Cultural Influence on Teacher Motivation–A Country Study of Maldives

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Abstract—The research reported in this study explored stakeholders' perceptions of the motivational influences for successful indigenous teachers to stay on as teachers in the islands of the Maldives. This case study employed qualitative methods of interviewing, focus-group meetings and questionnaires to collect data from local indigenous groups and included school principals, leading teachers, successful teachers, parents and students. Analysis of data via a grounded theory approach indicated that the participants' perceptions of what motivated successful teachers to remain as teachers were influenced by social and cultural aspects. The sense of belongingness and relationships were identified among them as motivational influences. It was also clear that the motivational influences to stay on in the teaching profession were contextual, inter-related, inter-dependent and multifaceted.

Index Terms—Culture, maldives, motivation, motivational influences, teacher.

I. Introduction

While the world is losing hope of achieving the second of the 8 Millennium Goals agreed and signed by 189 nations of the world in New York on the 8th of September 2000 to achieve universal primary education for all the children by the year 2015, the demand for teachers and for that matter the demand to retain quality teachers has never been more prominent. Many countries including the rich, poor, developed, developing and least-developed countries suffer the consequences of lack of teachers or at least lack of quality teachers. When considerable achievement was made in increasing primary school provisions until the year 2004, the rate of increase has slowed down but the demand for more and quality teachers has never lessened due the increase in demand for the secondary and tertiary education.

Teachers form the largest investment in a school and can instrumentally exert the strongest direct influence on student outcomes [1]-[3]. Accordingly, a school is as good as its teachers and "at their best, they tap into the hopes and talents of young people and help them grow into productive citizens" [4].

Often members of communities complain of a teacher's under-performance. Poor performance by teachers may be attributed to a number of different reasons [5]. Lack of motivation could be one of the key causes [5], [6]. Hence, the sources of teachers' motivation are under continuous scrutiny as the sustenance of motivation at a high level is imperative for schools to enhance student achievements [7]. The levels of teachers' motivation to carry out the tasks associated with the teaching make a vast difference in terms of student achievements and thereby attracting other teachers, students and parents to the school [8].

Therefore, it is important that the issue of motivation be researched and the factors that contribute to it be determined so that appropriate measures can be taken to improve and sustain the enthusiasm [9], [10].

II. Literature Review

Motive, motivate, motivation or 'motivity: the power of initiating or producing movement' [11] is 'originally derived from the Latin word 'movere', [12] which means 'to move'' [7]. Motivation is developed from motive [13]. Motive, want, desire, and wish are some words that refer to the inner state of being in relation to something in the environment [14], [15]. Behaviour is influenced by a wide range of drives or motives [16]. It is assumed that motives are emotional discomforts and uneasiness that energize people into action to obtain a state of relief and serenity [17]. A motive has an important component; the drive, which is usually an internal process but may be highly influenced by external environmental or other conditions to reach a goal or achieve a reward [18]-[20]. Motivation is a hard concept that is suffering from a lack of clarity and consensus not only in definition but also in understanding [21]. In general terms motivation refers to the force that motivates individuals to do something[1].

Many researchers have considered why and how people get motivated to do what they do. For example references [18], [22]-[30], and [31] are a few of them. The cause of performance or the cause of improvement in performance is thought to be dependent upon the continuous motivation of doers. 'Self-evaluation, perceived self-efficacy and self-set goals', according to Bandura and Cervone [32], have been shown to affect level of motivation. Subsequent to the intensified or diminished motivation, a 'complex interplay between the [doers], the group and the society in which they are placed' foster or hinder actions [33]. Actions, to a large

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[1] No definition of motivation has gained universal acceptance. Here are few other definitions:
- Motivation is defined as 'a person's active participation and commitment to achieve the prescribed results' (Conroy, 1994, p. 50).
- It is defined as 'the willingness to exert high levels of effort toward organisational goals, conditioned by the effort's ability to satisfy some individual needs' (Robbins, 1998, p. 355)
- Motivation involves the processes that energize, direct and sustain behaviour' (Santrock, 2004, p. 414)
- 'Motivation is defined not only by tendency arousal, but also by its orientation' (Vázquez & Rapetti, 2006, p. 512)

extent, are influenced or determined by the individual's attitudes and beliefs towards the action, the amount of perceived control over it and the subjective norms or circumstances that govern/surround that behaviour [34]. So, 'how can people increase their motivation or that of others' to ensure they 'work more productively'? [16], [35]. Research is required to understand the issue.

