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Emotional Experiences and its Influence on Identity Construction: English Language Teachers' Narratives

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Abstract

Teacher emotion is a relatively less explored area in the context of English language education research in general and teacher professional identity in particular. This study reports the emotional experiences of four secondary-level English language teachers from public schools in Nepal, exploring their life stories through informal conversations and in-depth interviews. Thematic analysis of their life stories indicated that as a roller coaster ride, teachers underwent positive, happy, and exciting moments to negative emotional experiences like sadness, dissatisfaction, humiliation, and vulnerability influencing their becoming. Vulnerability emerged as a significant motif in their stories, which, though generally considered a negative emotion, immensely contributed to teachers' development. In addition, emotional attachment with students, colleagues, and school; compliment and appreciation by colleagues, parents, and students; and students' success and satisfaction enhanced self-esteem and commitment to teaching, positively contributing to identity construction. In contrast, sad and depressing moments arising from students' disruptive behaviour, exclusion of teachers in crucial decision-making, and misrepresentation and misrecognition of their contributions by seniors and administrators in their discourses posed a crisis on their identity, stimulating feelings like quitting the job. The study's findings implied an urge to pay due consideration to the affective dimension of teachers by policymakers and administrators for their professional development and identity construction, thereby enhancing students' learning outcomes.

Keywords: *Narrative inquiry, Nepal, teachers' emotions, vulnerability, identity, communities of practice*

Introduction

Emotion is an emerging field in teacher education with its wider range of discussion particularly focused on its impact on teacher professional development and students' learning outcomes. As teachers' emotional experiences may greatly influence their commitment to teaching or restriction, exploration of the affective dimension is crucial. Satisfied and happy teachers may have greater productivity than the ones who are unhappy and dissatisfied. Moreover, emotion may also affect their cognition and thereby

their professional development and identity construction. Hence, exploring teachers' affective domain is crucial. In the context of Nepal, teachers are reported to have heavy workloads, limited professional development opportunities (Neupane, 2023, 2024; Neupane & Gnawali, 2023; Neupane & Joshi, 2022; Neupane & Bhatt, 2023), low payment, lack of consideration of their overall wellbeing, and lack of recognition of their contribution that causes stress and anxiety. In addition, teachers face widespread pressure to perform well and enhance students' learning outcomes. The most important aspect of the affective dimension of teachers is not only how they feel, rather how they respond to their emotions and their influence on their development and growth.

Traditionally, emotion was considered a cognitive, personal, and subjective concept. Vygotsky (1998) reaffirmed that cognition and emotion are interconnected and are the two subcomponents of consciousness. He argued:

> Thought is not begotten by thought; it is engendered by motivation, i.e., by our desires and needs, our interests and emotions. Behind every thought, there is an affective-volitional tendency, which holds the answer to the last "why" in the analysis of thinking. A true and full understanding of another's thought is possible only when we understand its affective–volitional basis (p. 252).

Vygotsky acknowledges the interconnected nature of cognition and emotion: one influencing the other. Referring to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning, Reis (2015) stresses that cognition and emotion should not be considered dialectical components; they cannot be detached as one induces the other.

Teachers undergo both positive and negative affective experiences, and both do impact their careers. However, negative emotions, mainly anxiety, fear, sadness, shame, guilt, and boredom, are found to have primarily focused on existing research. But recently, researchers have been directing on the positive personality factors and personal feelings such as love, happiness, enjoyment, belonging, empathy, gratitude, satisfaction, spirituality, and mindfulness, among others and their influence on teachers' well-being (Prior, 2019). Knowing teachers' emotions is crucial because it enables them to make teaching-learning meaningful and enjoyable. Exploration of emotion, according to Prior (2019), helps "examine how positive emotions may shape individuals' sense of autonomy and personal agency as well as their motivations, attitudes, identities, and social relationships" (p. 65). Day (2012) argues that understanding and managing emotions within themselves and others enhances teaching-learning management. Thus, teachers' emotions are inextricably linked to their professional practices, their growth and identity construction.

The model teacher myth – flawless, authoritative, and always efficient – still prevalent among teachers has hindered understanding emotions. Due to the influence of the model teacher myth, teachers tend to hide their feelings from their students and colleagues to conceal their potential weaknesses and vulnerabilities (Hargreaves, 2000). According to Lemarchand-Chauvin and Tardieu (2018), experienced and expert teachers tend to share their emotions less than beginners. Expert teachers are found to have shared their feelings with their family members instead of colleagues, thinking that sharing emotions would mean admitting weaknesses. Hence, sharing of emotion in

teaching is avoided due to stereotypical beliefs teachers carry of themselves about their identity. In this article, I report four secondary-level English language teachers' emotional experiences and their response to different emotions and thereby their influence on professional development and identity construction by exploring their life histories.

