curriculum modifications, administrator decisions, institutional support). In addition, it explores the diverse impact institutional contextual environments can have on educators' overtime.

Therefore, this section first addresses the motivational dynamics in relation to context which seem to affect female university EFL teachers' motivation in Saudi Arabia. Then it focuses on the construction of teacher professional identity and its dynamic interplay with motivation. Furthermore, it addresses the tension between instructional system standards and teacher autonomy, and micromanagement problems faced by EFL teachers. Next, it presents the effects of EMI policy on teacher motivation. It further explores the emotional dimension of teaching and the coping strategies utilized by teachers for teaching in the context. In addition, it analyses the effects of positive student feedback on teacher motivation. Lastly, it lists the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors identified in this study and their relation to the Person-in-Context framework.

6.1 Motivational Change and its Relationship with the Context

According to Dornyei and Ushioda (2021), contexts frequently change, and the changes can be linked to individuals' behavior and result in diverse motivational statuses over time. Teachers' development and motivation highlight the importance of the intrinsic drive to engage in meaningful activities in different settings, including university teacher education programs; however, understanding the impact these settings have on shaping their motivation is necessary (Kubanyiova, 2019; Heckhausen, J. & Heckhausen, H., 2018). These complexities make motivation tough to conceptualize; however, utilizing participants' narratives can help in understanding their motivation during their teaching experience and in light of their interaction with the social context (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Therefore, this section first discusses the four case study participants and their trajectory of motivational change over time within the teaching context, as their narrations represent the most significant findings of this study. The following section addresses the third research question that investigate motivational dynamics overtime.

6.1.1 Mona: The Autonomous Teacher

The results of this study are consistent with those of other studies and suggest that individuals choose teaching as a career to develop students into effective individuals of society (Watt & Richardson, 2006). The first case study, Mona, highlights the story of a motivated teacher who enters the teaching profession due to her passion for teaching and desire to impact the next generation. Thus, the start of her career was firm as she stepped into the classroom full of enthusiasm and determination to teach and help her students gain as much knowledge as possible. She enjoyed the independence and adaptability of her profession within those early years. She perceived herself as a reputable university instructor and an academician. The findings of Watt and Richardson (2014) support her experience when they state that the more supportive-autonomous leadership the more autonomous motivation for teachers. Therefore, the context at that time provided her with a sense of autonomy as a teacher to create exams and assess her students concurring with the argument of Ryan & Deci (2000) that perceived autonomy fuels intrinsic motivation. This ownership increased her desire to teach, which contributed to her professional growth as an educator.

Notwithstanding, over time, the educator experienced various challenges and difficulties that negatively impacted her motivation. Implementing the modular-based curriculum was a

significant obstacle to Mona. The curriculum was taught in an eight-week long module. She voiced her irritation with the time restraints and the pressure to finish the program in such a short time. Changes in the teaching context affected her teaching motivation. For example, the workload became unbearable and added more pressure on her, which might have impacted her instruction's effectiveness.

In line with Aydin's argument (2012), that the lack of communication on the part of school administration with the teachers might demotivate them, the drawback for Mona was the need for more administrative transparency. This lack of transparency in the communication channel and decision-making process created frustration, which resulted in demotivation, as she was not adequately provided with information and the necessary support from the administration. Mona was unhappy with the administration's lack of openness on what the exam would cover. It made her believe that she could not adequately prepare her students for the tests. The curriculum was loaded with material that was difficult for students to understand. She had no alternative but to cover it all, which resulted in intellectual exhaustion. This supports Skaalvik and Skaalvik's (2021) view that when teachers feel excluded from decision-making and unrecognized, it has a negative impact on motivation and job satisfaction. Notwithstanding such difficulties, the teacher's dedication changed noticeably. Initially driven by a passion for teaching, she moved to advocate for students and the establishment of a fair educational system. This shift symbolized moving out of her personal fulfilment and focusing on the learning needs of the students.

These findings are in accordance with findings reported by Cephe (2010) that teacher's burnout and academic work subsequently resulted in resignations from an English Preparatory institute at Turkish university. This is similar to Mona who talked about the emotional stress these difficulties had on her. It demonstrates the dilemma between the need to cover a lot of content in a limited time and the required understanding of it. It even made her lose motivation to teach in such a context and in the end, she made the tough choice to resign from her teaching postion and ask to be transferred to the Department of Business Administration. She found her time as a teacher in the Business Administration Department was fantastic as she valued the autonomy, trust, and accountability she had in creating curricula and administering exams to students supporting the idea of intrinsic satisfaction linked to autonomy. The fact that Mona decided to shift to the Business Administration Department and stop teaching in the English Language Institute implies that she was seeking

a change or an opportunity for growth in her career. It is clear from the narrative analysis that Mona prefers the flexibility to create her courses, tests, and evaluations. This suggests that her preferred method of instruction depends on her values of autonomy and creativity in teaching. She thinks that education should be customized to provide instructors with freedom and space to develop their teaching. In contrast to the true teacher autonomy case of Mona, we have a genuine learner autonomy case, Sara.

6.1.2 Sara: The Adaptive Innovator

The second case study explored the long and eventful career of Sara, an educator whose experience represents a perfect example of change and professional growth. At first, Sara was passionate about the English language, so she chose to major in it and pursue a career as a translator or language instructor. At the beginning, Sara had no professional teaching background and was insecure. She depended on the shared wisdom from other experienced educators, but she soon discovered that not every piece of advice fitted her unique personality and instructional style. As a result, she became unsure and doubtful of her teaching methods.

During the middle of Sara's teaching career, like Mona, she encountered difficulties when the ELI switched to a modular system during the latter stages of her job as a language teacher. The administration implemented the changes without considering the instructors' concerns and inquiries. There were times when students inquired about tests and she could not provide them with precise responses or assistance, which made her feel frustrated and helpless. Furthermore, she had to deal with demotivated repeating pupils who had gone through the course several times. The conflict she had with the department leadership worsened her struggles during that time.

Notwithstanding, Sara's reflexivity to the situation differed from Mona. Instead of quitting, she decided to continue her professional development which increased her intrinsic motivation. This also accords with Barin's (2018) observation, which showed that EFL teachers develop more intrinsic motivation with professional development. She opted for CELTA and Delta courses to enhance her qualifications**.** This gave her invaluable experience and built her confidence as a teacher. She started to focus on evaluating students' learning skills more than the materials and decided to change her focus as a teacher from preparing students for tests to developing their language acquisition skills. After this adjustment, she was satisfied with

her teaching approach and felt more assured of her teaching. She involved her students in a vibrant and meaningful learning process. She focused on professional development courses as her aim was to improve her abilities and stay motivated in her teaching profession.

However, in her final year as a teacher, Sara taught higher level students. She was responsible for teaching students in an academic skills-based course – specifically writing skills (e.g., essays) – which she admitted was hard and demanding since it was her first time teaching this kind of course. As the focus shifted to academic skills, Sara became overburdened by the added effort and the pressure to cover the content in a condensed amount of time. She admitted that she was over-stressed and that she and the students were becoming further apart. Sara could not be fully engaged with the pupils or recognize their responses because she had to concentrate on the new curriculum and efficiently presenting the material while focusing on students learning language skills at the same time.

The case of Sara concurs the findings of Tsutsumi (2014) that teachers are more likely to meet their needs of intrinsic motivation through self-growth and the joy of seeing daily student development in English classes. Therefore, Sara was very happy when her class did exceptionally well on the writing test, which happened despite the difficulties she faced. The survey of her students at the semester's end indicates that they were happy with her instruction. Despite feeling reassured by this input, she continued to think that her focus on overseeing the academic skills curriculum prevented her from developing a genuine relationship with her students. Sara is an example that life-long education and openness to innovative ideas can be significant in maintaining motivation. Her skill at turning failure into lessons and success despite these failures is an excellent sample of what a talented teacher has to offer when she is true to herself despite the challenges that she encounters. This example shows the greatness of personal independence and determination in the life of an educator especially when there is a lack of sufficient administrative support.

6.1.3 Rana: The Supportive Practitioner

At the beginning of her teaching career, Rana moved from being a student in the English literature major to an English language instructor which posed challenges. She nevertheless took a chance and found inventive ways like roleplays using her experience in theatre to inspire and engage her students. She stated that pupils at that time were motivated, showed

great interest in learning, participated, asked questions and engaged more actively in the lessons, which made her more motivated to teach. This also accords with Mukminin et al. (2015) views which showed that students' performance and excitement to learn was one main factor in teacher motivation. Rana compared them with current students who have lost the enthusiasm to learn the language. She emphasizes how crucial student motivation is to the educational process as it does not foster a conducive learning atmosphere when students lack drive and involvement.

Rana also connects the notion of motivation to autonomy, describing how the working environment at the language institute empowered her. She was responsible for exams and grading; however, later these powers were removed, and the papers of her students were marked by another teacher. In her view, administration did not trust her. These results are in line with the findings of Börü (2018) who states that internal motivation increases when associated with autonomy and trust from the administrative leadership. Therefore, the regulations of an institute which utilize a fixed curriculum cannot suit everyone's professional needs. Rana notes that instructors may become more preoccupied with finishing the course content than ensuring learners' progress due to the urgency to complete the curriculum in a set amount of time. Rana believes that this drive to rush may affect the standard of instruction and the student's educational goals. She shared her displeasure with the modifications made in the workplace, especially the lack of autonomy and trust. It appears that the idea of having someone else correcting her students' work indicates that leadership distrust her ability to fairly evaluate and grade her learners. This mistrust can potentially undermine motivation and drop educational standards in general. Rana keeps questioning the effectiveness of such an approach and if it really assists students learning.

This study produced results which corroborate the findings of previous work in this field. According to Butler, (2012) a significant contribution to teachers achieving motivation is when they value and develop a rapport with their students. Correspondingly, Rana's main sources of teaching motivation come from students' development and their passing the course. She cares about students, sees them as a family and ensures they benefit from her classes. Moreover, Rana attempted to inform the administration about the difficulties students experienced and the need to consider some alterations to the educational system. For example, she brought up the idea of making English as an elective course for some students

who had low language proficiency. She hoped the administration would consider her recommendations and act to enhance the learning environment for every student.

Lastly, during the COVID-19 pandemic, classes were shifted to online instruction. Rana stated that because only the students' names were displayed on the screen, the virtual environment put her and the students at a distance. As a result, she missed face-to-face interactions with her students. Her eagerness for face-to-face classes indicates that seeing her students learn is the main drive for her motivation to teach. Despite these obstacles, Rana remains an actively practicing believer as she adjusts her plans so that they are more efficacious for students. Rana's story illustrates that a teacher may make necessary adjustments in teaching and learn to adapt within a changing context to sustain motivation and impact the learning process for students. Likewise, the last case study, Maha, shared a similar teacher motivation with Rana who started her teaching career aiming to assist students developing their English language proficiency.

6.1.4 Maha: The Coping Educator

The last among the case studies is that of a teacher who once loved teaching but began to feel discouraged because of organisational and structural challenges. According to Maha, teaching was initially a positive experience because she was adding value to the students' lives. She started teaching in a private educational facility which increased her motivation. In this setting, students were self-driven to acquire knowledge. Later, Maha started to teach at the university language center. She described it as an enjoyable and productive educational environment where the semester system in place at the time was beneficial for both students and instructors. The duration of the semester helped Maha to understand students' weaknesses and observe them overcome their learning difficulties and that increased her teaching motivation. A year later, the modular system was implemented. According to Maha, the new system resulted in speeding up the curriculum. This change made it challenging to cover the subject matter adequately. The lack of time prevented her from offering more assistance to her learners. For example, she could not make presentations or plan extra activities. She believed that the system did not allow students to practice their language skills adequately. She also voiced concerns regarding lack of practice time which is essential for language acquisition.

According to Maha, the usage of unified tests with an automated marking system has created a perception of teachers' lack of power in the process of student evaluations. She stated that the role of a teacher was like that of an "actress" simply to follow instructions and play the part. The teacher believes that such diminished autonomy resulted in ruining student-teacher relationships. The final grade was awarded by someone else, and therefore, the space for interactions between the teacher and students was not there. The findings of this study mirror those of the previous studies by Wang et al. (2024) and Tsutsumi, (2014) which found that autonomous teachers were expected to be more creative and collaborative than those who taught in a controlled environment. This issue increased more during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic which caused several challenges for Maha. It was convenient for Maha to work from home; however, only a few students could participate in online learning platforms. So, many of them did not grasp the content of the topic well. Therefore, this study confirms the argument of Dhawan (2020) that online classes can be considered a challenging process for teachers when attempting to encourage students to participate in learning activities. This change was sudden and without any previous introduction or training in online teaching, which affected the teaching and learning processes.

Maha talked about how teachers took a robotic approach to instruction "teaching without feeling just as a robot". They concentrated on teaching without focusing on students' active engagement in class. She emphasized that a feeling of continuous frustration had resulted from recurrent setbacks during her career as the modular system undervalued her contributions as a class teacher. This dissatisfaction and indifference impacted her bond with the students, which made her less interested in the students' achievement or failure. A feeling of not being valued undermined her feeling of power and professional importance. Therefore, she reached a stage called "Amotivation" as proposed by Ryan and Deci (2020), which is a state where individuals lack value or interest to perform without intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. Despite this challenge, Maha coped with the system and did her job as required; however, without any motivation. This is consistent with what has been found in previous studies by Cephe, (2010) and Han and Yin (2016) who argue that when teachers face a lack of social prestige it negatively affects teacher motivation and results in attrition or burnout. All together students' lack of motivation to learn, lack of trust and autonomy, lost of prestige and self-respect resulted in Maha losing her motivation for teaching. This also concurs with the study by Shah et al. (2013) conducted in Saudi Arabia which found that when teachers perceived inadequate recognition they became emotionally disconnected from their work and

their students. This finding provides a vivid picture of how organizational structure, and lack of recognition might reduce teacher' enthusiasm in the long run.

The narrative of this teacher shows that there are times when a person's behaviour does not change over a given period. It is thus more sensible to link such conduct to personal attributes or achieved motivation; On the other hand, one's behaviour may deteriorate over time depending on the context. This correlates to the argument of Kubanyiova, (2019) and Heckhausen, J. & Heckhausen, H., (2018) who connect motivation to unstable circumstances that shape teacher motivation within their surrounding context. Rather than being a fixed, stable feature, motivation should be understood as a dynamic state that emerges through the interaction between the person and context. Thus, when the systems take control over teacher's freedom of action and do not acknowledge their professional competence, it brings feelings of low motivation. Such constraints negatively affect teacher's implementation of pedagogical strategies, emotion and motivation which can cause them frustration. Consequently, if these factors are responsible for the decrease in motivation and diminishing the importance of educators' roles, they must be tackled.