The exploration of the successful teachers' reasons to stay on teaching will help exemplify the clues that make conditions conducive for teachers to remain in the teaching profession.

Research on teachers' motivation indicates that the motivational influences to continue to teach are dependent upon a complex array of personal, social, cultural, economic and geographical conditions that dictate the working environment [36], [37].

According to Wlodkowski and Ginsberg [38] 'motivation is inseparable from culture' and hence, culture influences motivational practices [39], [40]. Geographical isolation and social factors also interfere with teachers' motivational beliefs, but teacher motivation researchers do not usually consider these factors [41].

Hence, continued research in different settings is warranted to determine what sustains teachers to be motivated and enhance the inputs for better student developments/outcomes [42], [43].

Therefore, a PhD research project was carried out to explore the stakeholders' perceptions of what motivates successful teachers to remain in the small and remote islands of the Maldives. This article is based on its findings. Specifically, this article looks into the 'sense of belongingness and relationship' as motivational influences within the social and cultural aspects of the findings.

III. RESEARCH SETTINGS

This research was carried out in the Maldives. Maldives is a small island state located in the vastness of the in the Indian Ocean and stretches across the equator. The population of nearly 300,000 Maldivian are scattered in 196 of approximately 1190 islands [44]. The islands are small and low-lying with only 10 islands larger than $2km^2$ [45] and rarely any ground reaching over 2.5 metres above sea-level [46]. The highest concentration of population is on the national capital; Male' [47]. Male' is a 1.8km long island which accounts for over one-third of the Maldives population [48]. The majority of the islands have less than 750 people with 55 as the smallest population residing on one single island [49]. The population is predominantly Muslim. It has been a Muslim state for almost 900 years [50]. It is religiously and culturally different from its physically closest neighbours; Sri Lanka and India [51] located 700km away [52].

Given the geographic conditions of Maldives, where the population is scattered to tiny islands with too small populations to justify profitable economic activities [53], few people are permanently employed by other people and/or companies. The central government is the major employer [54]. Hence, job opportunities are scarce and a high demand prevails for the few jobs available. Teaching is one of the main areas that create jobs on most of these small islands and therefore one may become a teacher for the sake of getting a job. That is, a teacher may not necessarily be in the teaching profession because of intrinsic motivation - the circumstances may have demanded the person to be in this profession irrespective of the level of intrinsic motivation.

A person may get trained as a teacher for it is amongst the easiest areas in the Maldives to get a job on his or her home island. Once a job is granted, normally by the government, an individual can perform sufficiently well as systematic, regular supervision and appraisals are infrequent. Motivation to perform well as a teacher may not be a priority for some of the teachers.

IV. METHODOLOGY

Some successful teachers leave the teaching profession while others remain in the field. Reliable formal statistical support is unavailable to visualise the magnitude of the problem of good teachers leaving the teaching profession. But anecdotal and experiential evidence suggest that like many countries Maldives is also struggling to retain quality teachers in service. Maldives has never achieved self-sufficiency in training and retaining teachers. It is heavily dependent on expatriate teachers and a number of locals with appropriate qualifications chose to leave the profession aggravating the problem of teacher shortage.

'[H]uman action is motivated so that we need to look for intentions and reasons for action in order to provide an answer to the question why people act as they act' [55]. It is assumed that human intentions and reasons for actions are best understood through their own expressions. Without understanding the people's own accounts of their behaviour, researchers can only guess at the reasons for their behavioural patterns [56]. They know the real reasons best. Their realities get constructed on the basis of their perspectives and points of views developed through their social, cultural and historical experiences [57]. For that reason, the researcher has taken a constructivist epistemological stance in conducting this research. Choosing a research method is directly tied to the research problem in hand and the purpose of the research [58]. The choice of best method always comes from the research purpose [59]. 'Methods carry with them ontological and epistemological commitments that also colour the way' the research outcome will be written, subsequently [60]. Therefore, the researcher's epistemological orientation and the subsequent selections of methods expressed in the research design were essential in defining the research outcome.