Teacher professional identity is an emerging research field in English language education that has its roots in the notion of identity developed in sociological and political contexts. Norton (2013) defines identity as "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how the relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (p. 4). In other words, identity can be understood as belonging or teachers' commonality with a particular group of teachers and what differentiates them from others (Weeks, 1990). According to Block (2015), teacher identity is considered as how teachers position themselves and their work, how their colleagues and others position them, and how they connect with communities of practice. Likewise, Gee (2000) considers identity as "being recognized as a certain 'kind of person,' identity is connected not to internal states but to performances in society" (p. 99). From all these definitions, one can infer that teacher identity is individual, social, performative, experiential, constructed, negotiated, maintained, and transformed through language, discourse and practices across time and space. Teacher identity is not a static entity rather it is fluid, complex, contradictory, multiple, situated, and contextually negotiated (Morgan, 2004; Richards, 2017; Varghese et al., 2005) which is in the process of 'becoming.' Identity is not an essence but a positioning in sociocultural and historical contexts.

Though the impact of emotion on teachers' professional development and identity construction has not been explored much, Lemarchand-Chauvin and Tardieu (2018) argue that pre-service teachers have long been seeking emotional support to address their emotional upheavals, though not taken seriously by the educational authorities. Some questions, like how to deal with the fear of getting into the classroom, how to deal with the anger that may arise out of the students' disruptive behaviours, and how to deal with the moments that occur from success and happiness and sadness one may feel due to failure, are unanswered. Reis (2015) also reaffirmed that English language teachers' emotional aspects were not given much prominent space in training and development activities. Emotions have mainly been ignored, considering them subjective, irrational, female, and challenging to capture. Benesch (2012) argues that "emotions seem to factor into teaching and learning so it would be useful to understand them better" (p. 133).

Studies on teachers' emotions and identities revealed different types of positive and negative emotions teachers experience, their responses to emotional situations, and the impact of emotion on identity construction. Lemarchand-Chauvin and Tardieu (2018) note that Aristotle has listed anger, pity, fear, and desire, associating these with pleasure or pain. Descartes has discussed mainly six emotions: love, joy, admiration, desire, hate and sadness, and he has distinguished these as primary and secondary emotions. By being specific to the teaching profession, Lemarchand-Chauvin and Tardieu (2018) list frustration, annoyance (anger), strain (fear), elation (joy), depression (sadness) and shame as some of the emotional experiences of teachers. Likewise, Teng (2020) discusses vulnerability as an emotional state that English language teachers undergo.

According to Lasky (2005), vulnerability is a multifaceted emotional experience that individuals may confront in numerous settings, or fear or apprehension that one's judgments could be erroneous, hazardous, or self-defeating.

The fundamental question is how to adequately respond to these emotions for the smooth development of English language teachers. Beginners share both positive as well as negative emotional experiences – victories and failures – and are eager to get advice from their colleagues, which is considered positively as a will to develop, an essential step for professional identity construction, and therefore valued by the professional community (Lemarchand-Chauvin & Tardieu, 2018). Emotional development should be a fundamental component of the training of language teachers, write Lemarchand-Chauvin and Tardieu (2018). English language teachers must regularly cope with their own and pupils' emotions, whether pre-service or in-service teachers. Fried (2011) argues that emotion regulation is essential to teacher education, whether done through breathing exercises or reflective activities. Even Reis (2015) argues that to grow as professionals, English language teachers require relentless opportunities to externalize and give voice to their thoughts and emotions. Proper identification, validation, and understanding of emotion may positively transform English language teachers' personal and professional lives. Therefore, English language teachers must explore and share their professional insecurities and find ways to respond to their feelings and anxieties to make it a catalyst for positive transformation.