Here we compare the results of the proposed method, narrative inquiry, with those of the traditional methods such as surveys. The basic findings from the discussion of teachers' trajectories and the teacher storytelling analysis support the premise of this research that teachers' reflexivity, emotions and motivation are different although the teachers share the similar context of the English Language Institute and experienced the same institutional changes over time; yet each teacher exhibited different reflexivity to context. These findings support the use of person-in-context theory (PIC) by Ushioda (2009), which holds that individuals are unique in terms of how their personalities, characteristics, goals and experiences affect their motivation. Using this theory, the research has been able to reveal that their unique identities are shaped by how they interrelate with their surroundings and social interactions. The following section addresses the third research question that examines identity dynamics.

6.2 Teacher Professional Identity and Motivation

Findings from examining the narratives of Mona, Sara, Rana and Maha support the claim of Beijaard et al. (2004) and Bucholtz and Hall (2010) that teacher identity is not static. Instead,

it evolves continuously, being largely shaped by teachers' interactions with their immediate social, institutional and professional contexts. The experiences of Mona, Sara, Rana and Maha illustrate how teachers construct their professional identities in an ongoing manner through interacting with social and cultural factors in their respective academic institutions and their direct associations with students.

Mona constructed her professional identity through intrinsic motivation and a strong commitment to teach coupled with a sense of fulfilment at seeing her students achieve their linguistic goals. At the beginning of her teaching career, Mona regarded herself as a "teacher by nature." Her strong self-belief created a sense of positionality in which her understanding of the importance of teaching was consistent with social and institutional recognition of teaching as an autonomous profession. Initially, Mona had a strong sense of capacity and professional identity because she enjoyed the freedom to design and implement teaching methods, which drove her motivation and growth.

Over time, changes in her institution's structures, such as a rushed modular system with restricted timelines, increased her workload, stifled her flexibility and eroded her autonomy (see 4.1.1). These changes provoked a relational transformation in Mona's professional identity that created an uncomfortable contrast between her personal values and teaching strategies and her institution's expectations. Mona became demotivated and detached because she saw administrative rigidity and communication breakdown as signs that her institution undervalued her work and lacked trust in her abilities and judgment. This detachment from her role within the institution exposed her identity conflict, which led to exhaustion that further caused an identity crisis, thereby demonstrating how external pressures can impact internal motivation. Mona demonstrated her independence by transferring from the English department to Business Administration, where she successfully restored her autonomy, agency, power and professional identity and rediscovered her motivation to teach.

The story of Sara reflects Tsui's (2007) argument that teacher identity formation and professional growth depend on the combined influence of professional circumstances and personal factors. Sara's abilities to adapt to institutional changes and engage in self-reflection along with her strong desire to grow professionally revealed how these practices can help teachers construct their professional identities (see 4.1.2). In her early teaching years, Sara's sense of insecurity and her questioning of advice from more experienced colleagues—advice

that did not suit her teaching style—influenced how she constructed her teacher identity. As in Mona's case, the rushed introduction of a modular system in her institution threatened to erode Sara's autonomy. However, exercising her agency to pursue professional certifications (DELTA and CELTA) reignited her intrinsic motivation. Sara's decision to pursue professional courses revealed her commitment to self-growth and a sustained motivation to address institutional changes.

Sara's identity construction and transformation throughout her teaching career enabled her to shift focus from test preparation and language acquisition to an emphasis on student engagement and skill building, which revealed a link between her values and learner-centred teaching style. These experiences revealed that teacher identity is dynamic and changes over time based on a willingness to innovate and grow professionally. The transformation in Sara's identity showed that she is an adaptive innovator whose identity, agency and motivation come from self-awareness and a commitment to lifelong learning and improvement, even without the benefits of autonomy and institutional support. This approach to identity is in line with Erss (2018), who asserted that a teacher can practise agency by negotiating an organisational policy and being able to resist it.

Rana's case demonstrates how a strong emotional and relational commitment to students and a belief in student-centred practice can shape and transform teacher identity. By using her theatre background to engage students and overcome teaching challenges during her transition from literature student to English instructor, Rana displayed an emerging teacher identity—one that connected with her students both emotionally and creatively (see 4.1.3). She demonstrated a relational identity through viewing her students as 'family' and deriving motivation from their success and growth. Her caring personality drove her to push for reforms, such as making English an elective subject for lower-proficiency learners. This advocacy revealed that she is both a reactive and a constructively critical teacher. Through her actions, Rana demonstrated that a teacher can sustain a professional identity by showing care and flexibility while supporting learners and pushing for curriculum adjustments to help struggling students.

The emotional and psychological state of teachers' professional identities varies across professional stages depending on contextual elements, as emphasised by Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) and Rodgers and Scott (2008), this was particularly evident in Maha's case. These aspects reveal the effects of persistent structural constraints, loss of autonomy and

emotional detachment on the shaping and transformation of Maha's professional identities. Initially, Maha felt greatly motivated and derived personal value from teaching and building meaningful relationships with students and tracking their progress. The change into modular system redefined her positionality from leader to subordinate and altered her identity from an empowered and connected teacher to a disengaged one, which resulted in the vanishing of Maha's professional identity (see 4.1.4). She demonstrated a sense of positional legitimacy by perceiving herself as a contributor to student growth. However, the shift to a modular system and standardised tests eroded Maha's sense of professional capacity and autonomy. Her case revealed that a context that undermines professional value and self-worth through external instructional system policies and lack of trust can lead to identity collapse and demotivation.

These four cases reveal each one's distinct characteristics, which aligns with Derakhshan et al. (2020) and Bucholtz and Hall (2010), who found that teachers can co-construct identity through relationality with social meaning. These four teachers demonstrated this relationality through their different reactions to their institutional contexts and structures. Mona's and Rana's reactions can be explained from an institutional perspective. While Mona felt devalued and detached after she lost her classroom autonomy, Rana attempted to adapt by demonstrating her identity as a teacher who cared about her students' ability to pass the course and further develop their studies and future career prospects. The two examples illustrate relational distinction, in which teachers react to dominant institutional norms or changes.

Sara objected to advice from more experienced colleagues and instead developed a teaching approach that was consistent with her personality. She rejected their advice on the basis that it would have eroded part of her teaching personality, thereby indicating her awareness that her teaching practice needed to be unique to represent her character and beliefs. Maha, on the other hand, began teaching with a strong sense of teacher identity and then collapsed after her institution reduced the teachers' authority and autonomy.

The narratives of Mona, Sara, Rana and Maha demonstrate that teacher identity is dynamic and evolves over time because identity is a relational and contextual construct. Identity construction as revealed in the four case narratives is consistent with Joseph (2003), who claimed that the individual and social dimensions of identity are inseparable. Teachers have not one but multiple and often intersecting identities which they develop based on personal

beliefs and institutional norms. All four teachers' identities and motivational levels transformed over time because of pressures from their institutions, curriculum changes, professional experiences and their individual emotional investments.

The theories of Beijaard et al. (2004), Bucholtz and Hall (2010) and Joseph (2003) maintain that teacher identity is not a static trait but rather a complicated negotiation involving personal beliefs, social relationships and institutional expectations. Their arguments align with Ushioda (2009), who held that motivation is dynamic and may rise and fall along according to individual personalities. Social context affects motivation, and Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021) and Han and Yin (2016) stressed the value of supportive, empowering environments for developing and sustaining professional commitment. More specifically for EFL teachers, for whom English is used as a medium of instruction. Therefore, there is a need to create a balance between teachers' autonomy and instructional systems to support teacher motivation. The next sections explore how instructional system standards and micromanagement of teachers impact their motivation in an EMI context in higher education in Saudi Arabia where English is used as a foreign language. These sections address the second research question of this study that investigated contextual factors and their interactive influence on teacher motivation.

6.3 Balance between Instructional System Standards and Autonomy

Universities are increasingly adopting uniformity around the world. According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), uniformity encourages the promotion of incorporating standardised rules into higher educational curricula to ensure quality and consistency that benefit the society (2018). Instructional system standards encompass a uniform curriculum, such as fixed textbook content, a course pacing to guide what is taught by teachers in detail and uniform procedures and assessments applied to college preparatory programmes (Noddings, 2013). The ELI introduced the preparatory year English language programme to provide intensive EFL instruction to students interning at the university and follows administrative and academic practices which adhere to international higher education standards (university Handbook, 2022). There has been a degree of consistency in college preparation programs; however, such programs might not be aware of the extent to which they are effectively catering to the needs of students or teachers in diverse contexts (Noddings, 2013; Harvey, 2024).

Instructional standards might not be appropriate to the contexts of each university and even against some institutions' aims and mission statements. The finding of this study concrete with Harvey, (2024) who stated that quality assurance through instructional standards is just another administrative burden that decreases teacher autonomy, particularly when the assurance is accompanied by administrative control about how academic work should be done. In this case, accountability has outweighed improvement so that for some teachers there is no benefit from the extensive quality exercise. Therefore, quality assurance is seen as a political control mechanism, not just surveillance but as regulations of the higher education domain (ibid). However, not all educators possess the necessary skills or are sufficiently motivated by such programs. Some instructors may view a fixed curriculum as acceptable because they have the necessary skills and motivation to simplify it for their students. Conversely, some educators consider such a curriculum to be inflexible and unchangeable.

Although instructional system standards ensure equity and accountability, the results from this study suggest that it often compromises the level of autonomy that a teacher enjoys, resulting in reducing their motivation and creativity. This argument is in line with Noddings's (2013) claim that standardization undermines education's important objectives—creativity and critical thinking. He states, "The preoccupation with curriculum standards undermines efforts at facilitating creative processes" (p. 210). This issue was acknowledged by Rinad, she had limited flexibility to modify her instructions. Therefore, instructors eventually focus on covering the curriculum content of the pacing guide rather than the efficacy of the actual learning process, as the participant Amera confirms by stating "*I think we move away from what we want them to learn and just focus on which book we need to complete*" (see.5.2.2). This indicates that teachers might need more time and flexibility in teaching their teaching practices to ensure student learning and achieve teacher motivation.

This finding supports previous research by Noddings (2013) suggesting that it is important to promote teacher innovation rather than prohibit it. He goes further to say that teachers may not thrive adhering rigidly to a specific method or philosophy. Instead, individuals should examine a variety of concepts and ask themselves critical and analytical questions regarding their teaching approach (ibid). Similar views were shared by Shahad (see 5.3.2) when a turning point in her career helped her invent different pedagogical methodologies to teach, which included vocabulary-building exercises in the assigned readings, moving away from the pacing guide plan. This approach led to a rise in the students' enthusiasm who became willing to learn

and helped each other. Ultimately, to foster ingenuity within her students, it was crucial to actively support and implant it within herself as a teacher first, by being creative and going beyond the pacing guide plan.

On the other hand, some teachers argue that there must be some form of Instructional system standards and uniformity within the institution to ensure fairness. For example, Norah and Amera (see 5.2.1) believe that uniformity is more convenient as it provides them with more free time in their personal lives. They agreed on the value of the pacing guide because of the huge number of students entering the university every year and the need to ensure that the exam contents are taught equally to all these students. Hanadi and Dana look at the instructional system from a personal perspective and believe that they are not only instructors but also mothers with families, therefore a modular system allows for more breaks for their personal lives and ensures a balance between their career and personal life. However, teachers argued that instructors must have some space to put their own 'fingerprints' on their teaching, such as providing them with control over a small percentage of the total marks for grading students. For example, participation marks or creating exams to evaluate students' development and growth should be given to the teachers at the English language institute. Ameera and Maha suggested that not all 200 teachers at the ELI are reliable or competent enough to take responsibility for their own classes. As a result, they think that teachers with better credentials or higher degrees and more experience should be given greater freedom in their classrooms.

Maha argued that teachers should be treated differently according to their proficiency and teaching experience. Experienced teachers can be granted some level of autonomy and trust, while newly hired instructors have not yet developed a trusted reputation follow the instructional standards. This argument is in line with Jerrim et al. (2023) that some level of limitation on teacher autonomy becomes essential because new teachers benefit from structured mentorship. Therefore, the level of autonomy administrators provide can differ from one teacher to another.

The findings agree with Balintag and Saengsri (2022) who argue that the most unfavourable factors for teachers include administrative problems and the need for more opportunities for professional growth. They propose that the pedagogical approaches employed by teacher-participants, namely establishing a calm and conducive work atmosphere thorough

preparation, and providing assistance to students, were found to be effective in restoring motivation (ibid). The standard modular instructional system lacks time and causes pressure for teachers as stated by Dalia, Shahad and Mona. This means that a reasonable balance of autonomy might be useful to extract the advantages of rigid instructional standards when required but also remain flexible enough to ensure teacher motivation.

There are similarities between this study's findings and the argument expressed by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2021) and Wang et. al. (2024) who stated that a sense of competence, ownership, and job satisfaction are more common among teachers who experience higher degrees of autonomy; they note the correlation between instructors' level of motivation and the autonomy they enjoy in classroom teaching. According to the authors, autonomy is the most important factor in what drives people. Therefore, the question of whether autonomy or motivation should take precedence remains open. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2014) argue that teachers are inspired to teach when they participate in decision-making and arrange their own lessons, and that this is not limited to just teachers, but also is true for students (Ushioda, 2011). Their finding matches the results of this study; some of the EFL teachers who participated in this study were affected by the lack of autonomy. For example, Amera, Rinad, and Hanadi required a sense of autonomy to achieve a higher level of teacher motivation. Amera stated the importance of incentives such as "*acknowledgment*" or "*responsibility*" of her own teaching to maintain her intrinsic motivation to teach. Focusing on opportunities for professional development were the key constructs that helped minimize the impact of the rigid instructional system, thus enhancing the motivational level of the teacher and, accordingly, student success. This calls for balancing instructional system standards and autonomy, which require establishing an atmosphere consistent with educational outputs to expand the teacher's professional experience. Focusing on opportunities for professional development were the key constructs that helped minimize the impact of the rigid instructional system, thus enhancing the motivational level of the teacher and, accordingly, student success.

6.4 Micromanagement and Teacher Professional Development

The term micromanagement was first mentioned by Amera during the interview: "*I didn't feel trusted. I felt micromanaged*". Over the years, the concept of micromanagement has emerged to exert control over employees' performance, their production and behavior within the

organization (Iro-Idoro & Jimoh, 2021). In the teaching context, the professional development and job satisfaction of instructors can be significantly impacted by micromanagement. Teachers' professional development may be hindered when they are micromanaged and have limited control or authority over their professional work. This type of administrative surveillance typically leads to a stifling environment in which a teacher feels devoid of purpose and is unable to implement new teaching methods or adapt to the learners' needs.