The study is on a selected group of people directly involved in educational services in Maldives making it fit within Stake's [61], [62] descriptions of case studies. As very little is known about the perceptions of the selected individuals on the motivational influences for successful teachers to remain teaching in the Maldives, qualitative approaches were used to investigate this phenomenon as thoroughly as possible. This case study of teacher motivation in Maldives was conducted in four sub-cases selected from three regions, south, central and north. A school from each region and Ministry of Education (MoE) were the four

sub-cases.

According to Richards and Morse [56] in case study research, 'there is a commitment to qualitative techniques, to methods seeking to understand how those under study experience their world…….. [Case study] is a particular way of pursuing qualitative inquiry, distinguished from other qualitative research' (pp. 77). Many authors describe case study as a qualitative method [56], [58], [62]. One of the strengths of qualitative research design is that it often allows greater (theoretically informed) flexibilities than quantitative research designs do [63]. Therefore, this research used qualitative methods of interviewing and focus group discussion meetings as the major forms of data collection. In addition, a questionnaire was use to collect demographic details about the participants.

A. Selection of Participants

The participants or the embedded cases for this case study were selected from the stakeholders in each of the sub-cases [62]. For the purpose this purpose, education policy makers/administrators, school principals, supervisors, successful teachers, students and parents were considered to be stakeholders.

It should be noted that for qualitative research there are 'no statistical grounds for guidance' to determine the number of participants but 'it tends to be small' [64], [65]. The number of participants for this study was purpose-determined in the light of practical logistical constraints [66]. It employed 'purposeful sampling' techniques [67], [68]. These were sometimes called 'purposive or judgemental sampling' [69]. The intention was to select participants who 'can speak from first-hand experience' and were information-rich to be able to contribute to the central issue under exploration [68], [70].

The selection of participants also had an element of 'snowball sampling' effects as some participants were requested to identify other potential participants but without losing the intended purpose. Therefore, the participants of this study comprised of personnel from the Ministry of Education (MoE), principals/headmasters, leading teachers, successful teachers, parents and students from the selected sub-cases.

Policy makers from MoE and principals from three schools were selected by virtue of their positions. Supervisors (leading teachers) were selected on the recommendations of the principals. Successful teachers were recruited from a list of such teachers generated by an advisory committee in each of the three (excluding MoE) sub-cases. Each of the three advisory committee comprised of school principals, leading teachers, members of Parent-Teacher Associations and School Boards, and students holding recognised titles like school captain or member of prefect board.

When the successful teachers were identified they were contacted to request to participate in the research. Those who agree to participate were separately requested to nominate the most appropriate students and parents based on their personal judgements. Once a few names were received from one successful teacher another teacher were also asked to nominate some. When their opinions were common such parents and students were contact to request participate. The embedded cased selected in these procedures contributed the data for this research.

Analysis of data via a grounded theory approach indicated that a dynamic interplay of factors contributed to the understanding of what motivated the teachers. It was revealed that the participants' perceptions of what motivated successful teachers to remain as teachers were very largely influenced by the cultural aspects. It was clear that the motivational influences to stay on in the teaching profession were contextual, inter-related, inter-dependent and multifaceted.

V. FINDINGS

Motivation is inseparable from culture. Out of the many cultural aspects on motivational influences for teachers to remain as teachers, this paper relates only about the sense of belongingness and relationship as motivational influences.

Engendering a community spirit and a sense of belonging among all in the community are essential ingredients for teachers to remain on a particular island. In the opinion of the participants of this study there are many things that can be done or have to happen in order to retain successful teachers in the profession. Strengthening relationship is noted as one of them.

