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Curriculum repetition and teacher motivation in English teaching: a narrative review on unchanged course materials

Repetición curricular y motivación docente en la enseñanza del inglés: revisión narrativa de materiales didácticos estandarizados

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ABSTRACT

The article is a narrative literature review of the long-term repetition of the standardized teaching resources and its possible consequences on the motivation of teachers in the English language teaching. The article will discuss, on the basis of the existing academic literature, the specified benefits and drawbacks of the extended use of the identical teaching materials, along with the correlations that the authors outline with the teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and student interest. It was a descriptive and analytical review that was created in terms of the analysis of secondary sources (past studies, case studies and theoretical contributions) of teacher motivation and sustainability of educational materials. According to the reviewed literature, the repeated use of the same resources can be related to the lack of intrinsic motivation, lower pedagogical creativity, and even possible implications on student participation; still, among the advantages, an increased efficiency in lesson planning and delivery because of acquired experience is also mentioned. Altogether, the researches examined are in agreement about the fact that extensive reiteration of the curriculum can be connected with the adverse outcomes in case not supplemented by updating, flexibility of the curricula as well as institutional support, thus, it

should be offered that the materials are renewed periodically and the professionals are constantly developed.

Keywords: teacher motivation, curriculum repetition, English language teaching, instructional materials, secondary education

RESUMEN

Este artículo presenta una revisión narrativa de la literatura sobre la repetición prolongada de materiales didácticos estandarizados y sus posibles implicaciones para la motivación docente en la enseñanza del inglés. El objetivo del artículo es analizar, a partir de la literatura académica existente, las ventajas y desventajas reportadas del uso prolongado de los mismos materiales didácticos, así como las relaciones descritas con la motivación docente, satisfacción laboral e interés estudiantil. La revisión tuvo un alcance descriptivo, analítico y se desarrolló mediante el análisis de fuentes secundarias (investigaciones previas, estudios de caso y aportes teóricos) sobre motivación docente y sostenibilidad de materiales educativos. Los métodos empleados consistieron en la recopilación, selección y análisis temático de estudios relevantes que permitieron identificar patrones recurrentes y contrastes en los efectos de la repetición curricular. La literatura revisada sugiere que la reutilización constante de los mismos recursos puede asociarse con disminución de la motivación intrínseca, menor creatividad pedagógica y posibles efectos en la participación estudiantil; no obstante, también se reportan beneficios como mayor eficiencia en la planificación y ejecución de clases por experiencia acumulada. En conjunto, los estudios analizados coinciden en que la repetición prolongada del currículo puede relacionarse con efectos negativos si no se acompaña de actualización, flexibilidad curricular y apoyo institucional; por ello, se recomienda la renovación periódica de materiales y el desarrollo profesional continuo.

Palabras clave: motivación docente, repetición curricular, enseñanza del idioma inglés, materiales didácticos, educación secundaria

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a dynamic and changing sector where the choice, utilization, and sustainability of teaching materials are one of the most significant aspects of the teaching process and student learning. Course materials are not only the means of delivering the content, but also mediators of pedagogical practices, influencing the choice of teachers in their instruction, involvement of students and the process of acquisition of critical thinking skills. According to the past literature, properly designed and revised teaching materials can improve the quality of instruction, learners autonomy, and rich learning experiences (Villocino y Villocino, 2025). Therefore, effective educational practice will always focus on management and continuous review of curricular materials.

Instructional materials are of special importance in the context of English language education, as there is need to combine language skills, critical thinking, and communicative competence. The English educators will be asked to develop language proficiency in the students and promote cultural awareness, analytical reading, and effective written and spoken communication (Yusuf et al., 2020). At the secondary level, learning of English not only leads to acquisition of language but also to the cognitive growth, creativity and academic readiness of the students. The success of this process is greatly determined by the ability of the teachers to customize the materials to the needs of the students and to changes in the educational needs.