In this context, the opposite of teacher' micromanagement is autonomy, which is when teachers have some freedom over the lessons and capacity to develop professionally and convey their responsibility towards students (Benson, 2007). The findings further support the idea of Derakhshan et al. (2020) that autonomy is vital to develop teacher professional identity. An autonomous teacher integrates creativity in their professional role which in turn gives them self-confidence about their qualifications and keeps them motivated. The results of this study indicate that teachers like Amera, Rinad, and Mona, need some sense of autonomy to grow professionally and eventually reach teacher motivation.

On the other hand, some teachers were frustrated by the lack of autonomy and a culture of distrust that affected their professionalism. Teachers in this study, for example Mona, Rana, Maha, Amera and Rinad, felt that they were not trusted enough by the administration to grade their students or create exams for students, or even view the exam papers prior to the exams, which decreased their level of motivation. Rinad casts doubt over the effectiveness of this regulation and links it to a lack of trust by the administration: "*Why don't you show us these things before the actual day of the exam?*" Lack of trust appears especially when teachers cross-check students' exam papers with other colleagues, which means twice the amount of effort. Furthermore, theses teachers expressed their frustration regarding the requirement for an additional instructor to be present during the speaking exam and to evaluate pupils alongside the class teacher. This micromanagement can hinder the process of using new skills and knowledge acquired from professional development.

Effective professional development is premised upon individual teachers being allowed to experiment what real instruction is and incorporate new ideas into their teaching. Amera, Shahad, and Hanadi expressed the importance of providing growth opportunities for instructors by allowing them to experience their teaching pedagogy and its effect on student learning. For example, Hanadi believed that implementing this strategy would improve her

instructional abilities. Despite the additional time and effort required, she expressed enthusiasm for creating exams to assess the effectiveness of her teaching methods: "*I have to mark, observe, think and crea*te". She believes that it is essential for teachers to undergo such analytical experiences to strengthen their teaching skills. Enabling a certain level of autonomy, such as autonomy in creating exams, designing activities or testing a certain teaching method, provides opportunities for greater flexibility to experience creativity and greater potential for teachers to develop and believe in their teaching skills. This argument is in line with Skaalvik and Skaalvik's (2021) who define self-efficacy as teachers' beliefs in their ability to organize and plan their lesson activities to successfully achieve their goals and enhance student learning. When some EFL teachers develop their teaching skills, they are able to enhance student learning of the target language, for example, Sara changed her teaching approach from curriculum content teaching to a skills development approach that helped her become more efficient as a teacher.

Allowing teachers to implement new skills and knowledge is indeed crucial and it is vital that the institution's leadership understands that some level of autonomy might strengthen professional identity, motivation and job satisfaction among language teachers. Reduced micromanagement and a supportive environment may give great weight to individual teacher autonomy, professional development and growth. Therefore, positive educational outcomes for students might increase. This argument is in line with Wang et al. (2024) who emphasized the need for "education institutions to prioritize intervention fostering positive teacher-student relationships, autonomy-supportive environments, and intrinsic motivation among educators" (p.1). Some teachers need to feel valued and appreciated, which in turn, enhances their commitment and enthusiasm for teaching. However, the very nature of micromanagement means it actively restricts the essential element of teacher motivation and professional development. All these external factors may decrease teacher motivation precisely as described by Amera and Maha. Diminished recognition and constant scrutiny finally resulted emotional separation from their work, which converted into a loss of motivation.

The discussion clearly demonstrates the complex relationship between teacher motivation, autonomy and their working context while showing how EMI-related policy decisions affect teacher engagement. The next section discusses how EMI policies affect EFL teachers in Saudi Arabian higher educational institutes.

6.5 EMI Influence on Teacher Motivation

The shift to EMI in the research context is informed by the Saudi Vision 2030 goal of economically empowering people by increasing their ability to learn and acquire new knowledge (see 1.3). This goal explains the implementation of a rigid EMI policy framework that prioritises compliance over teacher autonomy. However, this framework has revealed disagreements between policy and classroom realities and ultimately negatively impacted teacher motivation. Not surprisingly, the findings of this study indicate that teacher motivation and the desire to teach require balancing the strict EMI policies of instructional system standards with teacher autonomy in educational environments.

This study's results agree with Aljehani and Modiano (2024), who indicated that the application of EMI policy in Saudi Arabian universities could cause dilemmas for teachers. The educational journeys of Mona, Rana and Maha demonstrate how strict instructional system standards and the micromanaging of teachers create unexpected challenges within EMI teaching environments. Mona's ability to create meaningful lesson plans vanished when her supportive environment shifted to a rigid instructional system that prevented her from addressing her students' diverse educational needs. The restriction of her autonomy undermined her internal motivation and caused her to move into the business department. Amera's accounts of micromanagement and regulations echoed Mona's and Rana's frustrations about not being able to create assessments or preview exam papers beforehand. The institutional mistrust demonstrated deficiencies in terms of professional esteem and acknowledgement, which continues to undermine both motivation and professional teachers' identities, as was exemplified by Maha's experience.

The findings of this study concur with Aljehani and Modiano's (2024) study. They revealed that top-down enforcement of English instruction leads to student and teacher alienation, especially when students lack sufficient language proficiency. Their study suggested that a number of Saudi Arabian teachers will be presented with a choice: Teachers must decide between following the policy—with the potential to fail to teach the content properly—or violating the rules by introducing some Arabic to help students learn.

In the same vein, this study identified how teachers experience a conflict between policy adherence and meeting their students' specific learning requirements. This was in accordance

with Rana and Lara, who decided to explain grammar in Arabic for their students to be able to comprehend the lesson. In this way, they displayed professional autonomy by using Arabic in their classrooms despite administrative disapproval. The teaching approach used by Rana and Lara aligns with Albakri's (2017) findings, which showed that flexible instruction methods are crucial for adapting to particular EMI environments because strict English-only rules can create barriers to comprehension and exclude students who are not proficient in English, particularly in contexts where English is used as a foreign language. When Rana found that her students interacted with the lesson when they could communicate in Arabic, she became more confident about her teaching strategy and was more motivated to teach.

This study found that EFL teachers who do not follow instructional standards in EMI context achieve professional development and motivation. When Sara began maneuvering the pacing guide and implemented reflective teaching practices, it represented a change in her teaching identity from teaching curriculum content to teaching skills development, which helped her become more efficient as a teacher. This finding was in line with Kennedy (2005), who suggested teachers should be encouraged to conduct action research to enable them to critically reflect on their practice and ultimately enhance their professional development. Sara's self-directed and critical reflection on her teaching personality and the training courses she took to enhance her teaching strategies mirrored this approach. With this strategy, Sara achieved her professional development goals, constructed her own teaching identity and became more motivated to teach. This finding from Sara case, also concurs with Nghi and Hue's (2024) study, which suggested that professional development (PD) is a strong motivational force that improves teachers' teaching methods. For this reason, such strategies should be implemented within EMI and PYP programmes to address teachers' satisfaction, emotional needs and increase their motivation to teach.

6.6 Teachers' Emotion and Coping Strategies

Teachers employ different strategies to cope with the instructional system, which is essential to ensure that they will stay motivated, maintain effective teaching practices, and develop a positive learning environment for their learners. In line with Kennedy (2005), Balintag and Saengsri (2022) argue that "self-regulation strategies and pedagogical strategies are useful for the teacher to cope with" demotivating factors (p. 1565). Self-regulation is encouraging oneself and thinking positively to prevent intense feelings or to inspire oneself. It is a vital

coping strategy for teachers working under constraints on their instructional practices. It is the means of promoting self-reflection that might lead to efforts to seek activities that substantially increase morale and motivation. This is presented by the case of Sara who overcome demotivation through sustained engagement in professional development courses that provided opportunities for innovative teaching approaches and strategies.

However, the findings of the current study do not fully support the previous argument. The coping strategies of self-regulation suggested by Balintag and Saengsri (2022) in confronting difficulties during teaching did not match the copying strategies of most of the participants in this study. After dealing with the strict instructional system standards and long teaching sessions for a number of years, some of the EFL teachers' passion for teaching gradually decreased and their efforts to cope with the instructional system reached a state of "*Emotional exhaustion"* as in the cases of Amera, Maha and Mona. This argument is in line with Wang et al. (2024) that the absence of job satisfaction and autonomy result in emotional exhaustion which it is linked to teacher burnout and high turnover rates, and deteriorating teacher motivation.

Moreover Like Maha, Amera and Dana reached a state called "Amotivation" where they believe that there is no point of what they are doing and they have no power to change it (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Dornyei & Ushioda, 2021). As a result, they experience a decline in interest or enthusiasm for teaching and begin to adapt to the system by simply fulfilling their job requirements. As a coping mechanism, teachers attempt to disregard the students' learning and begin teaching with a robotic teaching attitude, which means finishing the curriculum rather than ensuring student learning.

Moreover, in line with Hopkyns and Gkonou (2023), who suggested that emotions are dynamic over time across various settings, especially within EMI in higher education contexts where a mixture of emotions exists. This study reveals that the complexity of the emotions some teachers experience and the unique set of challenges they face during their teaching career, such as high workload, time pressure, lack of autonomy and incentives, student disengagement, and institutional pressures that eventually cause frustration and reduce teacher motivation. Some teachers face emotional exhaustion when teaching repeaters, such as in the case of Sara and Hanadi who were demotivated to teach. Hanadi stated that her summer classes were the worst she had ever taught, "*it drained my energy*" due to the

students' disengagements in classroom activities. Moreover, instructional constrains can also affect the teachers' emotions and they begin to be passive about teaching Like in the case of Sara and Ameera. A similar pattern was obtained by Heckhausen, J., & Heckhausen, H. (2018) stated based on their research, it appears that daily setbacks can significantly increase the risk of decreasing individual motivation. For example, Amera stated that the teacher "*will become very cynical if they are not motivated by other things that are external*". She develops cynicism over time because she cannot help students since she cannot modify the regulations within the institution. Initial unpleasant feelings can increase over time and lead to demotivation and coping with the system, can have the "*snowball effect*", which Amera mentioned.

Amera suggested the value of some external incentives such as money or acknowledgment. Despite Amera's suggestion of financial incentives, the results of this study question a key finding from earlier teacher motivation investigations by Pourtoussi et al. (2018) and Gultekin and Acar (2014) that consider income as a significant external force for teacher motivation. The remaining 13 participants in this study did not mention any issues or concerns regarding salary increases as a source of motivation. Therefore, the emotional satisfaction of female Saudi language teachers mainly relies on students' participation and autonomous teaching practices not on financial compensation.

It can be inferred from the Amera's narration that the disappointment and loss of interest felt by experienced teachers can have ripple effects on newly hired teachers and eventually their students. For example, Dana expressed her longing for the days when teachers had more control over their classrooms, and they had the power to develop tests and modify the tasks to fit the learning needs of their students. Despite these hurdles, the instructor accepted and acknowledged the present system and coped with it. A cross series of studies (e.g., Caruso, 2019; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2021; 2018; 2019; Cephe, 2010) are in line with this finding as they demonstrated that teachers' perceptions of value consonance, the extent to which teachers share the institute norms and values, are positively related to teachers' professional identity, self-efficacy, engagement, sense of belonging and job satisfaction, but negatively related to teacher burnout and motivation to quit the teaching profession. Disconnection between the institute and the language teachers prevents teachers' engagement that might affect their motivation to teach and investment in student learning. Consequently, demotivated teachers and their lack of interest in classroom teaching can directly impact learners' progress and achievement.

6.7 The Effect of Students' Positive Feedback on Teacher Motivation

The findings appear to be consistent with other research by Dornyei & Ushioda, 2021; Wang et al., 2024 which found that the learners' outcomes are directly related to teacher motivation. There is a close sequential linkage between teacher motivation, students' perceptions and positive feedback from the learning experience. The results of this study explain the relationship between teachers' long- term, intrinsic motivation and their students' academic accomplishment and feedback as seen in the case of Shahad, Rana and Hanadi. When these teachers know that students achieve competence, they feel valued, appreciated and encouraged to teach. The feelings of being valued and appreciated directly impact their sense of commitment and positive intrinsic motivation for teaching. In accordance with the results, a previous study by Zou et al. (2024) demonstrated that teacher-student relationships have a mutual impact on motivation. They noted important factors that contribute to effective teaching and learning, including teachers' and students' intrinsic drive for teaching and learning. In other words, a positive teacher-student relationship can motivate and engage students. For instance, if students are struggling to comprehend and pass the course, the teacher can help them by teaching out of the curriculum to address the student's needs.

These results agree with the findings of other studies by Mukminin et al. (2015), in which teachers are motivated when students are active and perform well in classroom activities. Rana, Shahad and Hanadi exhibited a higher level of intrinsic motivation and desire to teach proactive students. Thus, one significant finding of this study revealed that when students are active and respond well, their feedback and appreciation increased Rana, Shahad and Hanadi's teacher motivation. Students' comments and appreciation serve as long-term intrinsic motivation for these teachers throughout their professional careers. For instance, Shahad who vividly recalls a group of students who had to repeat a course three times. When she taught them, vocabulary building strategies, all of them passed the course, which made her extremely motivated to teach as she realized how much she assisted those students to continue with their university education. Furthermore, she witnessed the transformative impact her efforts had on students' future as she expressed "*I remember their tears of happiness when they succeeded. They still text me occasionally, although this happened ten years ago*" (see 5.3.2 p. 169). The fact that this incident is still within her memory ten years later shows how much she is intrinsically motivated by it up until now.

The students' success and responsive feedback formed a positive feedback loop for Rana's intrinsic motivation. The act of students referring to her name at the deanship and admission office to enroll in her class (see 5.3.2 p.167) boosted her reputation and self-confidence and increased her motivation for teaching as a career. Although it happened six years ago, this experience remains vivid in her memory, highlighting its importance. Moreover, these satisfied teachers try to become more effective and engaged in the learning process. They use significant effort and show commitment to their professional excellence. Such validation is essential as it enhances teachers' strengths to overcome career challenges, helping them to have the same enthusiasm for teaching. The output was to give Rana positive feedback, which improved the students' learning experiences and positively motivated her (see 4.1.3). Therefore, positive student feedback is also likely to encourage teachers to continue with their practices and seek further innovative ways to enhance the learning experiences, which could result in enhanced professional growth. Furthermore, Hanadi recognized the authenticity of the compliments from students, considering that teachers had no control over grades. Therefore, due to the absence of immediate rewards or special benefits, learners are more likely to provide genuine feedback on their learning experiences. As a result, their comments not only pleased the teachers but also stimulated their enthusiasm, leaving a lasting impression on their memory throughout their teaching career.

