Factors Affecting the Motivation of Expatriate English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Teachers in the Sultanate of Oman

Submitted by Sarah Zafar Khan to the University of Exeter as a thesis in part fulfilment for the degree of Doctorate of Education (Ed.D.) in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages in September 2011. This thesis is available for Library use on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

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ABSTRACT

Research in the area of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher satisfaction and teacher motivation has recently gained momentum, and several studies completed in different parts of the world have contributed to this growing field (Al Hashmi, 2004; Al-Maawali, 2003; Dörnyei, 2001; Gheralis-Rouss, 2003; John, 2011; Kızıltepe, 2008; Manuel and Hughes, 2006; Menyhárt, 2008; Shoaib, 2004). However, studies from Oman, particularly with expatriate teachers, are still limited. The purpose of the current naturalistic qualitative research is to explore the factors that motivate and discourage expatriate EFL teachers in a public university in Oman.

The conceptual framework of this study is based on the Needs Hierarchy theory (Maslow, 1954) and the Motivation-Hygiene theory (Herzberg, 1976). An exploratory methodology was used, and the sample selected for this study comprised exclusively expatriate teachers whose average number of years of experience in Oman is 18.75 years. In-depth semi-structured interviews with sixteen expatriate teachers revealed several intrinsic and extrinsic factors that motivated teachers to work and live in Oman, such as, interaction with students, job security, and living in Oman. Teachers also expressed several discouraging factors that affected their personal and professional life in Oman. Examples include difficulties in getting promoted, faculty evaluation surveys, and bureaucratic administrative policies.

This study is significant in giving voice to experienced expatriate teachers who share their vast experience and suggestions and offer recommendations to administrators and managers on adopting policies that are holistic and present optimal working conditions to teachers.

Key words and phrases: motivation, Oman, expatriate teachers, exploratory research, teacher welfare.
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ABBREVIATIONS USED

EFL—English as a Foreign Language
ELT—English Language Teaching
ELU—English Language Unit
SQU—Sultan Qaboos University
TESOL—Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
UAE—United Arab Emirates
UK—United Kingdom
USA—United States of America
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