There are many things that can be done to stop them leaving. Strengthening the relationship of the community and parents with the teachers may be one

Ali, Studet

Fostering meaningful relationships among the stakeholder groups was identified as an important contributor to influence teachers' motivation to remain.

Having a good relationship with the parents is the other important thing in the parents' view. There need to be a cordial relationship among parties concerned

Shafraaz, Leading Teacher

The relationship with the parents and community was perceived to serve many purposes. It helps to resolve frictions among stakeholder groups.

Receiving the cooperation of the management and parents and parents understanding how the teacher treats children and talking to teachers and sharing with teachers and having good relationship are good things. So that the problems that arises with teachers can be easily solved. That will encourage the teachers to go forward.

Shafia, Parent

The cordial relationship among stakeholders also serves the teachers for the purpose of feeling a sense of belonging to the community.

……this sense of belonging this culture that had been created at [various levels] draws the teacher to want to be a part of that [community] to want to keep up the good name …… there is that added drive to be a part of that team of teachers and that is again a motivational factor. Why did I stick to being a teacher? Because of the family feelings that I had in [there]. And even now given the choice I would be happy to work in [there] kind of. So, it's an ongoing

attraction ……….. a sense of belonging to that. And I think on a small island many teachers would feel like that, if they have had a good feelings about being a teacher and good feeling about what they are doing and how well they are valued

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Ameena, MoE Official
</div>

A leading teacher warned of a few negative consequences or hindrances the teacher might have to face at the absence of a cordial relationship among the stakeholders.

When there isn't a good relationship they cannot share their thoughts with each other, so even if they are unsure of something they feel reluctant to express those concerns even in the coordination meetings due to inferiority complexions (mediocre)

<div align="right">

Shafraaz, Leading Teacher
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There are many factors that contribute to develop the desired relationships. Due to the cultural practices and prevalent attitudes in the community, family connections are seen to be one of them. Looking after the elderly is believed to be the responsibility of the younger generation. Often the family members take care of the disabled in the family. A number of motivational influences emanate from this sense of being together in the family. The familial connections provide comfort, strength, safety and security for teachers as well as others in the family.

A. Desire to Stay with Family

For various reasons teachers crave to stay with their extended families. Some of them return to their home island to be with their extended family due the need to care for the elderly parents. Others return on family requests. Still others need to stay with the family in order to secure support of the extended family while fulfilling teaching and related responsibilities in school.

In my opinion, family support is very much required for such teachers to continue their profession even after parenthood

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Rifqa, Successful Teacher
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Teachers in Maldives generally spend long hours in working for the school. In addition to their timetabled contact class hours they spend a lot time helping the weaker students in extra remedial classes. They devote long hours for planning the lessons and preparing or securing teaching aids. They also give a considerable amount of time for co-curricular activities in school.

Good teachers will sacrifice a lot of their time for teaching. Teachers work even on their holidays to take extra classes or help the weaker students…… Quite often they refrain themselves from other pleasures but sacrifice their time to work in the school.

<div align="right">

Ali, Student
</div>

In order for them to be able to spend the time needed to become good teachers they have to be helped by the members of their family.

Teachers survive in the school with great support from their family………. A teacher can become committed and dedicated teacher by spending a lot of time in school. ……….

firstly, good teachers can only come and spend these times with the backing from home.

<div align="right">

Hazlaan, a school principal
</div>

As such they expect their spouse or extended family to help them in various ways. Particularly, if they have their own small children, they will often be looked after by a family member. In the absence of an organised day care facility in most of the islands, the family members care for the young and elderly while the teachers are in schools. They also do a lot of school related work at home.

Good teachers do a lot of school related work at home too. For example, they prepare lesson notes and sometimes they get assistance from other members of the family in preparing worksheets and other things………. So the support of the people behind those committed teachers who spend a lot of time in school work has to be noted.