These results are consistent with studies by Richardson at el. (2014), Zou et al. (2024), and Wang et al. (2024), which confirm a connection between teachers' intrinsic drive to teach and students' intrinsic drive to learn. Therefore, teachers’ motivation fluctuates according to student performance and interest to learn. The participants in this study, Norah and Hanadi affirm the existence of a correlation between students' engagement in class and teachers' motivation to teach. The greater the students' enthusiasm and interest in learning, the more teachers are motivated to educate. Similarly, Hanadi, Mona and Manal stated that teaching students in the science and medicine departments was more favorable to them as students’ proficiency level was high and they were more interested to learn than the students from the art department. The active participation and collaboration of students motivated teachers, which is why teacher motivation increases significantly when highly capable students surround them.

Students’ motivation is mediated in an indirect way by teachers' motivational styles and teacher-student relationships. More concretely, this is seen in the case study of Rana who feel

that her teaching approach is supported and valued by her students show higher a level of intrinsic motivation towards her teaching approach. This is consistent with the findings of a previous study by Kim and Song (2016) that instructors' beliefs that a teaching method will enhance students learning will increase teacher motivation to teach. More concretely, Rana who developed constructive relationships with her students; she accomplished this by explaining grammar using Arabic enabling students to connect their thoughts and engage with the content critically. Therefore, positive Feedback of this kind can motivate a teacher significantly and push them to refine their techniques further. Teachers can try out novel ideas and adjust them to the requirements of their learners. The role of Rana's intense feeling for students' successful response to her teaching style (See 4.1.3) made her ensure that students comprehended the lesson and the learning objectives were achieved, and this helped increase her motivation and, in turn, her effectiveness in maintaining student learning experiences. Despite its success, this teaching method was not accepted by the institute's evaluator, although the implantation of such teaching strategies enhanced students' and teachers' motivation. Therefore, the result of putting too much emphasis on EMI polices stretched much further than just teacher motivation and creativity and eventually affected the learning process.

6.8 Student Development Links to Religiously Driven Teacher Motivation

The education system and the education curriculum in Saudi Arabian institutions are strongly influenced by social, cultural, and religious norms that are prevalent in the Arab world. Due to the cultural heritage, there are deeply religious foundations of society, which are being influenced by globalization. These factors have a significant role in the curriculum and teaching system in Saudi Arabia (Almalki, 2022., Shah, at el., 2013.) The issue of religiosity emerged unexpectedly in the data analysis, and it was constantly highlighted in relation to various aspects of the context, particularly students' development. Apart from education, a religious faith shapes a person's thoughts and life in several ways. Findings show that some teachers can unconsciously reflect on the transformation of their religious beliefs and spiritual convictions, which could influence their personal and professional selves in different ways. The findings coincide with Hartwick's (2015) argument that teachers might weave certain behaviours directly from their spiritual beliefs into their approach to teaching. For example, participants Dalia, Kenda, Rana, and Sara showed a correlation between teaching, Allah (God) and students. Teachers' religious beliefs and personality contributed to their intrinsic

motivation to teach. The idea that teachers are being evaluated by God makes them feel more responsible to perform their jobs properly. Surprisingly, the findings suggest that religious beliefs were found to be embedded in the Saudi female language teachers' instructional behaviours.

In a similar vein, the concept of “Amanah” was shared by Amera, Mona, Rana, and Sara. They expressed their feelings of responsibility that God trusted them to do their duties of educating and assessing their students to develop. This is not just from professional perspective; it is also their personally held intrinsic beliefs that provide them with a sense of accountability and drives them to instruct students effectively despite the challenges of the system. These findings are supported by Yusuf and Triyonowati (2022) who stated that intrinsic motivation can trigger a person into bringing out a strong desire to work with a stronger will, and as a strong person's behaviour is reinforced to reach one's goals. It can be argued that the religiosity of teachers in institutions within the Islamic context plays a role in the form of mediation and facilitation for some teachers’ intrinsic motivation to show loyalty to their students and institution. For example, Rana’s attempt to follow the pacing guidelines and cover everything prescribed in the curriculum to follow the regulations of the institution and practice all that is expected of them. she had feelings of guilt if she neglected to explain the materials to students or students failed to pass the module. This guilt is related to kenda’s intrinsic religious beliefs that it is part of her duties (Amanah) as a teacher to effectively deliver the curriculum content and earn “Halal money.”

This finding supports previous research by Hartwick (2015) and Albishi's (2021), which proposes a link between teachers’ religiously driven motivation to their occupations as a spiritual call that connects positively with student learning. As a result, they may practice and perform their duties by aligning them with their religious beliefs. This is presented in Rana’s case, contributing to religious moral values through her teaching approach. She integrated some of the religious beliefs to enhance students’ motivation to learn. She advised students using the statements of Prophet Muhammad while highlighting the importance of “*seek help from God and never giving up*” on learning (p.172). She incorporates religious guidance and teachings to offer students the inspiration and motivation to continue developing and “think positively”, winch is according to Balintag & Saengsri’s (2022) findings considered an effective strategy to overcome demotivation. The text this tutor selected and presented to students

fitted her philosophy of life and belief that religious texts might greatly impact her pupils' learning experience.

However, Amera, a Muslim American teacher, demonstrated different ways of incorporating religion into her professional life compared to her Saudi colleagues, Rana and Mona, who defined their professional motivation through religious principles of fairness, patience and duty. Amera stood firm by referencing her contractual rights and professional limits and refusing to do extra, unpaid work. She stated, “You cannot use Islam to not appreciate me” (p.174), she is insisting on having external rewards, such as incentives and payment that she is due based on both her professional and religious rights. This demonstrated that the function of religious discourse varies according to different perspectives. Religion shapes both intrinsic motivation and moral purpose as it integrates into national, cultural and institutional life, as it did for the Saudi teachers Rana and Mona. Hence, Amera valued her religious beliefs while maintaining expectations for professional respect and contractual fairness. The varying responses of Muslim teachers to motivational experiences showed that cultural standards and organisational power dynamics determined their different beliefs and perspectives.

In conclusion, even though the role played by teachers' intrinsic religious motivation in the development of students required further empirical validation, the current study has shown that teachers' religious beliefs and motivation can affect their teaching practices and in order to impact students' development. Matching teaching styles with their spiritual values and believes can result in intrinsically motivated teachers and supportive classrooms.

Therefore, it is necessary to capture the relationship and the overall influence of the three major themes which emerged in this study, namely, autonomy, professional identity, and the teacher-student relationship and their contribution towards teacher motivation. The first theme 'teacher autonomy,' indicates the level of decision-making, curriculum planning, testing students and the choice of instructional approaches by the EFL teachers. This sort of autonomy helps in the sense that teachers can assume control of their responsibilities, given that self-direction enhances intrinsic motivation and commitment towards the teaching profession. Enabling professional freedom forms the basis of professional development because it empowers teachers to shape and evaluate their practices in line with their beliefs and approaches to teaching. Thus, autonomy benefits their motivation and helps teachers develop the feeling of ultimate professional identity.

As a result of freedom and autonomous practices within EMI contexts, teachers interact with students and develop teaching approaches that suit their student learning needs, such as the use of L1 in classrooms. Teachers then adopt new teaching approaches which lead to the formation of a teacher's professional identity. When teachers fully identify with the profession, they are the most confident and are, therefore, more hard-working and effective in their duties. Furthermore, this confidence is a crucial factor in diminishing emotional exhaustion. When teachers are confident and competent, they can manage the emotional challenges of teaching and learning, avoiding burnout and continuing to deliver their best performance. Decreasing emotional exhaustion and increasing motivation led to the growth of strong teacher-student relationships. When teachers are independent, self-assured, and emotionally stable, they will likely interact positively with their students. For example, when Shahad developed a vocabulary-building strategy to assist repeating students to pass the level and eventually they did, she became more confidant and motivated. These relationships involve trust, respect, and communication, which in turn enhance the motivation and job satisfaction of the teacher. Moreover, there are several contextual factors affecting teachers' motivation that have emerged in this study indicated in the section below.

6.9 Intrinsic vs Extrinsic Motivational Factors

Since motivation ensures teachers' effectiveness and job satisfaction in the classroom, considering factors that aid in the quality of education among teachers and students becomes crucial. Following the previous discussion of the dynamic nature of teachers' motivation in relation to the teaching context and the influence of these contextual factors on the teachers' motivation to teach, this section discusses several intrinsic and extrinsic motivators that emerged across the data analysis. It underlines common trends and unique challenges faced by the EFL female teachers in the Saudi Arabian context. Overall, it aims to address the first research question of the study.

6.9.1 Intrinsic Motivational Factors

Passion for Teaching and Student Interaction

Passion for teaching and student interaction and appropriate relationships with their students are two instrumental forces for instructors; this has been proven in various studies such as those conducted by Kızıltepe (2008) Han and Mahzoun (2018). One can consider the teacher's attitude in the case of Mona to be a true reflection of passion for education. She considers

herself a “natural teacher” who approaches teaching with great enthusiasm. The findings reveal that the teachers’ zeal to teach and her enthusiasm were high during the initial years of her teaching, hence making teaching a delight. Teachers in this study have a passion to teach and enhance society by developing student learning. For example, Rana stresses interaction with the students as she enjoys close relationships with them including sharing physical gestures of encouragement.

Commitment to Student Learning and Success

Although the EFL teachers Like Mona and Rana faced frustration and challenges within the instructional system, they still have the intrinsic commitment to deliver the content, provide educational development and care for the well-being of learners; teacher motivation relates to students’ motivation. This finding is compatible with the research of Zou et al. (2024); and Mukminin et al. (2015). Concern for the student's growth and general well-being is shared by teachers in this study. For example, in the case of Mona, she caters to the students' needs by showing her concerns about justice and rights and fostering enhanced critical language capacity. In the case of Rana, she focuses more on student understanding by using Arabic in teaching, although it is not the policy at the ELI to use the learners’ L1 in classrooms. Finally, Shahad demonstrates her responsibility in making students learn by changing teaching techniques for better understanding. This deep commitment to student achievement serves as a solid intrinsic motivator, moving teachers to excel beyond their regular duties.

Personal and Professional Growth

Even though the teachers are micromanaged, they demonstrate an inner drive towards their professional growth. For example, teachers reflect upon their devotion and constant commitment to their professional learning (Cephe, 2010; and Derakhshan et al. 2020). For instance, in the case of Sara, she takes courses like CELTA and DELTA to work on her language teaching skills and to develop her teacher identity. She seeks multiple avenues for professional development to further fine-tune her teaching competencies. This type of intrinsic drive for growth allows one to confidently overcome new challenges, innovate unique pedagogies, and provide quality education to students.

Religious and Moral Motivation

Many teachers Like Dalia, Sara, and Maha consider their religious beliefs and moral values to be motivational determinants of teaching. In concurrence, a study conducted by Hartwick

(2015) and Yusuf, Triyonowati, (2022) discovered that instructors' religious beliefs have a favourable impact on their students' learning. Indeed, to some teachers faith and morality guide their behaviour towards students and commitment to teaching. This is because such teachers believe that teaching is an exercise of their spiritual duties which impacts their motivational orientation.

6.9.2 Extrinsic Motivational Factors

Curriculum, Institutional Constraints and Instructional Standards

External factors, such as curriculum demands and institutional restrictions, can influence the motivation and experiences of teachers. Some EFL teachers in this study showed frustration with the modular system and the limited time available to cover the curriculum as in the case of Amera, Hanadi and Maha. The teachers want to spend more time on activities and ensure that the students have grasped the content, but this has to be done within the constraints of the system. This argument is in line with the findings of Noddings (2013), Tsutsumi (2014), Doyle and Kim (1999) and Aydin (2012) that lack of freedom and rigid guidelines around the curriculum dictate how far the teachers can go to prepare and cover content for exams at the cost of interactive learning. These external factors decrease teachers' classroom autonomy, lower their motivation, and bring down their job satisfaction. This is further compounded in EMI contexts, where EFL teachers as in the case of Rana and Lara must manage both content delivery and language demand policies (Albakri, 2017), often without adequate institutional support or curriculum flexibility.

Lack of Transparency and Autonomy

Another external factor that impacts teacher motivation is the lack of transparency and autonomy in the decision-making processes. For example, Mona and Rana expressed discontentment with the lack of transparency in the exam content, which puts the teacher in a challenging position to prepare students or discuss issues related to the test results with them. If teachers cannot provide satisfactory answers to questions that students may raise, this makes the teachers feel frustrated and embarrassed as they lose some of their authority. The relationship between teacher motivation and autonomy has been discussed by previous literature Roth et al. (2007), Ryan & Deci, (2020), Tsutsumi (2014) and Wang et al. (2024). Börü (2018) confirms these findings and states that teachers' loss of trust and autonomy inevitably creates frustration for teachers. As a result, it hinders them from being able to provide

personalised feedback and, in turn, from being able to monitor the progress of their students. This may also have an impact on confidence, and therefore on their creativity and ability to innovate as a teacher.

Validation and Recognition

For some teachers, validation and recognition come from outside such as from administration, principals, peers, or even students, as in the case of Sara, who was initially doubtful about her effectiveness in teaching but became motivated by the positive feedback and high grades that students attained on writing exams. In general, teachers emphasize the significance of external rewards, such as recognition (as a university academic instructor) which Maha describes as a "prestige" and chances for greater responsibility or career advancement. Han and Yin (2016) and Cephe, (2010) confirm that this social recognition is necessary for motivation to grow gradually. Moreover, this kind of acknowledgment enhances the teachers' morale and strengthens their belief in their teaching career choice. On the contrary, Rana feels less motivated when an evaluator fails to value her efforts to adjust the teaching methodology, so that the students understand. It negatively influences teacher motivation or even discourages them from effectively achieving their tasks.

Student Performance and feedback

Teachers' motivation is affected by students' participation and development; this argument is presented in multiple language teachers' motivation studies (Zou et al. 2024; Erkaya, 2013; Mukminin et al., 2015; Kim and Song. 2016). Teachers like Shahad and Hanadi wish to see their students grow and develop, and this becomes a source of motivation for them. Watching those efforts come to fruition, during the teaching course, strengthens their commitment to teaching and their drive to keep making a difference in students' lives. However, one external factor that may affect teacher motivation is the challenge of keeping students interested and participating during long, extended class sessions. If students get bored or experience burnout, this is reflected in the teacher's morale, which affects their desire to teach. Hanadi and Sara express frustration with repeating students, so they aimed to deliver only the book content effectively. On the other hand, some teachers like Shahad and Rana tried to make the repeating students realize their potential by inspiring and encouraging them in their academic journeys. Moreover, students' positive feedback, comments, or appreciation can have a strong impact on teachers' performance as they feel more confident due to this affirmation of their teaching skills.

COVID Technological Changes and Adaptability

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about a technological revolution and a shift towards online learning, which has affected teachers' motivation. Maha and Rana shared challenges related to adapting to online teaching and to the absence of face-to-face interactions. Dhawan, S. (2020) findings confirm that the teachers experience difficulties communicating with students online. Despite these challenges, Maha and Rana showed flexibility to change by coping with learning experiences within the online environment and attempted to make the best of it.