Exploration of the role of emotions in the identity construction of English language teachers is a recent phenomenon, and very few studies have been conducted in the area. Li (2020) explored the narratives of two Chinese English language teachers, focusing on how beliefs and emotions contributed to their professional identity construction. Research results showed that native/non-native speakerism had a powerful influence in shaping teachers' beliefs and emotions related to teaching and learning English, due to which these teachers kept on seeking approval on their pronunciation from their colleagues abroad. Furthermore, native/nonnative discourse that put nonnative teachers in a disadvantageous position caused distant relationships of one participant with his students and colleagues. Because of that, he had to put additional effort into preparing for his classroom instruction and developing a caring relationship with students and their parents to prove his potential. He felt highly vulnerable being a non-native speaker of English.

Likewise, Yuan and Lee (2016) explored how Ming, a student teacher, dealt with contradictory emotions while doing his practicum at a private boarding school in a suburb of Beijing by drawing his lived narratives. The findings indicated that the negative feelings he experienced during the internship challenged his beliefs as a teacher, while positive emotions that he derived from his students' success and recognition contributed positively to his identity construction as an English teacher. However, due to constraints from the mentor's side and the contextual factors in school, his negative emotions gradually escalated, posing a severe hindrance to identity construction. Professional learning atmosphere, sociocultural environment, and emotion heavily influenced teachers' identity construction. Swearingen (2019), examining nonnative English speaker teachers' language teacher identity development in graduate-level Teaching English to Speakers of

Other Language (TESOL) programs in the USA, Canada, and Australia, identified the emotional glue or affective responses in language teachers' identity development, among other factors. Regarding emotion and identity, the researcher found that affect has transformative power in language teacher identity development. Swearingen's (2019) investigation revealed that "While negative emotions may constrain identity development, positive emotions stimulated through reflection on alternative discourse, opportunities to enact identities through student teaching, and supportive networks seemed to impact identity formation positively" (p. 10). Though few studies are conducted in contexts other than Nepal, there is a paucity of research on teacher professional development in general and the influence of emotion on identity in particular.

Though many studies (Gautam, 2018, Neupane, 2023, 2024; Neupane and Bhatt, 2023, Neupane et al., 2022; Pokharel, 2022) are conducted on the identity construction of English language teachers, to the best of my knowledge, studies that exclusively focused on emotion and identity are nonexistent in Nepal. Because of this, some critical questions about English language teachers' identity construction relating to emotion are unanswered. What are the emotional experiences of teachers? How do different positive and negative emotional experiences influence teachers? How do teachers respond to their different emotional experiences? What is the role of emotion in the identity construction of English language teachers? These are some of the still unanswered critical questions that this article attempts to answer. Through the exploration of the lived experiences of four English language teachers over a long time, by employing the life history approach of narrative inquiry as a research method, the study unveils the teachers' emotional experiences and their response to different emotions influencing professional development and identity construction. The following research question guides this study.

How do emotional experiences and teachers' responses to them influence the professional identity of secondary-level English language teachers?

Research Method: Narrative Inquiry

Narrative research predominates the teacher's professional identity research, enabling researchers to explore the participants' lived experiences. I conduct this research under the "interpretive framework" or a "paradigm" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 13) that enables me as a researcher to co-construct the lived reality of the participants through informal conversations and interviews. As humans are storytelling creatures who explain their and others' experiences through narratives of past, present and future, highlighting the importance of stories in human life, Silko (2006) mentions: "You don't have anything if you don't have stories" in her widely acknowledged novel *Ceremony.* Connelly and Clandinin (1990) also argue that in education, narrative inquiry brings "educational experience as lived" (p. 3). Hence, narrative inquiry becomes pertinent to this research.

According to Barkhuizen (2016), "Stories enable us to represent our experiences including our identities, but they also, in the telling, re-shape those experiences and identities" (p. 6). This constructivist, sociocultural and post-structural notion of identity formation, as opposed to essentializing tendency, is appropriate to my research. Barkhuizen et al. (2014) argue that narrative inquiry is the only method that provides access

to language teaching and learning as lived experiences over a prolonged period and in diverse contexts and settings. Because of this, teacher identity is a widely discussed theme in narrative inquiry research of English language teaching and learning. As narrative inquiry is employed to explore the life stories/histories of English language teachers in different contexts and settings to identify the being and becoming, narrative inquiry is appropriate for this research.

Participants

In this research, four secondary-level English language teachers from public schools in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal, having at least seven to ten years of teaching experience, are purposively selected as research participants. Participants were chosen based on the specifically defined criteria: a) teachers having at least one education degree, either Master of Education (M.Ed.) or Master of Philosophy (MPhil), b) currently teaching secondary-level students in public schools in Nepal, and c) having at least seven to 10 years of teaching experience. However, before deciding on the four participants who met my criteria, I had a primary level of conversation with seven participants. Out of those seven participants, four participants who best fit the defined criteria were selected. Experienced teachers are purposively selected as research participants as they achieve a certain level of maturity, gain ample experience, and attain a certain level of identity construction during this stage. Table 1 presents a brief glimpse of each participant.