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Hazlaan, a school principal
</div>

As expressed by the research participants there are numerous other ways family members help teachers. For example, it is not customary for Maldivians to take their lunches packed to their work except by the fishermen. Fishermen are normally out on the sea for long periods. They do not return home for meals but take packed lunches. Otherwise they prepare meals while on board the vessels if they are big enough to cook and have the facilities needed for cooking. Others who work on land often go back to their homes or go for cafés or restaurants for their meals. Cafés and restaurants are available only in some islands where there are significant sizes of populations to create the prospects of making profits out of them. On other islands people take their meals at home. Hence teachers also go home for their meals. Their spouse or the members of the extended family prepare the meals. Otherwise they themselves may cook upon their return or the meals are cooked by expatriate housemaids imported from neighbouring countries.

Members of the family may help the teachers commute to school several times a day on the comparatively larger islands where there are motorcycles and cars. There are other numerous ways the extended family help teachers. The family also benefits from having teachers with them. They have the opportunity to tutor their younger members by their elder siblings or members of the extended family. Some teachers even choose teaching because they know that they can get a job in their home-island to stay with their families. A young male teacher with a first degree in teaching secondary - mathematics and accounting once said the following when he was asked why teachers remain in the island school.

………for me, my concern is that working with my family members here. That's the main factors.

<div align="right">

Salman, teacher
</div>

The family he was referring to was his extended family. The desire for teachers to stay with their families was quite evidently expressed by some of the participants. Such desires may have resulted from parental pressure for children to return to their home island after completing a qualification.

B. Parents' Pressure

Until recently, the provision of education in Male' was considered to be far superior to that in other islands. Hence, often parents send their children to Male' for their education. But the family or parents generally expect their children to return to their home island to live with them among extended families upon completion of a level of education.

Parents wish their children to select a career in which jobs are available in their home island. Education is one of those areas where there are jobs on all islands. Therefore, parents wish their children to become teachers. Particularly, it is the wish for their girls. They want their girls to become teachers so that they can come back to their home-island.

…….and parents want their, particularly girls, to become teachers with the hope that they will stay on the island.

Ameena, MoE official

So, it is quite common for parents to expect their children to return to their home-island after their education or training. Having a reasonably well paid job on their home-island for their children is something most parents aspire. Teaching ensures a more stable income than that from fishing or any other common employment. However, some teachers argue that the pay for teachers is not appropriate for the work they do.

Provide financial benefits comparable to other sectors. In reality, teachers get very little.

Faiz, School Principal

They maintain that a person with similar qualification in other areas now can earn better than a teacher. Even the fishermen with no formal qualifications seem to earn better than a teacher. One young teacher on this matter went on to say that;

For example, what I'm saying is, for example, my father-in-law; he is a fisherman, and he get for a month around 15 or 14 thousand Rufiya. But for us; our profession is teaching, but we get maximum 9 thousand Rufiya, nowadays which is not worthwhile.

Salman, an Accounts Teacher in a small school

This particular teacher, according to him chose to become a teacher because he can get a job on his home-island with a reasonable pay. In spite of the differences in opinions about the pay, a lot of parents pressure their offspring to return to their home island as teachers for various reasons. Therefore, many teachers prefer to return to their home island once they complete their teacher training.

C. Preference for Home Island

Having jobs on the home island ensures the presence of the younger generation to care for the elderly. The younger generation in general, still pay heed to the expectations of the old, even though the people believe that it is diminishing. By having come to the home-island, the newly trained teachers have the opportunity to work within their extended family.

Ouh... may be working in home-island, for me,

Salman, teacher

Unless there are family grudges with other stronger families in the island the likelihood is that they build a strong holding in the job. They easily get settled back into the island's culture when they come back to their own island. This is also a way of getting the approval of the community easily.

D. Security and Safety

Security and safety within the island community were also noted as one of the motivational influences for teachers to stay in a school.

Security in the community is also another factor.

Nazeem, School Head

Sticking together as one population on an island could be considered as a way of ensuring their own security and safety. Until very recently there were no police or security forces present on the islands except Male'. The National Security Service counteracts any foreign threat to the nation. The island population manages most of their own safety and security issues. They manage most of their internal conflicts.