Significantly, the utilization of Person in Contact (PIC) theory informed the findings of this study. First, by aiding in the understanding motivational change as a conceptual framework that affects teachers' reflexivity toward the context (see 4.1 and 6.1). The PIC framework includes broader features of motivation by integrating sociocultural, institutional, and personal dimensions. Second, as PIC represents a holistic approach to investigate motivation, it considers all the personal and micro- and- macro contextual factors that affect individual motivation which makes it an effective approach to understand teacher motivation:

The findings of this study represent personal macro factors that affect teachers' motivation such as: teachers' personal life (mother and family) as in the case of Amera, Dana and Hanadi, social prestige presented in the case of Maha which add a powerful personal dimension to their work experiences, and personal emotions which impact teachers' intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction. Taking part in the decision making related to student assessment increases a sense of belonging to the institute community and fosters social prestige as academic teachers in front of students. These patterns highlight the need to listen to teachers' voices and to address their concerns in their unique teaching contexts as a means to increase teachers' motivation. Moreover, the PIC theory aids in understanding teachers' religious believes and Saudi sociocultural background such as the concept of "Amanah" represented in the case of Sara, Rana, Kenda and Dalia that serves as an intrinsic motto driving the Saudi language teachers' motivation to teach despite their frustration from the surrounding context.

On the other hand, according to the Person-in-Context theory, surrounding extrinsic micro features significantly affect teachers' motivation. The fact that teachers are being micromanagement by rules and regulations can directly affect their motivation, mainly

because of the way the immediate institute context shapes the working lives of these teachers as in the case of Amera, Rinad and Mona. For example, the perceived lack of trust, transparency, autonomy and training, along with excessive workload burdens in grading assignment and unsupportive communication with administrators decrease teachers' motivation. These findings suggest that offering support and opportunities for professional learning experiences that enable teachers to succeed and develop students' learning can help educators find meaning and enhance their teaching skills and thus promote their motivation and teacher professional identity.

Although intrinsic and extrinsic contextual elements significantly affect teacher motivation, understanding their interaction within institutional settings and their combined influence on motivation remains essential. Toward this end, using PIC framework helped to reveal additional complexity when intrinsic and extrinsic influences interact. This study showed that the powerful shaping of teachers' motivation results from the dynamic interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic factors. For example, Sara found success when her internal drive for personal development and student interaction matched her professional advancement opportunities, despite the limited autonomy in her workplace. Teachers like Mona and Maha demonstrated how teacher passion diminishes over time when persistent institutional pressures and micromanagement coincide with inadequate instructional system support. These findings reflected the core of the PIC theory, which recognises that motivation emerges through the consistent interaction between individuals and their surroundings. A sustained look at the institutional environment using the PIC framework reveals that sustained teacher motivation and growth depend on how well the system enables teachers to align their internal drives with the external realities of their professional lives, especially within EMI contexts.

Language institutions should provide EFL teachers with a supportive work environment by offering professional development opportunities, grants and some sense of autonomy to make them motivated individuals. As policymakers might want to address teachers' intrinsic and extrinsic needs and how they interact in relation to teacher motivation, they would benefit from the findings of this study to develop better EMI policies and programs to support EFL teachers in the Saudi context.

6.10 Conclusion

This chapter examined how EFL teacher motivation developed and changed overtime within the context of a Saudi university language institute. According to PIC theories (Ushioda, 2009), teacher motivation develops through the interaction between individual beliefs, goals and values and the surrounding institutional environment. Teacher motivation varied depending on tasks and contexts: some teachers showed situational motivation while feeling disengaged from other responsibilities associated with their jobs. The evidence showed that motivation emerged from specific contexts and individual circumstances, which emphasised the need to view motivation as both dynamic and contextually influenced.

The professional identities of Saudi EFL teachers emerged from their emotional connections to contextual elements found in their workplaces. Thus, we can see that teachers develop their identities based on institutional requirements and their interpretation of organisational challenges. Institutional factors, such as micromanagement and instructional system standards, together with changes in EMI policies showed varied effects on different teachers. Despite having a unified working environment, the teachers demonstrated diverse motivational responses, which supports the PIC perspective that motivation requires personalised and contextual analysis.

This research demonstrated how teachers' belief systems and religious values—combined with their dedication to student development—interacted with external elements, such as lack of autonomy and trust by the administration. The findings of this chapter show that teacher motivation and identity emerge from multiple dimensions and changes over time through the interaction between internal drives and external factors. The alignment between the participant narratives and theoretical constructs serves as the foundational basis for the concluding chapter. The subsequent chapter integrates the study's major findings while answering the research questions. It also discusses the study's limitations and provides future research and policy recommendations to support teacher motivation in the context of institutional reforms in EFL environments.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

This thesis contributes to the enhancement of knowledge on teacher motivation in the context of Saudi EFL higher education, specifically regarding their reflexivity of the context. The study involved examining the impact of context on Saudi female EFL teachers' motivation. This chapter provides an organised overview of the study results as they relate to the key research questions. Furthermore, it presents the consequences and contributions that this study brings to theory and practice regarding teachers' motivation related to their professional development and pedagogical practices. Finally, limitations of this study are discussed, and suggestions for further research are provided.

7.1 Summary of the Research Findings

In this section the main findings of the study are synthesised to address the three research questions, showing how EFL teachers' motivation was shaped by the dynamic interaction between personal values, institutional conditions and sociocultural influences within the Saudi EFL context.

For this study, the notion of teacher motivation was explored in relation to the Saudi EFL context using a qualitative narrative analysis technique to understand the pedagogical journeys of EFL teachers. The findings could provide insight into how EFL teachers across various educational environments deal with the complexities of motivation. Analysis of teachers' narratives allowed greater depth in interpreting their experiences and practices and helped to draw out common themes and factors that impact teacher motivation across the Saudi EFL context. These findings gave rise to more precise insights into the interplay of teachers and their teaching context.

Research Question 1 asked What factors embedded in the Saudi Arabian context play a significant role in impacting the motivation and demotivation experienced by EFL teachers during their teaching? The analysis related to this question considered the influences of both personal beliefs, values and teacher experiences and contextual or institutional conditions that teachers perceived as important in their motivational experiences.

The first sub-component of RQ1 asked what personal factors teachers identify as shaping their motivation or demotivation. Overall, findings showed that the motivation of EFL teachers depends on internal factors to a great extent. The EFL teachers in this study exhibited passion and excitement for teaching in the early days of their teaching careers to develop students' learning. The teachers valued students learning, developing and passing the course level. The teachers' motivational experience was influenced, in part, by the students' level of motivation and engagement in learning. They described feeling intrinsically motivated when students fully participated and showed interest in classroom activities. Furthermore, the nature of the relationship between the teachers and students played a significant role in the teachers' motivation. High-quality student/teacher relationships characterised by positive attitudes and appreciation from students were shown to positively boost long-term intrinsic motivation, while negative attitudes from students, such as a lack of interest in learning, were found to demotivate teachers. Another significant factor affecting the EFL teachers' motivation was their commitment to delivering the course content effectively despite the contextual challenges they faced. Lastly, teachers' religious faith, beliefs and moral values are sociocultural factors that oriented intrinsic motivation for teachers during their teaching and interactions with learners. These factors, which promoted an overall positive classroom atmosphere, build teachers' commitment and passion for the job.

However, internal factors do not function in isolation. The data showed that a number of contextual and institutional influences impacted teacher motivation and that the external teaching environment. This addressed the subcomponent of RQ1 that asked what external or contextual conditions teachers perceived to be significant in their teaching experiences.

This research revealed various external factors that influenced the motivation of the EFL teachers in the PYP English language institutional programmes. One such factor is alignment with international higher education standards through the use of EMI polices and the uniformity in instructional system standards (e.g., curriculum and assessment) implemented at the ELI. These measures resulted in a lack of autonomy and control for teachers as EFL teachers perceived these actions as demonstrating a lack of trust in their ability to show valid professional judgement or to respond flexibly to students' needs. The centralised assessment diminished their motivation and eventually affected their job satisfaction. The study uncovered that when EFL teachers are free to design and teach lessons creatively, their motivation is generally high, as opposed to what it is when working in the context of such

restrictions. This implies that when EFL teachers receive proper space to be creative, their critical thinking, creativity and willingness to work on their professional development increases their motivation.

While these personal and institutional factors are important individually, their interaction reveals deeper complexity in how motivation constructs and fluctuates in context.

Research Question 2 asked how internal and contextual influences interacted to shape teachers' motivation. This question focused on the impact of the contextual factors on teachers' motivation, including the positive or negative impact on the teachers' intrinsic motivation, emotional states and perceived work values and beliefs. EFL teachers feel positively motivated when they have the freedom and ownership of their class decision-making as they can test their teaching methodologies and track students' development. The availability of autonomy and professional development opportunities (external motivating factor) enhances EFL teachers perceived competence and self-efficacy, thus making them more motivated to teach (internal motivation) (Wang et al., 2024). Thus, professional development experiences, organisational climate and successful teaching experiences affect teachers' emotional satisfaction, competence and motivation. Organisational provisions that offer greater autonomy and opportunities for innovation and teacher professional development were found to be associated with more positive teacher motivation, whereas organisational provisions that reduce teacher autonomy or subject EFL teachers to more conservative performance demands are associated with less positive motivations. Moreover, trust, recognition and acknowledgment from the administration and students led to teachers' positive feelings about themselves and confident about their teaching practices and eventually increased their motivation.

On the other hand, the absence of support and impediments to teacher autonomy can demoralise EFL teachers or affect their competence. Institutional system standards and micromanagement that interfere in professional matters directly affect individuals' emotional frustration and well-being. Other factors, such as a lack of recognition and the absence of balance between workplace and personal life, can negatively influence teacher motivation, and decrease their motivation to teach, according to the results. The study showed that several aspects are likely to bring about negative feelings among EFL teachers and demotivate them. These factors include time constraints for completing the course content, which caused stress; lack of appreciation and feeling valued, which led to frustration; and instructing

repeating students who lack interest in learning, which decreased teachers' motivation to teach.

Conflicts between teachers' autonomy and institutional reforms mentioned in participants' stories served as evidence on how systemic pressure limits educators' independence and eventually affects their motivation. Amera's narratives traced how the adoption of a unified curriculum and assessment led to a lack of independence and trust for the teacher and stifled her intrinsic motivation to teach. As a result, she had to cope with the system requirements and became cynical. Eventually, the continued frustrations led some EFL teachers (Amera and Maha) to cope with the system and do their job as requested by the management without motivation. The feeling that they were not properly appreciated, acknowledged and valued led to cynicism and burnout. However, Dalia, Kinda and Rana's beliefs, ethics and religious norms with respect to teaching led them to believe that it was their responsibility, 'Amanah,' to deliver proper instruction so students learn and develop; in this way, their beliefs increased their motivation to teach.

Moreover, teacher motivational factors also lie outside the classroom walls. For example, teachers' family lives constitute elements that impact teacher motivation and the dynamics of motivation. Some of the EFL teachers found the instructional system to be more suitable to their personal lives as they were mothers as well. They perceived the systematic structure as more convenient for them, enabling them to fulfil both their personal and professional obligations.

The third research question asked: How do EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia narrate changes in their motivation and professional identity over time throughout their teaching journeys? Thus, the third research question aimed to examine the dynamics of motivational change over time. The findings showed that teachers' motivation is a complex and fluid construct because it is not static and fluctuates over time for various reasons (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2021). The internal and external contextual factors discussed previously change and develop with the passage of time. Teacher motivation is likely to shift as well. For instance, teaching different groups of students, changes in leadership structures within the institution and changes in educational policies or personal circumstances are likely to influence teacher motivation. The level of motivation may increase or decrease over time due to repeated encounters with success, goal achievement, positive feedback and the experience of supportive relationships. Conversely,

repeated experiences characterised by challenges, setbacks or failures, lack of recognition, disconnection from students, lack of autonomy or lack of a sense of value can erode it.

The stories of Mona, Sara, Rana and Maha demonstrate that EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia go through constant changes in their motivation and professional identity differently, as their personal beliefs develop, along with influence from institutional and social relationship factors. At the start of their teaching careers, Mona and Maha possessed inherent motivation and clear professional goals driven by both personal accomplishment and student achievement. The implementation of modular curricula along with instructional system standards and reduced autonomy progressively undermined the teachers' sense of professional worth and control. Mona experienced an identity conflict and demotivation after losing her autonomy and feeling mistrusted by the institution, which led her to request a transfer to the Business Department to regain control and professional fulfilment. Maha experienced a decline in motivation due to administrative micromanagement coupled with ongoing daily emotional frustration, which resulted in the collapse of her teacher identity.

On the other hand, Sara maintained and transformed her professional identity and motivation through ongoing professional development and self-reflection while demonstrating adaptive agency by obtaining qualifications, including CELTA and DELTA, which allowed her to move from preparing students for exams to building their skills and reaffirming her professional identity despite organisational pressures and eventually increased her motivation. Rana built her teacher identity through emotional and interpersonal ongoing connections with students; this technique stemmed from her empathetic and caring teaching approach and innovative student engagement strategies. Rana's caring identity kept up her motivation despite institutional restrictions and system changes because she remained devoted to student achievement and worked to oppose fixed practices. Teacher motivation and teacher identity development process are dynamic constructs that change with time through personal beliefs and values combined with contextual requirements and the impact of these factors on teachers' emotional states.

Therefore, the findings showed that EFL teachers can maintain motivation in the face of challenges depending on their individual resistance and coping strategies. EFL teachers who have developed teaching skills and a growth mindset are more capable of sustaining motivation over time and can face challenges as seen in the case of Sara. Thus, for some, their

motivation state is relatively stable, driven by a passionate commitment to teaching, and effective coping strategies. Some teachers maintained their motivation to teach because of their believes and values to achieve students' success as in the case of Rana. For others, their motivation state is much more variable, reflecting the changing nature of their experiences and contextual factors. This implies that motivation to continue towards a final goal often requires that individual EFL teachers find coping strategies that help them remain motivated to engage in the teaching profession.

Teachers' understanding of the changes in their motivational profiles is essential for maintaining and developing motivation and, in turn, for instructional effectiveness and valuable educational results. For example, if EFL teachers find motivation in planning the lesson, they can allocate one class a week for their own teaching activities to maintain motivation throughout the course or overcome demotivation. The relationships described above between the contextual factors and the teachers' experiences may make it possible to develop proper prevention and coping strategies to promote the well-being, satisfaction, and performance of the EFL teachers at the English language institute. These are essential to improving motivation among teachers, and, in turn, improving the quality of teaching and learning among students. The study provides a foundation for future research and intervention to improve EFL teachers' motivation to teach English.