Table 1

A brief overview of the participants

S. N.	Participants	Teaching experience	Gender	Contextual Background
1.	Kumari	Ten years	Female	Born and brought up in a culturally diverse social context in the hilly eastern part of Nepal
2.	Nita	Ten years	Female	Born and brought up in an upper-middle-class family on the outskirts of Kathmandu Valley
3.	Binesh	thirteen years	Male	Born and brought up in a middle-class family in the hilly eastern part of Nepal
4.	Surya	Ten years	Male	Born and brought up in a family dependent on agriculture in a hilly midwestern part of Nepal

Story Generation and Data Collection

I explored the lived stories of these four participants by conducting in-depth interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) and informal conversations, which are the most common method of collecting data in language teaching and learning research (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). First, I gathered my participants' stories through informal conversation to elicit accounts of their different life episodes, such as childhood, basic education, secondary education, university education, and teaching experience, focusing on their emotional experiences in various stages. Then, open-ended questions were asked to elicit stories during story generation, as stated by Hollway and Jefferson (2000). Participants were asked about their emotional experiences and how they responded to those emotional situations. During the interview process, as noted by Savin-Baden and Niekerk (2007), I patiently listened to the participants' stories and actively participated in the story generation,

acknowledging the mutual co-constructed nature of the stories (Sfard & Prusak, 2005).

While conversing, I was aware not to distract participants from the flow of their storytelling. However, sometimes, I asked questions in between to dig out more essential details and examples of some of the crucial incidents. Thus, the participants and I co-constructed the life stories (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) relating to the emotional experiences of these four English language teachers. I recorded the interview and informal conversation by obtaining consent from the participants. After that, I transcribed and translated the recordings for the further process of interpretation and meaning-making.

Interpretation and Meaning Making

In this research, I employed the thematic analysis approach for interpreting and meaning-making the participants' stories. Barkhuizen (2011) claims that thematic approaches (analysis of narrative) have been predominantly employed in TESOL in the past and even at present because the paradigmatic analysis is also considered an academically valid method. Drawing on Barkhuizen's (2011) notion of narrative knowledging, I consider the narrative analysis process from generating the story, transcribing, translating, and coding the data to presenting the themes in the narrative report.

However, I employed Saldana's (2016) first-cycle and second-cycle coding processes to interpret the transcripts. Each participant's transcript is placed on a separate table and coded using the selected coding approach during the first coding cycle. During the process, anecdotes that are relevant to research questions were highlighted. Then, codes and highlighted anecdotes from all the participants pertinent to the research question were categorized and thematized in the second-cycle coding process. These themes mainly concern how positive and negative emotions affect the professional development and identity construction of English language teachers. These categories and themes were then connected and discussed with findings in the previous studies and theoretical categories. Afterward, the summaries of themes accompanied by excerpts from the transcripts (McAlpine, 2016) were presented in the report in logical sequence in narrative form.

Emotional Experiences and Identities: A Roller Coaster Ride

English language teachers' narratives showed that emotional experience remained crucial during their teaching-learning journey, influencing their professional development and identity construction. All the participants shared how teachers underwent different positive and negative emotional situations and how such experiences influenced them. Teachers shared positive emotional experiences such as happiness and satisfaction from attachment with students, school and administration; positive compliments from students, administrators and parents and students' success. In addition, they also underwent sad and depressing moments and vulnerable situations. As noted by Nita, as a roller coaster ride, positive, happy, and exciting moments to negative emotional experiences like sadness, dissatisfaction, humiliation, and vulnerability contributed to what participants have become now.

Will I Survive in English Language Teaching or Not?