In some islands there have been instances of harassing, bullying and mugging in some islands. The community has to provide protections for the teachers. Who will protect the teachers if the community does not? Unless they have proper security they will not be there. They might have to leave the profession. So the community can ensure the security of the teachers in a way that they feel the place as a safe one. So the teachers will feel very happy.

Faiz, School principal

But even then, internal conflicts become so heated up that the families on both sides may have to act as protectors of their fellow people. Often people of strong family connections or knowledge have more strength. Hence, the islands remained as very peaceful places where the 'strong' maintains peace.

As time goes by, the situations in the islands are continuously changing. Number of islands where police is deployed is increasing. More and more people have begun to feel that security and safety have to be ensured by the state. They no longer view protecting each other as their responsibility. Some of them even feel that the condemning of the action of a wrongdoer is taboo. It is also considered a way of exposing one's self to threats of being unsafe or even harmed.

They [teachers] are getting some physical abuses, assaulted. So maybe some gang fighters or some threatens actually they are getting maybe theft and those things are also happening in the society now that is the truth.

So I think we have to show them that it is a safe place for those teachers to live in this school.

Nazeem, School Head

Security and safety has become important considerations when teachers make decisions on which islands they may want to go as teachers. Unless they have family connections, family friends or friends of their own they are reluctant to go to some islands.

In the absence of the police or army on the islands, everyone in one way or another is responsible for the

maintenance of peace and security. Most of the people on any given island are related to each other by blood or marriage. They get strength from one another. Family influences are quite strong on the individuals. Individuals need family support in various ways. If a teacher gets support or approval of a large family in the island that teacher is likely to get approval from many others.

There have been many occasions when single young teachers are posted to various islands, they get married to locals. Marriages presently are rarely arranged by the family. Young men and women choose their marriage partners. But family influence on who marries whom is quite strong. Family approval from both sides is vital in many cases, particularly for women. Teachers or other professionally trained people posted onto remote islands easily get the approval of local families for marriage. This could be for numerous reasons. One could be the fact that such people are seen with esteem by the community. The other could be for reason of securing income for life through a stable job.

By this way such people ensure their security and safety in the island. Once the person is married with someone from another family, the members of family often become protective of that person, particularly if that that person achieved the blessings of the whole family. Likewise, when unmarried teachers are sent to remote islands, they sometimes marry into families of the island. By this way they make their positions stronger in the island whereby increasing their chances of succeeding in the field of teaching. Teaching in Maldives requires the approval of the community in order to succeed in the field.

E. Community Reception

The community's support is a strong force for teachers to remain in the profession. Teachers are influenced to stay on or leave teaching profession by the reception they receive from the community when they are posted to various islands.

The other would be that the, what do you call this, the reception he has received from the community would have been, probably he would have liked it, the reception he received from the community, that means he is accepted as a society as a person who is, who is here and well respected.
Ikram, MoE Official

The community reception is affected by many factors. Some of them could be the reputation one has acquired by working in some islands. If one has made a good impression by working in a particular island that teacher is likely to succeed in the other islands too. Often people try to find out about the performance of the teacher in other islands if a teacher decides to go to some island other than that of the teacher's own.

The decision to accept the offer to go to a particular school or island will be influenced by factors related to being familiar with the island or school. This familiarity may be through various sources.

…… a lot of teachers choose to go to a school because either they have known somebody there, I am talking about the locals here, either they have gone there.
Ameena, MoE official

The teacher may know someone in a school or island. Due to the closed-knittedness of the society, a teacher may come to know someone in a school though numerous ways. It may be due to a personal meeting in a completely different context from teaching. Or it may be through another friend or through a friend's friend. It may well have been through some sort of family connections too.

A visit to an island could be considered a visit to a school as schools are so important in the community. Teachers may visit islands for various reasons. It could be on official business or for leisure. They may also visit with their family members if they happened to have family friends in the island.

They may go on teaching experience during their training too. Such visits may provide teachers chances to familiarise themselves with schools as well as with the community. On trips of teaching experience to outer islands often the group of trainees get hosted by the community. Or they may be hosted the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). PTA frequently happens to represent a large portion of the community. This gives teachers the chances to get acquainted with the traditions of the particular island. It also provides the opportunity for them to form bonds with some people in the school or in the community.