7.2 Implications and Contributions of the Study

The study makes several overarching contributions to the field by highlighting what shapes and sustains teacher motivation in the context of EFL teaching. Also, it provides a critical lens through which practitioners, administrators and educational policymakers interested in enabling and enhancing teacher motivation and effectiveness can view EFL teachers within the contexts of their English language institute.

In line with previously published literature, this study has established a link between student engagement and positive student-teacher relationships, teacher motivation and students learning. More specifically, it has added to the literature noting that student positive feedback provides EFL teachers with long-term intrinsic motivation for teaching. It also adds to the quickly evolving literature on the roles of autonomy, emotional satisfaction, and professional development that can impact on teacher motivation and effectiveness. Moreover, this study has put forward the significance of creating a language organizational system structure that

contributes its rules and regulations to support teacher motivation and self-efficacy. This study also contributes to the growing understanding of how EMI policies impact teacher motivation in Saudi Arabia. As EMI continues to expand under national educational reforms like Vision 2030, institutions must consider how language policy intersects with teacher's motivation, teacher identity, and teacher autonomy. Without sufficient support, EMI can act as a constraint to motivation; however, with training and flexibility, it can support teacher growth and professional development. As trust and organisational support influence teacher motivation and development, this work has shown how a systematic structure can impede creativity that when present leads to greater job satisfaction and teacher effectiveness, especially in light of the effect of instructional standards at the university educational level.

Results show that teacher motivation is dynamic because it changes with teachers' personal and professional life experiences. The narratives from teachers demonstrated that changes in their motivation resulted from shifts in various contextual aspects including curriculum modifications and institutional policy changes impacting teacher autonomy. This complexity reinforces the view from Chapters 1–3 that motivation is best understood through a relational process that emerge from complex interrelations between individual and the context (Ushioda, 2009).

Finally, this study can be beneficial to EFL teachers within a similar context to understand any similar kinds of constraints and help them find motivation by focusing on things that motivate them the most; these may include prioritizing professional development (Sara), practicing autonomy (Mona) or developing student learning (Rana). As such, the present study offers the required foundation to continue studying different strategies that could be effective in improving teacher motivation. The study outlines key factors that affect the change in teacher motivation over time through a dynamic approach grounded in the context. Further, the addition of new empirical findings to the body of literature can open up new avenues of research and practice, providing new theoretical foundations to the notion of teacher motivation.

7.3 Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to research in the area by drawing on the PIC motivational model. Most research has used PIC theory on studying students' motivation in language education rather than teacher motivation. Therefore, this study adds to the research on teacher motivation by

using the PIC theory in the specific and new context of Saudi Arabia. This study drew on PIC theory in order to identify how individual motivations can be re-formed and further developed after teachers' initial encounter with demotivating contexts. There is truth in the experiences of the EFL teachers whose motivation fluctuated. The theory allows sense to be made of these motivational changes as a dynamic and continuously changing phenomenon through the interaction of personal experience within the evolving institutional context.

General theories of teacher motivation, including the expectancy value theory (EVT) and goal achievement theory (AGT), have been useful for explaining and predicting cognitive and affective motivation processes (Ames, 1992; Wigfield, 2000). Although these theories help describe the cognitive and affective processes of motivation, they are inadequate for capturing the holistic interactions through which teacher motivation unfolds when situating EFL teachers in a specific context and over time. Furthermore, the focus on changes in teacher motivation over time can revise and refine motivational theories within educational research. For example, EVT might explain how much Rana values her students' learning and that her motivational expectations rely on her students passing the course. However, it might not be able to explain the impact of Rana's religious beliefs (based on her cultural background) and the integration of Islamic beliefs into her teaching approach. Such theories did not reveal how Rana's sympathetic and caring personality interacts with her religious beliefs within a specific context and results in maintaining her motivation overtime and overcoming demotivation.

Other models, such as self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985), have offered valuable insights into motivation in relation to autonomy (autonomous vs. controlled motivation); however, they are still limited in terms of taking into account the nuanced, situated meaning-making processes central to teacher narratives. Although these theories can be used to conduct holistic research (e.g., quantitative research), they often overlook the lived experiences of teachers as individuals embedded within institutional, cultural and interpersonal systems (Ushioda, 2009). Therefore, while these theories on motivation are suitable for statistical analysis, they shortfall to adequately consider the broader factors that influence teachers' motivation, and the need for theories on dynamic and contextual motivation models is supported. Using these theories separately could result in a simplistic interpretation of complex phenomena. Thus, this research utilises Ushioda's (2009) person-in-context (PIC) framework to examine how teacher identity interacts with personal beliefs and environmental conditions.

From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that EFL teachers' motivation is influenced by a complex interplay among various personal factors, such as goals, cultural beliefs and experiences and contextual aspects, such as institutional policies, curriculum design and student engagement. The PIC theory helps in understanding how interacting with the institutional context influenced Mona and led to a decline in their motivation and their eventual decision to leave the department. The PIC theory also aids in identifying how some teachers—for instance, Sara and Rana—have managed to not only maintain but also boost their motivation within unfavourable conditions. The use of the PIC theory in this study also helps explain the motivational effects of EMI. Rather than viewing EMI as a neutral pedagogical shift, the theory shows how EMI policies interacted with personal beliefs and teacher strategies. Motivation was shaped not only by internal goals but also by teachers' ability to navigate language-related challenges in EMI classrooms.

As the PIC theory takes a holistic approach to motivation, it helped the researcher consider all the factors that may have affected teacher motivation, such as capturing how some EFL teachers, as in the case of Hanadi, need a sense of autonomy over instruction and assessment development and yet, at the same time, they find instructional standards and uniformity beneficial to their personal lives to some extent.

7.4 Methodological Contributions

There is a call by scholars, such as Dornyei & Ushioda (2021) and Harfitt (2015), for conducting a qualitative research approach to fully examine teacher motivation, as most of the studies relied mostly on a quantitative research approach. Therefore, the method applied in this study is narrative inquiry, which is a qualitative approach to research that engages with people's stories and experiences within their own context to extract the meanings and understandings they have about their world. The purpose of the study was to examine the significance of contextualised features that contributed to the dynamic process of teacher motivation and its development over time. This narrative approach provided several methodological contributions to the study.

First, narrative interviews allowed for participants' voices to be heard and provided the study with rich and contextual data. Using teachers' own words facilitated an in-depth

understanding of their complex experiences in ways that other methods, such as surveys or structured interviews, may not have achieved. Unlike more rigid methodologies, narrative inquiry supported the flexibility needed to explore internal beliefs, contextual constraints and emotional responses within the lived realities of teachers.

Second, narrative interviews combined with semi-structured interviews captured how motivational experiences and teacher identity were constructed by personal beliefs and values, relationships with students and the wider institutional context. The ability to relate the impact of adjustments over time also allowed for an understanding of the teachers' trajectory: more specifically, how teacher motivation evolved in response to shifting circumstances, such as changes in policy, classroom demands and life events. For instance, Rana's frustration about no longer being allowed to grade her students, which she had been able to do in the past, reflected how institutional change impacted her perceived professional role and sense of autonomy.

Furthermore, narrative inquiry made it possible to understand how EFL teachers compared their past and present experiences and how these comparisons influenced their desire to teach which is essential when examining fluctuating motivation and identity over time. This included insights into how teachers internalised constraints or resisted demotivation by developing new strategies and reframing their goals. Narrative inquiry, which allows for an exploration of specific incidents, change, place and time (Clandinin et al., 2007), offers a holistic understanding of teacher motivation as a contextually grounded, relational and evolving phenomenon.

Narrative inquiry was supported with field notes, which were considered in the initial coding stage method along with the document analysis of the textbook and pacing guide, to understand teachers' narration. Observation is also used in this research; however, it did not provide additional data but, rather, served an essential function by helping the researcher to grasp the participants' meanings, which supported their narrative interviews and commentaries within the various thematic findings.

Overall, narrative inquiry enabled a comprehensive exploration of teacher motivation in the Saudi EFL context. The depth of the participants' stories and the emphasis on change over

time enriched the analysis and offered valuable methodological contributions for future qualitative research in language teacher education.

7.5 Implications for Educational Institutions

Educational institutions and EFL teachers are significant in facilitating learners' educational processes. Therefore, this section describes factors that influence teachers' potential to contribute to their institutions as EFL teaching professionals. Language institutes can create an enabling environment to foster motivation among EFL teachers and students, hence, institutions should consider the following implications:

Based on the findings, several institutional changes are recommended for teaching contexts where EMI policy is applied. First, teacher autonomy and creativity should be promoted by involving EFL teachers in decision-making. The findings suggest that language programs should include EFL teachers in the decision-making processes related to the curriculum, assessment, or policies within institutions to create support among teachers and drive them to teach. EFL teachers are not be able to teach in a way that inspires them if they are constrained in what they can or cannot do in their classroom practice. In Rana's case, her strategy of using Arabic (students' L1), helped her maintain students' positive outcomes. Therefore, universities should accept and trust teachers' professionalism and give them freedom to test new methods and techniques in their classroom as long as they do not violate the prescribed curriculum.

Institutions need to provide differentiated support for teachers according to their career stages and develop flexible autonomy frameworks to effectively enhance teacher motivation and development. Structured guidance and mentorship are useful to help newly hired and early-career teachers develop. However, experienced teachers require more collaborative decision-making opportunities and curriculum development participation that matches their developing teaching interests. Experienced teachers achieve professional satisfaction when they have more control over their work. Institutions should provide teachers with varying levels of autonomy according to their professional backgrounds. Balanced autonomy models help teachers sustain their motivation and professional identity as they progress through different teaching trajectories.

Second, it is important for the institution to foster a culture of professional collaboration and growth. Management of work culture factors that directly relate to teacher motivation include

collaboration, professionalism, and respect for teachers' professional development and promotion of a learning culture. Professional development enriches the teacher's competency and keeps them motivated in their practice. Hence, EFL teachers need to be provided with reasonable professional development opportunities to sustain their professional growth and motivation.

Last, teacher recognition and emotional exhaustion need to be prioritized. Institutions must limit the establishment of policies, and procedures that cause teachers to feel their professional status is undermined and not valued. The support of EFL teachers should be part of the academic program at the workplace environment. These needs can be met by providing teachers the with trust and encouraging them to feel part of a community that respects teachers. It can be achieved by creating a balance between the work and personal lives of the female EFL teachers by setting reasonable workload standards and flexible working hours. If these issues are addressed in the institutional environment, EFL teachers will be able to improve their efficacy, determination, and productivity, ultimately benefiting them and their learners.

7.6 Implications for EFL Teachers

EFL teachers in general, are responsible for promoting student learning in their classes. To achieve it, they must maintain their motivation and effectiveness during classroom teaching. EFL teachers should consider the following implications:

EFL teachers should engage in continuous professional development opportunities. They need to actively and continually seek professional development and training programs to enhance their teaching of English as a foreign or second language. Teachers should utilize reflective practice skills to critically evaluate their strategies used in teaching and their impact on student learning outcomes (Kennedy, 2005) to overcome demotivation and increase motivation. It can be seen in Sara’s and Rana's cases that the practice of continuous reflection and practice assisted their innovation and preserved their enthusiasm and motivation for their jobs. Some of the activities that may be carried out in reflective practices include using a teaching journal, asking other EFL teachers or students to complete surveys to see their opinions about classroom teaching, and accordingly making necessary changes to the lesson plans.

The findings of this study revealed that EFL teachers can overcome their frustration and demotivation by identifying what really motivates them as an individual teacher, as each teacher is unique in their personality and beliefs. What motivates one teacher might not be motivating to another teacher. Therefore, EFL teachers should find ways to practice what interests them and create a space during classroom teaching to experience new teaching approaches and maintain their motivation in teaching, thus making the learning process very interesting for both the teachers and the learners.

EFL teachers should advocate for a collaborative work environment and flexible EMI policies and practices in their work setting that can promote their voice and level of satisfaction. This study found that work regulations and procedures that hinder teacher autonomy result in demotivated teachers. Therefore, EFL teachers must protect and unify their voices to demand favourable policies and cultures to enhance students' learning and development. This can include discussing potential EMI policies with policymakers that might contribute to changes within administration. For example, allowing teachers to use L1 during instructions, also the teachers in this study suggested that 10 to 30 percent of the total grading can enable them to keep track of their student development and test the effectiveness of their teaching method. By paying attention to these implications, institutions and EFL teachers can support teacher motivation and overcome demotivation. Thus, EFL teaching can become a meaningful and rewarding profession, not only for teachers, but also for learners.

7.7 Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Future Research.

Although this study on the teaching experiences of EFL teachers working in the EFL sector in Saudi Arabia enhances our understanding of teacher motivation and how to overcome demotivation, it has several limitations that should be considered for the purposes of future research.

7.7.1 Gender and Cultural Representation

The findings of this study were based on female participants working at the ELI in the female section, revealing that the female teachers' roles as mothers, their family responsibilities and their religious faith affected their perspectives about teaching. Thus, investigating the contextual factors that affect male teachers working in the same context to identify if they share any similarities could be interesting; for example, research can examine whether male teachers have the religious intrinsic motivation to teach.

Moreover, future researchers should go beyond the Saudi context and work with participants from different educational and cultural backgrounds to examine the role of religion on teacher motivation at various stages of their careers. As the findings illustrate, Amera, an American Muslim teacher, viewed Islamic values differently from other Saudi teachers (see 5.3.3). This indicates Islamic values differ between Muslim teachers according to their cultural background, thus, this finding needs further investigation.

Additionally, further studies can explore how gendered factors influence motivation beyond male/female comparisons. Moreover, research focused on female teachers' motivation should examine cultural and ideological elements along with positional factors that female educators may encounter and either value or reject within their professional environment.

7.7.2 Institutional Scope

The sample of the study includes only female English Language instructors from a public university in Saudi Arabia. However, the findings might not apply in other contexts such as private institutions in the country as experiences and context may differ in several ways. Therefore, there is a need for comparative studies in various educational contexts within Saudi Arabia; for example, English language institutes at private universities might face different contextual factors that affect teacher motivation. Moreover, research in this direction might aid in fully understanding the specific effect of instructional standards and constraints for teachers' motivation in various settings, and perhaps lead to the discovery of more contextualised strategies to promote teacher motivation and practices.

7.7.3 Exclusion of Other Stakeholders

Moreover, these findings are mainly from the perspectives of the participants who were chosen for this study to gain in-depth data focusing on the notion of teacher motivation. However, this study has limitations as it does not involve other individual within the context, such as students, policymakers, or other professional development unit members like trainers and administrative officials who devise different policies. It would be interesting to investigate their views and perceptions of policies, rules, and teachers, as the leadership might have a different view that justifies all these constraints on teaching as they are part of teachers' experiences and professional learning.