The quality and motivation of teachers is a common concern that defines the outcome of education. English instructors are at the center of ensuring academic quality, provision of conducive learning environments, and steering students to the long-term education outcomes (Xu et al., 2025). Nonetheless, considering the stated significance of instructional materials, very little consideration has been paid to the consequences of long-term repetition of the curriculum on the professional motivation of teachers. The prolonged use of the same set of instructional materials can limit the creativity of the pedagogy, lower the autonomy of the professionals, and adversely affect the teacher's engagement and well-being.

Therefore, this paper will be a synthesis and discussion of available literature on the long-term reuse of the same instructional resources in secondary and English teaching, including the benefits, limitations, and relationships reported between it and teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and student engagement. This narrative review has conceptual and practical contributions towards curriculum sustainability and institutional decision-making.

Development

Theories of teacher motivation

The paper has been based on the existing motivational theories, which are Maslows hierarchy of needs, Self-determination theory and Expectancy-value theory. The frameworks

offer complementary insights into the impact of psychological needs, autonomy, competence, and perceived value on the motivation and professional engagement of teachers.

Teacher motivation in educational contexts

A key issue that determines the quality of instructions, the engagement of students, and the success of educational processes is teacher motivation. The studies have shown that the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of teachers is determined by such factors as professional purpose, institutional support, workload, and access to instructional resources (Wang y Shakibaei, 2025). Intrinsic motivation can also be based on the interest of teachers in improving students and meaningful learning, whereas extrinsic motivation can be provided by recognition, the assistance of leadership, and a possibility to develop professionally to maintain the long-term interest.

Recent research indicates that motivation is directly related to the well-being and sustainability of teachers in terms of their profession. Prolonged work pressure and lack of control have been linked to higher rates of burnout and health hazards caused by stress among teachers (Madigan et al., 2023). In the case of secondary education where requirements of the curriculum are very high, it is important to learn how instructional conditions can affect teacher motivation, especially in the language teaching situation where constant adaptation and innovation are required.

Course materials and teacher motivation

Instructional resources are important in influencing the pedagogical practice and professional satisfaction of teachers. Empirical data can indicate that adaptable, applicable, and properly organized course content positively influences the job satisfaction and teaching performance of teachers (Sims et al., 2025). On the other hand, fixed or monotonous curricula can limit pedagogical freedom and decrease motivation, which can decrease the rates of creativity and engagement among students (Bullard y Bahar, 2023).

Research on lesson planning and curriculum design shows that long-term use of the same set of materials can make work more monotonous and reduce the feeling of professional agency of teachers (Xu et al., 2025). Longitudinal studies also suggest that chronic job pressures and redundant training behaviors have an adverse impact on the perceived effectiveness and willingness of teachers to become innovators in the long run (Skaalvik y Skaalvik, 2021). These results indicate that repetition of the curriculum can serve as a structural factor that affects motivation decay.

Reinforcing instructional materials and professional autonomy

Revision of instructional materials has been commonly related to enhanced motivation of teachers and their instruction. Recent studies highlight the importance of current and flexible materials enabling teachers to match the changing pedagogical methods, student requirements, and technological changes (Greguric, 2021). It has been demonstrated that the combination of

innovative resources and the ability to design courses flexibly promotes teacher autonomy and professional development (Bullard & Bahar, 2023).

The lack of autonomy in the choice of the material and its adaptation has been revealed as a strong predictor of emotional exhaustion and burnout in English as a Foreign Language context (Alamoudi, 2023). Educators that cannot update or renew teaching resources tend to become more stressed and less engaged, which supports the relevance of curriculum flexibility in terms of maintaining motivation.

Factors influencing teacher engagement

The other factors that affect teacher motivation are organizational and personal factors such as leadership support, professional development opportunities and perceived workload. Positive management practices and support have a positive impact on morale and resilience, and the excessive demands and lack of resources negatively influence motivation (Gunn and McRae, 2021). Recent data show that autonomy is a protective factor against institutional pressure, that helps mitigate the adverse workload impacts on motivation (Collie and Carroll, 2023).

Teacher engagement is also achieved when course content is relevant to the real-life situations of the students. Instructional materials that are relevant to the learners and their current problems promote instructional innovation and enhance the teacher-student relationship (Mohammed et al., 2022; Tampubolon, 2018). Nevertheless, identity-related demotivation and burnout have been associated with curriculum stagnation among language teachers (Sato et al., 2022).