Having good family connections and/or friendly relationships with some influential people in the island community helps teachers establish themselves when they are posted to other islands. The blessings of an influential family on the island become added advantages to the teachers for better survival in a new community.

Some teachers also earn good reception through their sheer efforts. They demonstrate their own talents, skills and capabilities to the community through various ways. Involvement in community activities also helps them earn community acceptance. According to some participants the teachers must involve themselves in community activities for many reasons.

For example, I being a lady, I must participate as fully as I can with other ladies in the communal cleaning of the island. Even if that activity is on our holiday, I see participation as important.
During such activities one gathers a lot of their ideas and suggestions. It is easier to work better in the light of those.
Azma, Teacher

The reception the teacher receives from the community is highly influential on the chances the teacher has for thriving on the island or in the school. Such reception is largely influenced by the relationships the teacher maintains with the community.

The teachers must always remember that the teacher is a member of the community, even though he/she comes to teach in school. Therefore, he/she must not only have relationships with parents and students. They must have relationships with each and every person in the community.
Azma, Teacher

F. Kinship among Colleagues and Stakeholders

The bond that forms among the many stakeholders with teachers within the community is found to be a binding force

to remain in the island. A leading teacher commented on how the Katheebs (island chiefs) can motivate teachers to remain in the remote islands.

If they can talk to the parents, they can talk to the students, they can see what is going on, if they can conduct some programmes, to have a friend, have a bond to share, the love, they can er build a love among this small community. If they can do that, definitely we can show love in the school. That is what is missing, in Maldives, nowadays…. The love to each other, the respect to each other that we should. Without that we cannot get respect, without that we cannot get the motivation.

Shafu, Leading Teacher

If teachers got the love of parents they would want to spend more time and do even better……. Teachers will be happy if the parents came and spoke to them nicely.

Abbas, Teacher/Parent

The kinship that forms within a school setup is found to be a similar force for teachers to remain in school.

If the people in the management meet the teachers kindly with smiles, teachers will be happy to spend more time in school otherwise they would not like to be in school.

Abbas, Teacher/Parent

Teacher morale in terms of how the students are relating with you, how the parents when given the opportunities, you interact with them, how do they accept you, how do they treat you, then the gel, the kinship and the camaraderie between belonging to a school, belonging to a group of teachers, again coming from my own experience, for example last night, I called for my family for a dinner party and within that family you wouldn't be surprised there were …. Teachers, because I consider them, because I have been with them for over 30 years of my life. So I mean, who else could be……

Ameena, MoE Official

School were perceived to practise various activities to develop and sustain the feeling of kinship among the various stakeholder groups. These include various social activities and many other things. Among the other things, visiting the sick and providing emotional support for the needy serve as motivational influences for them to belong into the team in the school.

When the people are actually in sorrow, we have to talk to those people and we have to give them some support, the moral support that we have to give that we are doing already. And even if somebody is sick I think it is something very important to visit them. We have a culture here always, something like, if a teacher gives a birth so we will visit and when we go visit the particular teacher we go with some gift collectively we collect from all the teachers. Those teachers will be very happy with that. So they appreciate what we are doing.

Nazeem, School Head

When such connexions develop between teachers and all others concerned many other motivational influences emanate from them to stay on in the school. Cordial relationships among the various stakeholders provide completely new dimensions to their working environments.

If the parents, management and students have a very cordial relationship among themselves all will feel that that they are living in big world of their own and if a teacher told something to a child the parents will feel that is like been said to the parent……. So, there should be similar relationships among all the parents, management and teachers. The important thing is to have a holistic environment shared by everyone.

Fikry, Parent

To sustain interest and motivation one has to maintain the close friendliness among the colleagues. Speaking with friends sustains interest.

Abbas, Teacher/Parent

The feelings of true kinship bring them the moral support and strength to express freely what they think of others and what they expect each other to accomplish to improve their mutual conditions. The students, parents and the school have to share all the feelings related to what happens in the school. A school head explained this as having a motivational influence for teachers.