7.7.4 Focus on Teacher Motivation

This study findings revealed the effect of EMI and instructional system standards on teachers' motivation to teach only, within a standardized unified system consisting of eight weeks for each level and three to four hour long classes that result in teacher exhaustion and demotivation. On the other hand, a growing number of universities, both in Saudi Arabia and around the world, are adopting a uniform approach for teaching students in their first year of college (Brdesee & Alsaggaf, 2021), hence, future research should investigate the effect of EMI and instructional system standers on students to identify the correlation between the unified instructional system and teachers' and learners' motivation.

7.7.5 Methodological Limitations

For this study comprehensive data were collected through the narrative inquiry method. The researcher gathered detailed data about individual participant journeys, yet these findings cannot be generalised to a larger population. Additionally, the small, context-specific sample limits generalisation beyond the studied institution. Nonetheless, this approach was appropriate for the study's goals as it prioritised lived experiences and meaning-making over breadth of coverage. Future studies may benefit from combining narrative inquiry with quantitative instruments or broader case studies to validate the patterns observed in individual teachers' trajectories.

A mixed-methods research could provide valuable information, as well as using classroom observations together with teacher motivation surveys and interviews throughout multiple semesters to track changes and identify broader patterns. In addition, diary studies and reflective journals can provide deeper understanding of how motivation levels shift throughout daily experiences.

Additionally, the study encountered limitations because it could be argued that some of the interview questions acted as leading prompts during the narrative inquiry interviews. The reason for their inclusion was to try and cover similar topics with all participants if they did not occur naturally in the conversation. The organization of narrative interviews have been indirect to obtain improved responses from various participants and through diverse stages.

7.7.6 Personality and Individual Differences

Since each teacher in the case studies presents a different view of the Saudi EFL context, further research must also investigate individual teachers' personalities and their ability to maintain motivation for teaching. This research identifies the effective approach and supportive strategies that can advance teachers to resist and overcome demotivation, especially in the EFL education context. The study identified some possible strategies, for example, providing opportunities for professional development of their teaching skills, encouraging a supportive culture for teachers, and enhancing students' development to maintain teachers' motivation. Since each teacher in the case studies presents a different view of the Saudi EFL context, further research must also investigate. Yet, more evidence-based research is required to empirically evaluate the effectiveness of such strategies in more diverse contexts. For example, teachers can conduct action research and use self-reflection approach (Kennedy, 2005) to overcome demotivation. Although the findings of this study showed how some teachers' identity and context interact to maintain their motivation for teaching; still, further research is needed to gain full understanding of this matter.

7.7.7 Simplified Use of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation Categories

Another limitation in this study stems from how it handles intrinsic motivation alongside extrinsic motivation. Although these concepts traditionally served as an effective model to comprehend teacher motivation, yet their application in this research sometimes presented basic understanding instead of critical depth. The process of separating motivational influences into intrinsic and extrinsic categories can result in oversimplified interpretations of the complex and intersecting motivations observed among participants. For example, being a parent can be both intrinsic (motherhood and emotions) and, at the same time, extrinsic (housework responsibilities such as cleaning and cooking). To improve future research outcomes, investigators should either avoid motivational classifications or use them while incorporating higher levels of critical awareness that allow participants to define their own motivations.

7.7.8 Pandemic Context

This study was conducted after the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the aftermaths of the pandemic, teachers might have experienced fear and frustration and that could be a factor in their stress and demotivation. This study discovered that teachers during the COVID-19 faced issues regarding online teaching that affected their motivation to teach. Therefore, future

studies should investigate and focus solely on the effect of online teaching during the pandemic on teacher motivation. The pandemic created a huge change in beliefs and perspectives that might have influenced teachers' motivation. This study found that teachers missed face-to-face interactions with students; however, COVID may have a greater effect on teacher motivation, their beliefs and teaching methods. Even after the pandemic, it might have long term positive or negative influence on teachers' behaviors that needs further examination.

From a personal perspective, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected me as a PhD student and as a researcher in several ways. As a PhD student I had my second year interrupted by the pandemic and had to adapt to remote study for the first time in my life and that was unpleasant for me. The Saudi Arabian government sent planes to evacuate Saudi students who studied in the United Kingdom. For around 18 months, I was highly stressed out and thought that the world was about to end, and studying and researching during these days was difficult. Living in social isolation, I developed feelings of frustration and stress, which could have undermined my motivation as a student. I would argue that this is important because I recognized and valued the time at different points during my life, when I started appreciating the simple and normal life I have. However, when the vaccine was invented things returned to normal gradually but still the pandemic made me feel that my PhD has taken a lot longer than five years. However, social constraints no longer existed when I began collecting data, and I conducted my interviews face-to face with participants. I was able to capture their motivation of satisfaction and frustrations towards the teaching context effectively which enabled me to practice the researcher role.

7.8 conclusion

As a PhD student, conducting this study enhanced my researcher skills and my knowledge especially in qualitative research area. As this study utilized a qualitative research approach and narrative inquiry, I gained knowledge in transcribing interviews. I developed appropriate data collection process and realized the importance of field notes to document the initial themes from interviews, and effectively categorized and coded the data using NVIVO program for the first time. I learned researchers' skills, such as to shift back and forth from the data to revise extract and codes and to conduct themes and meanings in the data by interpretations, and what those meanings say about participants' experiences to determine the findings, and

then relate these to theories. I realized the significance of collecting rich data in qualitative researcher is through gaining the trust of participants and allowing them to feel comfortable and open during interviews, which enabled me to understand their lives in greater depth and, in this case, understand their teaching motivation. This was achieved by keeping both the participant and the university name anonymous. Giving the participants the freedom to voice their thoughts limits researcher biases and ensures the findings credibility and accuracy. More importantly, I am aware of the importance of fulfilling these roles that lead to a more profound understanding of the complicated social phenomena of teacher motivation in the setting of an English Language Institute at the university level in Saudi Arabia.

Overall, this research delivered an in-depth analysis of teacher motivation and professional identity development among female EFL educators in Saudi higher education institutions. The study demonstrated that teacher motivation emerges as a dynamic construct through narrative inquiry and the PIC theoretical framework, which revealed motivation's evolution through personal beliefs and institutional structures, alongside sociocultural norms and relational elements.

Teacher motivation depends on internal factors like dedication to student success and religious beliefs, but these elements must be studied alongside external contextual forces. The clash between institutional constraints, including limited autonomy and strict assessment procedures, and teachers' personal values and teaching ideals often resulted in emotional exhaustion and identity conflict or collapse for some teachers. The study did, however, reveal that some teachers possess agency and resistance to EMI policies can overcome demotivation.

The research findings indicate that educational institutions must support teacher motivation through structural system changes and by creating environments that validate teachers' professional autonomy and identity. Combined with meaningful professional development opportunities and teacher contribution recognition, these changes form essential strategies to boost motivation and cut EFL teachers' emotional exhaustion.

This thesis contributes significantly to the teacher motivation literature through its context-specific and theoretically sound narrative, which emotionally resonates with teachers' professional challenges and opportunities. This study creates new paths for future investigation into the intricate connections between identity and motivation within teaching

environments while advocating for educational policies which recognize teachers as pivotal agents of change.

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Appendix A **CONSENT FORM**

UNIVERSITY OF Southampton

CONSENT FORM

Study title: **Investigating the Contextual Factors that Affect the Motivation and De-motivation of English Language Teachers in a University in Saudi Arabia**

Researcher name: Doaa MAhrous
ERGO number: 74027
Date: 20/7/2022
Version number: 2

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information sheet *participant information sheet* and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.	
I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study.	
I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw (at any time) for any reason without my participation rights being affected.	

Name of participant (print name) ……

Signature of participant……

Date…….. ……

Name of researcher (print name)……

Signature of researcher ……

Date……..

Appendix B Interview Questions samples

Open-ended interview questions examples:

- Why did you choose a career in teaching?
- What excited you about teaching?
- At what point in your life did you know you enjoyed teaching?
- Do you still like being a teacher?
- What parts of teaching do you dislike?
- Through your teaching experience, have you ever felt frustrated while teaching?
- In what ways do you think the working place can affect your teaching? (e.g., colleagues, managers, administration)
- What do you think are the most important factors that affect your English teaching in a language institute?
- In what ways do you think context can affect your teaching?
- In what ways do you think students can affect your teaching?

Follow up Questions Examples:

1. Do you find that the educational policies and procedures of your department either help or hinder your motivation? If so, how did this experience make you feel?
2. Do you find the paperwork requirements imposed by your superior administrators to help or hinder your motivation? If so, how?
3. Upon what metrics do you tend to rely on to define teacher effectiveness? If so, how?
4. Do you feel individually and particularly responsible for each student's performance and progress? If so, how?
5. Do you feel that test scores provide you with sufficient information to evaluate performance and thereby gauge your own effectiveness?
6. Are you specifically, deleteriously affected by individual students' particular motivation to learn or lack interest? If so, how did it affect your motivation to teach?
7. Do you have equivalent expectations for all students, or do you tune your lessons to the key differences among the top, middle, and bottom of your class? If so, how?
8. Are you more fulfilled by excellence shown by the top of the class, strength shown by the middle of the class, or competence shown by the bottom of the class?
9. Are you encouraged by or unaffected by your students' prior performance in learning foreign languages? If so, how?
10. Do individual students' apparent perceptions of the importance of the class affect your relative abilities to reach them? If so, how?

11. Do you ask your students what their individual reasons for studying English are, and does this affect your attitudes toward them?
12. If you find a particular point difficult to convey, are you motivated to search for fresh approaches or do you prefer to stick to your established teaching pacing guide?
13. How does it make you feel when you are faced with a particularly slow student who challenges your teaching capabilities?
14. How does it make you feel when you are faced with a particularly gifted student who challenges your teaching capabilities?
15. Do you typically adhere to traditional curricula, or do you try to come up with your own teaching approaches, tricks, and examples?

Appendix C Narrative Interview Sample

Researcher:
Okay, Sara, how are you? How are you? I hope you are fine. My topic, as I told you, is about teacher motivations. I will ask you maybe 8 questions, but simple.
Participant:
okay

Researcher:
Ok, my first question is why did you choose teaching as a career?

Participant:
Yeah, it's okay. We can conduct the whole thing in English. Yeah, it's easier for me actually to speak in English.

Researcher:
if It's easier for you speak English.

Participant:
So, to be honest, I didn't want to be a teacher.

Researcher:
Okay.

Participant:
I wanted to be an ambassador. Yeah, and join the political science department. But then, at that time, it was before the women empowerment policies were put in place. We, as women, we didn't have a lot of opportunities. Either it's teaching or joining the medical career. And I hated the idea of the medical pathway. I hated science, all science, but I love languages. I love English. I really love English. So, I used to read a lot in English. So, it was the only and the best opportunity for women at that time to join the profession, especially those who majored in arts. So, it was the best thing to do, to major in English and become a translator or, or a language teacher. But then I was during my last year, at the at BA, I had the opportunity to become a teacher assistant at the University, which was like, okay, the, the most prestigious thing to for women to join in the, in the, in the education in the education field. So, I joined it because it was, I mean, it was stupid if I didn't join the university. So, I did. But when I when I started to learn about online TEFL and the language teaching and the strategies, I loved it, I loved the idea of helping students or helping people to learn something. And I was good at it. I was good at explaining grammatical rules. And I was good in delivering meaning and delivering information. So, I thought that I have the skills. And from that time on, I loved it. And I kept on developing my teaching strategies.

Researcher:
Wow. Good. So, what excites you about teaching, at what point you found that teaching is exciting? at what point?

Participant:
at what point at that time, I learned that teaching excites me. when I see someone when I see someone learning something from me, I remember I taught my cousin to pass the TOEFL exam and develop his reading skills. And I saw him developing. So that thing excited me like okay, helping somebody or delivering a strategy or teaching somebody a strategy. And I saw it in my students, also, some of my students. So that excites me and that keeps me coming to teach

Researcher
Okay, at what point you find that teaching is enjoyable. You enjoy it?

Participant:
I think, I think during my first year, when I first entered the classroom, and I, I saw students getting motivating and excited with me, so yeah, during my first year, I loved it.

Researcher:
And then?

Participant:
and then from that time on, I enjoyed teaching until today. Yeah, as a teacher, I have ups and downs. But yeah, mostly I enjoy it.

Researcher:
Okay, do you still like being a teacher?

Participant:
Yeah, I do. Okay,

Researcher: 03:54
what part of teaching do you dislike?

Participant:
Okay, it's contextualized. It's not about teaching. It's about the educational context. The strict rules. I hate it. Yeah, because I feel my hands are tied. I can do more, but I can't because of the instructional policies. Yeah, that part only demotivates me, but as a teacher, I always find a room to manoeuvre. So

Researcher:
a room to what?

Participant:
manoeuvre.

Researcher:
Okay, manoeuvre

Participant:
Yeah, I do.

Researcher:
How do you do that?

Participant:
For example, like okay, we have a I have to follow a pacing guide and I have to follow a book and I'm not allowed to bring extra materials. I do follow the book but in my own way, for example, I dedicate a whole time for, for reading and a whole time for Listening, and I teach in the way that satisfies me. So that brings me satisfaction in teaching.

Researcher:
Okay, so you get satisfied

Participant:

Yeah, I get satisfied because I still have a voice in my teaching. So, because of the administrational, administrative policy, I can't, I can't, I feel my hands are tied and that keeps me down and keeps me frustrated. So, I have to find the motivation and I find my own voice in teaching. So, this is what I do is like, okay, just beat the system in a way. And that's keeps me coming also to the classroom.

Researcher:
That's what's giving you satisfaction that you have your own path

Participant:
Yeah, my own my own way of, of teaching in my own style.

Researcher:
Okay, so like, it's like you provide the exercise, you put some excitement in it.

Participant:
Yeah.

Researcher:
how do you do that?

Participant:
For example, I just follow the topics

Researcher:
Okay,

Participant:
yeah, I follow only the topics but what's inside the book with exercises I, I personalize it to my own way. I follow the reading passage, but the questions I bring my own materials, for example. Yeah,

Researcher:
Good. I got you know. Okay. So, in what, in what ways do you think your workplace can affect your teaching?

Participant:
Well, students sometimes do affect me. Especially if I teach repeaters. Three times repeaters one time I taught three times repeaters. Oh, that was really demotivating for me, because three times repeaters usually they are demotivated like okay, the most demotivated students I've ever met. And they just have this idea that okay, we can't do it and we will not pass, and we just want to have a 60 or a D or whatever. And they're not interested in learning the language mostly and whatever, whatever I do, like okay, they are still demotivated, and it keeps me demotivated as well. Those classes, I started to be passive, just like okay, teach the content and go home. And that's really keeps me demotivated They are passive and impassive as well. And, like, okay, whatever I do, I feel like okay, they're not interested in learning the language. And that's yeah, keeps me so demotivated

Researcher:
so, you feel that you don't want to come to the class, or what?