Vulnerability emerged as a significant motif in the story of Binesh. Apart from Binesh, Kumari also shared the vulnerable situation she endured during the formative phase of her teaching career. The lived story of Binesh reflected how vulnerability had been a major motivating factor for his development and success as a student and a teacher. Though vulnerability is commonly considered a negative emotion, affecting identity construction negatively, the story of Binesh reflected vulnerability as a motivating factor. Binesh shared how the vulnerable situation he experienced due to fear of job opportunities in the future motivated him to invest in his education. He argued: *"I always used to get scared of job opportunities in the future. And that fear of opportunity always motivated me to work hard. This is how I completed my academic journey up to my master's in 2001."* As Binesh had witnessed a lived example of a teacher who could earn well during his schooling, Binesh believed that being an English teacher, he could have good economic and symbolic capital that always motivated him to invest in English language learning. But at the same time, Binesh was also scared of not having good opportunities if he didn't do well in the teacher education courses. His beliefs, dreams for the future, and vulnerability inspired him to study well and complete his M.Ed. in English with good grades. Though Binesh completed his M.Ed. in English with good grades, he was not confident enough to start his career as an English teacher. After a visit to one of the publicly acclaimed private schools in Kathmandu Valley during the formative phase of his career, Binesh realized that he didn't have language fluency equal to that of grade three students. Binesh confessed:

> *I had an M.Ed. degree, but teaching in grade three was a challenge. If literature and social were given, I would probably teach. But teaching functional English was tough. I didn't have the fluency to use the communicative language teaching method the course envisioned. While visiting Universe Secondary School, I found that a grade three student was far better than me regarding his communicative competence, mainly speaking. In class, English was the only medium of instruction; courses were so good that he had an excellent disposition to an English-speaking environment. But for us, English was just a subject. We didn't immerse ourselves in English.*

Though Binesh had taught up to the secondary level in a public school in his village, he experienced a survival threat in Kathmandu. Mainly, his speaking was not as par the expected level. Binesh himself revealed that it was a "shocking moment" and he suffered from a "survival threat."

Binesh revealed his vulnerability through his story relating to the interview process for the primary-level Vice Principal's post he had applied for. His response to the interviewer during the interview in question regarding the expected salary showed his vulnerability. He confessed:

> *In their question about the expected salary, I replied that I was not expecting much wages. I require an amount that is enough for my survival. That was a moment in my life. So, they gave me enough amount for my survival. Then, I started working there as a Vice Principal. Though I was just a Vice Principal, I had to take the whole responsibility of the school as Principal.*

Binesh was so vulnerable that he could not even claim his salary strongly. He was ready to teach in whatever amount they offered. And his vulnerability was induced by the lack of communication skills. Being an English teacher at the secondary level, Binesh required a certain level of speaking skills, but as his communication competence was not good, Binesh joined as a Vice Principal in a pre-primary school situated on the outskirts of Kathmandu Valley. After teaching for a few years, Binesh realized that developing a career in teaching at a private school was challenging. He underwent an "economic crisis plus the question of sustainability" in that pre-primary school. Hence, when Binesh received an opportunity to teach on a public campus in that area, he switched to the college. However, as it was a small community college where Binesh didn't see the possibility of a tenure track position, the question of sustainability bothered him again. His existential reality as a teacher challenged his belief that he developed seeing his teacher during childhood, the dream of having good economic and symbolic capital as an English teacher. Binesh started feeling vulnerable. Stories of Binesh echoed the findings of Yuan and Lee (2016) relating to their exploration of how negative emotions a student teacher experienced during practicum in the People's Republic of China challenged his belief about the teacher.

Binesh chose the English language teaching profession, getting inspired by his teacher as his teacher had good economic, cultural, and social capital. Aspiring for a better future, he joined English language learning and, thereby, the teaching profession. However, due to inefficient communication skills, struggle for job opportunities, and the question of sustainability in the teaching profession, Binesh felt vulnerable during the formative phase of his career. But the same vulnerability motivated him to struggle and finally establish himself as a tenure-track secondary-level English language teacher. Wenger (1998) relates vulnerability with alignment that when employees are not aligned with the norms, values, and ideologies of the communities of practice, it may lead participants to vulnerable situations. Wenger's use of the term vulnerability has a negative connotation. However, in the context of Binesh, he felt vulnerable because of the questions about his beliefs, expectations, and dreams for the future. In addition, vulnerability is also rooted in inefficient communication skills. Instead of having a negative impact, vulnerability emerged as a motivating factor to engage in development activities, because of which Binesh achieved his dreams for the future.