They [parents] also have to feel that they are the part of this school and all the sorrows and the happiness they also have to share. And they are doing it….. Even if we get something good, some rewards or something that the school is remarkable then I think their contribution they have to give. And sometimes we are getting, we are winning from competitions and we are getting good results. In these situations also they have to mark it with the students with the school management. So they have to feel that this is something that actually they have got. So that sort of attitude I think we need from the community to keep these teachers in the school and motivate the teachers.

Nazeem, School Head

G. Social Gatherings

Social gatherings among teachers and other stakeholders are also found to be a strong source of motivation for teachers. Social gatherings seem to serve many other purposes. Among them includes the formations of various forums for stakeholders to appreciate, celebrate teachers work. They also help develop a sense of belonging among the various stakeholder groups.

A leading teacher once expressed her thoughts as follows about what the school management can do to motivate teachers.

They can do so much to motivate the teachers. Like, appreciating their work, having a get-together, talking about the umm……things that could be improved, and those teachers who have improved, sharing their ideas among all, every month, something like that.

Shafu, Leading Teacher

According to Shafu they have get-togethers like picnics, trips, fun camps and other social gatherings for students, parents, teachers and their families. Such gatherings really help iron out discontent among all stakeholders through discussions in informal settings where everybody feels

relaxed.

And another thing is that that friendliness that we are having in the school. So it should be a very friendly environment that everybody can talk and they can express their feelings in the school without any hesitations. So I think that's very very important thing to motivate the teachers. If they feel that if they say something if they suggest something so they will be penalised or something will happen, I think we have to avoid those things to motivate the teachers.

<div align="right">

Nazeem, School Head

</div>

In such informal settings parents can talk about what were good or bad about the teachers rather than talking about teachers in town.

Instead, the parent can tell the teacher, in front of her "I am really impressed…….In front of the teachers, in front of the public, but not only the negative points, positive points also and where they can be improved.

<div align="right">

Shafu, Leading Teacher

</div>

When teachers and parents have a social bond and are friendly they can express their concerns in manners that do not offend each other.

Developing relationships among themselves. Having a teachers' social club and carrying out various programmes. They all can enhance motivation by having a mechanism of exchanging knowledge among teachers, by having a very close bond between all the people.

Unless there is a close bond when one makes a suggestion for improvement, it is likely that the other person gets angry.

<div align="right">

Fikry, Parent

</div>

Having mechanisms of exchanging knowledge and opinions among stakeholders in friendly environments through informal social gatherings serve in creating opportunities to motivate and sustain teachers' motivation.

VI. IMPLICATIONS

The Maldivians for a long time have lived in a remote isolated situation. Until recently, the islands were very little known to the external world. They have managed their affairs by themselves internally and externally. Even now there is no organised formal police service present in all inhabited islands leaving the islanders for their own devices to manage their internal security. Togetherness was seen to give them strength and comfort in managing their affairs. This was seen to be reflected in the motivational influences to become a teacher and remain as a teacher on the islands.

When relationships and togetherness are so highly valued it can be assumed that the island communities expect the teachers to reciprocate the same towards the communities. While these communities recruit large numbers of expatriate teachers these are important issues for expatriate teachers to bear in mind if they aim to succeed as teachers.

Since teacher motivation so much embedded in the cultural and social norms of the society, efforts to motivate teachers have to be very much target and calculated with a special emphasis on the societal norms. The activities to enhance motivation of teachers have to be holistic rather than fragmented and ad hoc. Such activities have to be based on empirical evidence as the society as a whole at the moment is transforming. Continuous research in various island communities has to be conducted to get enlightened about the social and cultural influences on teachers' motivation and their implications for teachers and other stakeholders.

VII. CONCLUSION

Motivational influences for successful teachers to remain as teachers in the remote and isolated islands of the Maldives are highly contextual, inter-related, inter-dependent and multifaceted. They are hugely dependent upon social and cultural aspects. Hence, they need to be continuously researched to understand what motivates teachers and the possible implications they might have on the small island communities.

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