Participant:
My motto is that it's part of my job and an Islamic way of saying Amana. So, I have this Amana, which means that I must come to class, no matter what. My negative feelings were kept shut at that time, because it's just like, okay, the motto of Amana is to go to class, but I don’t make extra effort; I just teach the content to make sure that students pass their exams, and that's it. Yeah, I'm also that, I mean, doing that basic of passing the exam is, for me, it also keeps me satisfied that I did my best. And you want to pass the exam. So, this is my best teaching to pass the exam, but not to learn the

language. But when I have motivated students, the exam comes secondary in my aim, it's just learning the language. So, I focus on teaching skills, rather than okay, memorize this vocabulary and memorize that grammatical rule and, and you will pass the exam. So that's the difference between my emotions or my teaching, aim in both classes.

Researcher:
Okay, so you feel that you are more motivated with students, students who are interested to learn.

Participant:
Yeah,

Researcher:
how about any other reasons might make you feel excited about teaching, frustrated while teaching,

Participant:
I don't have a voice at all in the ELI administration, regarding the curriculum, for example, my interest now is in teachers' identity and gender and all these things and as a woman, I feel side-lined or in the shadows. This also keeps me demotivated from participating in academic in the academia, like okay, I don't like to participate in committees, because I feel that okay, no matter what I do the final decision or the decision makers are the main site. So that's keeps me demotivated that I'm wasting my time I don't want to focus. I don't want to participate in in committees. Although my academic position now as an as an assistant professor, allows me or enables me to participate in such committees, but I don't want to because I feel that I'm wasting my time and energy. That also keeps me feel that I'm not part of the community. So

Researcher:
All right. Have you ever experienced and experience any situation with colleagues or with students or with administrators, and that gives you a push to teach?

Participant:
Research, research, Research keeps me pushed. I mean, I remember during my first years, I was so disappointment and disappointed in my teaching and frustrated with the system and everything. And I found my myself in research. I do a lot of research.

Researcher:
I don't quite get it. How did you do that?

Participant:
for example, like okay, my, our position it doesn't give rewards in in teacher development, but I spent a lot of my salary on, on taking courses like CELTA, DELTA TKT all these teacher development courses, just to keep myself happy and to keep myself motivated in my career. So, I invested on those things. And through these things, and through research and through these such courses, I've I found my way in teaching.

Researcher:
Okay,

Participant:
because I invested a lot in the techniques and the know how

Researcher:
so, you work on yourself.

Participant:
Yeah,

Researcher:
that's what make you motivated until now

Participant:
I do I do.

Researcher:
And okay, so anything you think you want to add? Anything that students have added to you?

Participant:
But sometimes I think because I'm a bit of a shy person. Yeah. I mean, I mean, a lot of students, they do love me and they do love my classes, but they feel like okay, in a way that okay, we, I'm very practical. So, they don't come to me emotionally and say, okay, Teacher, we love you. But they say, Teacher, we enjoyed the class today. And I say, Okay, hi. Yeah, I thank you so much. And that's it. But like, okay, um, so sometimes I do feel like, okay, I need to open up with my students a bit. I know, they, I mean, I have the feelings. And I do surveys a lot of time to students. And I, I get amazed by the positive remarks from my students, but

Researcher:
how does these positive remarks make you feel? What do you get from these?

Participant:
I do, because I feel inside that I'm satisfied with my own teaching. It gives me that, okay. It gives me the idea that I'm on the right track. But I don't have this personal relationship with my students.

Researcher:
Okay. Is it because you're shy?

Participant:
Yeah, I think because I'm shy. And I'm like, okay, because I'm shy. I feel like okay, no, okay. It's better to be practical. So that's why it's just the practicality it's out of just being shy. It's not being mean to my students. Yeah. This this always the, this idea always comes to me from my students. And this is how do how do they make me feel? Like okay, they love my classes, but they never told me Okay, Miss, we love you, Yeah, I got a lot of positive feedback. But I told I also told my students please, please make those writings anonymous. So, I don't know who wrote these things to me.

Researcher:
All right. All right. Okay, so that's it for now.

Participant:
Thank you.

Researcher:
Thank you for your time and for everything. I really enjoyed talking to you.

Participant:
Yeah. Thank you so much.

Appendix D Semi-Structured Interviews Sample

Researcher:
How are you Dr. sara?

Guest
Alhamdulillah I'm Really good.

Researcher
Okay, following our last interview, I can see that there is some conflict you faced when you change the level of the students and they become more academic, as you as said, you said, “level 103 takes a lot of my time or my energy, because it's a lot of academic skills. And I'm usually used to teach the skill.” So, you kind of face some conflict there. How do you feel now after you finish the semester?

Guest
Well, to be honest, it was my first time to teach academic skills. And it was really draining. And it took a lot of my time and energy and I wasn't really happy with my performance of teaching. The duration of the semester makes my teaching and my academic life a bit difficult. Every semester I have to shift. I believe this is something that teachers need to cope with. Changing students, curriculum and changing from modules to modules could give the teacher a better teaching experience. But maybe for me, because this is the first time it takes me a bit more time than other teachers who have taught the same curriculum last year, for example, maybe next year, I wouldn't be that much tired.

Researcher
This is how you felt at the beginning?

Guest
Yeah, that was what I feeling like, okay, at the beginning until the writing exam. When the students took the writing exam, I was surprised by their grades, I mean, they really had high marks. And at the end of the semester, I gave them a survey about my teaching. I was a bit hesitant of giving them the survey. I think, because I was scared of their feedback. But when they replied to the survey, they were happy with my teaching. But it's like, because it was my first time. And I couldn't umm. I mean, I was so busy during the semester of like, teaching the academic skills and, and learning about teaching the academic skills. I think that's why I didn't feel any connection between me and my students. But They were happy. I mean, they were happy of the teaching. So it was from my side, I guess. And this semester, I'm also teaching 103 so I feel okay, this semester, I would be more confident maybe. Yeah, so that was the conflict. It was like, okay, I am seeing something like, okay. And the students on the other hand, are seeing another thing I mean, another side of the of picture.

Researcher
information they were learning the skill, is that what you're trying to say?

Guest
Yeah, yeah, they will. They were learning the skill. And they and they, they learned a lot. I mean, according to the survey, and what they told me in their reply in their replies that, okay, they learned academic writing, and they learned academic reading. And, yeah, I mean, they were they were, they were happy. And although I mean, during the classes, I think I was so busy from that I couldn't see their feedback instantly. And that was bothering me. Because I couldn't see their feedback instantly. But I think at the end of the semester, or the end of the day, what the students appreciate is that are they sense that the teacher cared for their teaching or not? I think that's the bottom line of the whole thing.

Researcher

You were trying to give as much as you can. And you work hard to practicing how to learn to teach academic skills to students. And you were too busy to understand the students' feedback or to know that they are gaining experience.

Guest
Yeah, yes. And because, I mean, it was their, I think, their second time of learning English, I guess, or the English classes. So, they were familiar with the like, okay, the Blackboard of these things, and, and they, they know that there is a deadline, so they didn't do the blackboard, quizzes and all these things. And in the first semester, I used to rely on these like, okay to get the students if they if they're learning or not. But these students because they're familiar with the whole system, they didn't do any of these things. And that's why I didn't get any feedback from them because I have no assignments nothing. It's only the writing assignments and they were doing okay, in the writing assignments. Yeah, but like, Okay, I've ended this semester. I was so surprised like, okay . I'm happy that okay. Oh, okay, at least they are very, they learned something I mean, and or what I wanted them to learn is that that they are learning they are learning it.

Researcher
what you worked hard for it, they got it.

Guest
yeah exactly.

Researcher
so how Does that make you feel?

Guest
More confident I believe and this semester. I am more confident that than last semester of teaching 103. Yeah, I'm teaching 103 as well.

Researcher
so, you are doing much better on that.

Guest
Yeah. Yes, I guess. Yes, I guess I will do much better and with more confidence,

Researcher
what type of feedback you got from the students?

Guest
Okay. let me open it I'm checking the Drive Okay, let me open my laptop because I guess it doesn't open from my mobile.

Researcher
Okay, You still believe that if you teach 103 In the next year, you think you can do much better?

Guest
Yes, I think every semester like every semester, I have a different motive. And every semester like, I feel that okay, I can improve something in the course, like, Okay, last semester, I taught the students I focused on the academic skills, and I told them that, okay, vocabulary is very important. But I didn't teach them a lot about prefixes and suffixes, and how to learn vocabulary better. So, this semester, I'm focusing on what to focus on that that part on teaching vocabulary, because 103 is mostly about like, okay. It's mostly about vocabulary. I mean, if the students have a strong and a wide range of vocabularies, they will do better in exams, and they will do better in the course itself. So, yeah, so I believe that okay, if I have a different motive or a different or a new thing to improve in the I mean, in in a semester, that would also give me motivation to focus.

Researcher :
Is the laptop open?

Guest:
Yeah. Okay, because I, I wanted the survey to be straightforward and doesn't take much time. So, I gave them like okay, a scale to rate and at the end of the survey I gave them a question an open question it's about the whole surveys in Arabic of course and, just one minute this is for 101 sorry,. I mean, because I give the same survey to 101 and 103 Okay, the last question was about, yeah this is 103, the last question was about give your opinion about the teacher and how and the classes and how she's teaching. So for 103 they wrote that okay, one of the students wrote "Dr. sara was great and I learnt a lot from here this semester and she kept on stressing everyday to learn the language and she taught us techniques and ways to help us learn the language and she made us practice all the skills in the right way and she was patient with us, she taught us in a good way, her demonstration is excellent, she's one of the best doctors we ever had I'm grateful to her" Another one she wrote, "her demonstration is so good and she helped improving my English language in a great way" and one student wrote "Amazing and responsible teacher" one of the questions that has a scale it was "the teacher way of demonstration helped me rely on myself to learn English language" and they have to answer whether they agree or partially agree or disagree and 80% of the class they wrote agree and the other 20% or the remaining they wrote agree but like number 2 and also among the question was The way the teacher demonstrated the material helped me deal with the mid-exam about 70% wrote agree and 30% wrote also agree but on the scale on a scale of two out of four. So, yeah, sorry.

Researcher:
How does that made you feel?

Guest:
To be honest, like, okay, very proud and it gives me the motivation to work harder. I think to me, it gives me a positive feeling. But to me, no, like, I like to work with all of each group on its own. So, I don't like to take that feedback and just rely on it for the next semester as well. Because next semester is a different case.

Researcher :
But it gives you a push to work?

Guest:
Yeah, exactly, it gives me it gives me a motivation to work harder and it gives me motivation to teach for the next semester, exactly,

Researcher:
okay. So, you said before that when you get some positive feeling about such situations right, you get more motivated to teach more to give more. And even you when you I get the feeling because you are focused on teaching the skills. You get better results than other teachers they are just following the pacing guide and just doing their job, right. Is that correct?

Guest:
This is what I believe.

Researcher:
There is a regarding you said that there is a clash. last interview, we talked, you said that I faced a lot of clashes with the administrative a lot of troubles with the administrative especially because I was a coordinator before, right?

Guest:
Yeah.

Researcher:
Can you give me an example of that?

Guest:
Example okay, it was 10 years ago. I mean, I can't remember a specific thing. But it was like, okay, it was the, the new semester the it was the time when the ELI started these new quarter and modules and all these things. And I, I believe I believed and I'm still, I still believe that this, this wasn't fair or because it wasn't organized to the students and to the teachers as well. And as they started to make these rounds, and to check if the teachers are in the classes or not. And I was also against that it was basically these new rules that are now became the norm that I faced clash, the clashes with them. And because I was a coordinator, I was I was near to the administration. I wasn't like, okay, just like a regular teacher, just teach the classes and go. We used to have meetings and all these things. And, yeah, that was one of the clashes. And after that, I just decided I don't want to enroll in any administrative work, because it's not, it doesn't give me any benefit.

Researcher:
you said you want to focus on teaching and develop yourself?

Guest:
Yeah, just teaching and research. And that's it.

Researcher:
you said that research make you feel happy?

Guest:
Yeah.

Researcher:
and it drives you away from the bad feelings, right?

Guest:
Yes, it does.

Researcher:
alright. So, when you gain more knowledge, you gain more happiness more excited, more motivated to teach, right?

Guest:
Yes, true.

Researcher:
do you think that you have other intrinsic motivation that drive you to work rather than developing your teaching skills students' positive attitude or comments, because last interview you mentioned Amanah and I get the feeling that part of the religion is what drive you to work more?

Guest:
I do believe that teachers should be professional in teaching, as professionalism is necessary to develop students and achieve the learning outcomes, but also our Islamic beliefs make us feel more responsible to do our job to the most. Both of them, I believe, helped me to go beyond the book content and focus on teaching skills for students.

Researcher:
okay, so I think that is it, I actually just want to catch how your conflict that you felt last semester, work with you at the end. And that I don't have any more questions. And I think that what I get from you, to

be honest, is students positive feedback gives you the motivation and you taught yourself by yourself. You trained yourself by yourself, and you have when you feel bad or frustrated from something, you try to work better and hard on it, try to gain more knowledge like the situation you face regarding the academic teaching skills for level 103. You try to develop yourself to help the students level. Is that true?

Guest:
Yeah, true.

Researcher:
Thank you for everything

Appendix E Example of Coding

Example of coding 1:

“My motto is that it's part of my job and an Islamic way of saying Amana. So, I have this Amana, which means that I must come to class, no matter what. My negative feelings are kept shut at that time, because it's just like, okay, the motto of Amana is to go to class, but I don’t make extra effort; I just teach the content to make sure that students pass their exams, and that's it. Yeah, I'm also that, I mean, doing that basic of passing the exam is, for me, it also keeps me satisfied that I did my best.” *(Phase.2, Sara)*

"My motto is that it's part of my job and an Islamic way of saying Amana."

- Code: *Teaching as a moral duty*
- Code: *Amana-driven responsibility*

"So, I have this Amana, which means that I must come to class, no matter what."

- Code: *Fulfilling obligatory responsibilities*
- Code: *Commitment to professional duty*

Example of coding 2:

“I remember I taught my cousin to pass the TOEFL exam and develop his reading skills. And I saw him developing. So that thing excited me like okay, helping somebody or delivering a strategy or teaching somebody a strategy. And I saw it in my students, also, some of my students. So that excites me and that keeps me coming to teach” (Phase.2, Sara)

"And I saw him developing."

- Code: *Impact of teaching on learners*

"So that thing excited me like okay, helping somebody or delivering a strategy or teaching somebody a strategy."

- Code: *Teaching as a source of excitement*
- Code: *Personal fulfillment through teaching*

Appendix E NVIVO Analysis Sample