Though Kumari didn't experience vulnerability due to the issue of sustainability, inefficient communication skills led Kumari to a vulnerable position during the formative phase of her career. Kumari shared that during her schooling, she could speak in broken English. Though Kumari could improve her writing during her intermediate, she didn't get an opportunity to enhance her oral communication skills. However, after starting a teaching career in a private school in Kathmandu Valley, she improved her communication skills a little. However, her communication was satisfactory only. Kumari confessed:

> *When I joined a school for teaching, I improved my verbal communication a little. However, after joining White Palace School for training and finding students communicating with each other, I realized that my English competency did not equal grade two students in White Palace. That's what I felt.*

Because of her inadequate speaking fluency and belief that her speaking was below par, Kumari hesitated to speak with senior teachers in her school. She worked as a primary teacher during the formative phase of her career. While teaching at the primary level, Kumari hesitated to speak with grade nine/ten students. She confessed:

> *During the start of my career, English was given high priority. At that time, I used to feel guilty because I did not have good communication skills. For almost six months, I wondered whether I would survive in English language teaching. As I wanted to improve my oral communication, I got help from self-help books, wrote some sample sentences in a copy, and memorized them to speak in class the next day. That was the condition of my oral communication. I feel that during the formative phase of my career, I was in a very vulnerable position.*

Kumari's vulnerable emotional experience was mainly concerned with her inadequate oral communication skills, which led her to rote a few sentences in English and prepare well in advance before getting into the class. Kumari's continuous efforts on a personal level to improve her verbal communication and disposition to an excellent English-speaking environment in a private school as a teacher gradually enhanced her oral communication skills. Even in the case of Kumari, vulnerability has emerged as a motivating factor that positively contributed to the identity construction of Kumari as an English language teacher. Unlike Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion, where they relate vulnerability with practitioners' nonalignment with the community's norms and values, it is more related to the teachers' communicative competence in the context of English language teaching in Nepal. Unlike Wenger's notion of vulnerability associated with its negative consequences, in the case of my participants, vulnerable emotional experience has contributed as a motivating factor for their professional development and identity construction.

Emotional Attachment with Students, Colleagues, and School

Another crucial factor contributing to self-esteem and a sense of identity is an emotional attachment with students, colleagues, and school. Kumari shared an emotional moment when students and parents burst into tears during her farewell from a public school in the eastern hills to Kathmandu Valley. Kumari struggled to bring transformation in that public school during her tenure and also underwent an emotional roller coaster ride, as noted by Nita. Kumari expressed that the "whole tenure was an emotional moment, emotional and memorable moment." During the interview, I noticed her being emotional while sharing her story. While Kumari shared her work experience in that school, I cross-questioned her, "Why do you think such an emotional bond developed with students and parents?" She responded to my question this way:

> *I think teaching quality was the main reason for that. Students were able to get the desired teaching-learning quality. Mainly, students' and parents' expectations were met. Next, I treated students in a friendly and caring environment. They were taught with love and kindness in a new environment.*

As noted by Kumari, the love and kindness, the caring environment, and the quality of teaching-learning were the main reasons behind developing suitable attachment among

students, teachers, and parents. And students and parents expressed their affection, love, care, and worries through tears. Experiencing such moments, Kumari realized that she had given a good impression as a teacher and that students and parents were satisfied with her ways of teaching. It was a moment of self-reflection as an English teacher for Kumari. Surya's experience of the farewell of students and his farewell from his previous public school resonated with the experiences of Kumari. Surya confessed farewell as an oxymoron experience, *"a bit memorable, a bit bitter."*

Anita's stories also revealed how a positive learning environment and intimate relationship with students, colleagues, staff, and school administration encouraged her to continue working in a school for a long. After working for a few years, Nita's parents pressured her to quit the job, saying it could hamper her performance in M.Ed. Still, she continued working there because of the intimate relationship she had developed with everyone. Nita shared:

> *I had developed such an intimate relationship with students that I could not resign. Plus, the working environment there was very supportive. So, I continued working and teaching concurrently. The working environment was so enjoyable. Even the English environment there helped improve my fluency. Because of that, I thoroughly enjoyed working there. Though there used to be a rush while going to school, I could not leave my job. Probably because of my good attachment to students and colleagues, I could not resign. I was in love with my job.*

The attachment to students, colleagues, staff, and administration created a pleasing environment in the school. Nita thoroughly enjoyed working in her previous school. Because of that, Nita could not resign from school despite being pressured to balance work and study. Students ' assignments reflected the excellent bond between Nita and her students. Nita revealed that when students were assigned to write an essay on "My Favorite Teacher," almost 90 percent reported her name. Because of all these positive emotional experiences, she enjoyed teaching. Nita expressed her emotional attachment: *"First workplace is like first love; that's what I feel."* Because of an emotional attachment to school, despite heavy work pressure, Nita could not resign. The lived experience of all these participants revealed that emotional connection with students, colleagues, and administration motivated teachers to continue working in the same institution for a long as teachers felt happy and satisfied working in such a pleasing environment.

Compliment, Appreciation, and Satisfaction

Another crucial factor that emerged from participants' stories is positive compliments and appreciation from students, parents, teachers, administration, and the satisfaction participants experienced. Nita shared how students' appreciation of her efforts publicly in a farewell program satisfied her. Nita revealed:

> *A few days back, there was a farewell program for grade 10 students. During the program, in a farewell speech, one of the students from grade 10 said, "I want to personally give thanks to Nita Madam for supporting, scolding, beating, and for everything because of which we are able to complete SLC successfully." That was such a satisfying moment. I had goosebumps while listening to him.*

Nita noted that, though teaching is a demanding profession, such appreciating moments gave satisfaction. Sometimes, even guardians appreciated the efforts that encouraged her to engage in teaching. She also received positive compliments while she was teaching at a private school. After receiving feedback about her fast speaking and conscious effort to improve it, Nita received commendations from the guardians of the students. The student's guardians said Nita *"started speaking slowly, and teaching improved drastically."* Nita revealed that the first compliment she received in teaching made her extremely happy and confident. Nita also received another praise after completing the Parents' Day function. The district administrative officer, colleagues, and guardians complimented that *"government schools can be changed drastically having teachers like her."* Such compliments and appreciation aroused happy feelings that motivated Nita and other participants to engage in diverse activities and give their best.

Though Kumari's story does not relate to her workplace, she also shared moments of happiness and satisfaction as a student. But such moments encouraged her to study sincerely, contributing to what she has become. Kumari revealed:

> *Our school used to conduct a prize distribution ceremony annually at the end of the academic session. In that event, prizes were distributed to position holders, inviting them and their parents to the stage. I mostly used to go to the stage with my father to receive rewards. Every year, I received the prizes in front of my father. That was the happiest and most satisfying moment of my primary education.*

As a teacher, Kumari now recalls those incidents as the most satisfying moments of her schooling. Such incidents always motivated her to concentrate on education and grab the position during her schooling. Kumari mentioned that she was "neither first nor third" during school.

Students' Success and Satisfaction

Nita and Surya's stories revealed the students' success and the satisfaction it gave them. Sharing her teaching experience at her current public school, Nita narrated how her efforts improved a poor student and enabled him to complete SLC successfully. She shared:

> *Let me share with you one incident. There was one student in grade 10 with poor handwriting. He did not even have a basic understanding of English. Fifteen days before SLC, he had asked me the spelling of "verb." At that time, we were taking additional classes for their SLC. I had a significant challenge in improving his writing and his English. I supported him a lot. Fortunately, he passed the SLC examination. Making him pass SLC was an outstanding achievement, and I was delighted with his result.*

The student with an inadequate understanding and skills of the English language and an impoverished vocabulary could complete SLC because of her efforts, which made Nita happy and satisfied. His result also aroused confidence and self-actualization of her potential as an English language teacher. Nita's stories resonated with the findings of Yuan and Lee (2016) that students' success and recognition positively contributed to identity construction as an English language teacher.

Surya's lived reality as an English language teacher also resonated with the stories of Nita concerning students' success and its positive

influence on teachers' satisfaction. Surya shared the happiest moment of his career:

> *The happiest moment in my teaching career was when I guided one visually impaired student in grade seven to write an essay to participate in a global competition. It was an international essay writing competition for physically disadvantaged students. The competition was to write an essay titled Our Future, Our World. My student won the competition and went to Canada for a prize worth 5000 dollars. I felt so happy that the student I guided won the global essay competition. It was the happiest moment of my career.*

Student achievement gave Surya a sense of accomplishment and self-actualization of his potential. He was so satisfied with his student's achievement. Stories of both Nita and Surya reinforced that students' achievement increases happiness and satisfaction and the teachers' confidence.

Sad and Depressing Moments

As a roller coaster ride claimed by Nita, participants not only underwent positive, happy, and satisfying emotional experiences but also endured depressing, sad, and vulnerable situations as teachers. Highlighting the tragic and unfortunate moments she underwent, Nita shared the disruptive behaviour of a student and the emotional experience she endured. When she caught one student using a mobile phone in the classroom, Nita seized the phone and warned that using a mobile phone in the classroom is not entertaining. But that day, the student stood up and shouted at her. Nita confessed:

> *To see him shouting at me, I cried. No other students had reacted that way previously. He said why do you always scold us? Why don't you listen to us, and blah blah? My tendency was that even though I scolded anyone in the group, I used to call them to my office and deal psychologically to avoid negative impressions. But that day, I could not control myself in class and cry.*

Nita revealed that the student who showed untoward behaviour was an aggressive type of student. Probably, he had been to school that day with pre-plan. But the next day, that student came to the office and apologized. However, it was a formality, and he didn't realise his mistake.

Apart from students' disruptive behaviour, Nita revealed that bias from senior colleagues, denial of involvement in crucial decision-making from administration, and misrepresentation by senior colleagues in their discourses hurt her. Nita expressed that there were such instances:

> *Sometimes, the administration didn't let us know the crucial things. I felt bias from the administration and senior colleagues in many cases. But I tried to counsel and pacify myself that people are not the same; they have different understandings, and I should not take it negatively.*

Nita felt unhappy when she was not engaged in crucial decision-making and often experienced bias. She used to counsel and pacify herself at such moments. Despite hard work and dedication, Nita felt like quitting the job when administrators and senior colleagues didn't appreciate her or sometimes when she was humiliated for minor mistakes. She confessed:

> *I never compromised on my responsibility. I still do not compromise on my work. But*

> *still, when my work was not recognized, I felt bad. Despite working hard all the time, humiliating teachers in mass when one mistake is committed is bad. Therefore, I felt like if there is no respect, why continue the job? I had that kind of feeling.*

Nita's Humiliating experience while working at a private school made her think of quitting the job. She considered it one of her bad experiences during her teaching career.

Like Nita, Surya also expressed a bitter experience when applying for the basic-level English language teacher's post during the teacher selection process. Surya heard from one of the selection committee members that though he had performed better, they could not select him due to political pressure. He revealed:

> *I heard a selection committee member saying that though I had performed better, they could not select me due to political reasons. After listening to them, I felt very bad. I felt like nothing is fair in this country. That was one of the most painful moments in my life. When I found my community and teachers biased toward me, I developed a kind of udasibhawana/ bitrishna [distraction] towards them.*

Political biases during the teacher selection process made him undergo a painful experience. But also, at the same time, he became determined to prove himself, which motivated him to study sincerely during his M.Ed. and complete it with a good score. Stories of Nita and Surya revealed that though they underwent bitter and painful experiences due to bias, these experiences gave mixed results. While Nita felt like quitting the job due to discrimination from colleagues, Surya developed a determination to prove himself after the painful experience of rejection during the selection process due to political reasons. The impact of emotional experiences depended on how teachers responded to such sad moments. Still, as claimed by Swearingen (2019), my participants' stories revealed that negative emotions somehow constrained their identity development.

Conclusion

Teachers' emotions emerged as crucial components in teacher professional development and identity construction, impacting their performance and decision to continue teaching. When positive emotions like emotional attachment with students, colleagues and students, compliments, appreciation and satisfaction, students' success and happiness motivated and encouraged them to perform well with a commitment to their profession, negative experiences like sad and depressing moments posed a crisis on their identity. However, vulnerability, though generally considered a negative emotion, motivated teachers to engage in professional development and acquire the knowledge and skills required to join the communities of practice they aspired. When their beliefs in teaching-learning careers and their dream about the future as English teachers were not affirmed by their immediate existential realities, they felt vulnerable. When English language teachers felt vulnerable, they invested themselves well in teacher education during student life and professional development during their careers to materialize their dreams. The vulnerability of teachers is mainly concerned with their inadequate communication skills and struggle for stable job opportunities and sustainability. Apart from vulnerability, positive emotional experiences like happiness and satisfaction

emerged from positive relationships and attachment with students, colleagues, and school, as well as positive compliments and appreciation from students and parents motivated them to engage in their profession sincerely. In addition, students' success gave satisfaction and happiness to teachers. However, teachers also underwent sad and depressing moments during their careers, which negatively affected their identity as teachers. As noted by Nita, as a roller coaster ride, teachers underwent different emotional experiences that influenced their professional development and identity construction directly and indirectly implying an urge to consider the affective dimension of the English language teachers by policymakers and practitioners which is hitherto unrecognized.

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