Research gap

Although a lot of research has been conducted on teacher motivation and instructional materials, most studies have not focused on the long-term impacts of repetition on curriculum implementation on the motivation of English teachers in secondary schools. Available research tends to concentrate on short-term instructional behaviors or single motivational elements, providing little integration regarding the interaction of long-term curriculum repetitions and institutional environments and professional freedom. Furthermore, the studies that investigate the moderating effect of school-level support on motivational outcomes in the long run are limited (Tikkanen et al., 2022). It is necessary to fill this gap to have a comprehension of the sustainability of instructional practices and their effects on teacher well-being.

Teacher motivation in educational contexts

One of the key determinants of the quality of instruction, the involvement of the learner, and the effectiveness of the entire educational process is teacher motivation. The studies have always shown that the motivation of teachers is influenced by the intrinsic and extrinsic factors such as purpose in the profession, institutional support, the workload and the availability of instructional resources (Wang y Shakibaei, 2025). Teachers are usually motivated to continue working with students in the long term because they are intrinsically motivated to ensure that

students develop and learn something significant, whereas extrinsic motivation like recognition, leadership, and professional growth is likely to keep them engaged longer.

According to recent research, motivation is strongly connected with the well-being and professional sustainability of teachers. Both job demands and low autonomy have been linked to higher levels of burnout and health risks related to stress among teachers in chronic situations (Madigan et al., 2023). In secondary education, where the demands in the curriculum are strong, it is important to learn how conditions of instruction affect teacher motivation, especially in language teaching situations that demand perpetual adaptation and innovation.

Application to curriculum repetition

In a self-determination approach, teachers are likely to lose their autonomy and competence because of the use of the same teaching materials over an extended period, which will lead to a decline in intrinsic motivation. The Expectancy Value Theory goes further to indicate that recurrent curricula lower perceived value of tasks, and commitment to instructional innovation by teachers is undermined. The framework provided by Maslow emphasizes the role of the unmet professional growth needs in motivation loss.

Curriculum repetition and professional sustainability

The issue of curriculum sustainability has gained additional topicality in educational research, especially in terms of the well-being of teachers and their long-term teaching performance. Although there are many justifications of curriculum standardization as the way of providing consistency and quality control, over-repeating of the same instructional material through invariants might have some unwanted outcomes to the professional sustainability of teachers. The research of instructional stagnation indicates that the duration of teaching repetitive content diminishes the feeling of novelty and professional challenge by teachers, which are essential elements of long-term motivation (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2021).

Curriculum repetition is particularly an issue in the context of secondary education in English, because language acquisition is dynamic in nature. The process of teaching languages needs to be constantly adjusted to sociocultural changes, trends in communication, and the needs of learners. When teaching resources are not updated in the long term, the teachers will feel that there is a discrepancy between the classroom reality and the content of the curriculum. Such a mismatch may frequently result in a lack of flexibility in instructions and the lack of chances to innovate in pedagogy, which plays a key role in sustaining professional participation (Greguric, 2021).

In addition to that, repetition of the curriculum has been associated with role strain because of teachers being expected to show a certain degree of creativity and responsiveness when working in strict instructional systems. This paradox imposes further emotional and cognitive burden on the teachers, which leads to demotivation and susceptibility to burnout. These results support the necessity to investigate curriculum repetition not only as a logistical problem but as a

structural one that influences the professional identity of teachers and their long-term dedication to the profession.

Institutional support and moderating factors

The links between curriculum repetition and teacher motivation have institutional support as one of the moderating factors. The adverse impacts of repetitive instructional practices can be overridden through supportive leadership, access to professional development, and collaborative cultures. It is proved that schools providing organized access to material adaptation and peer cooperation help students to become more motivated and professionally involved (Tikkanen et al., 2022).

The implementation of professional development programs based on the focus on curriculum renewal and reflective practice allows teachers to transform the existing materials in a creative manner. Such initiatives allow teachers to keep instructional fresh even in a standardized curricular framework. Furthermore, the efforts of teachers to become innovative should be rewarded by the institution, which will strengthen motivation and prove professionalism.

The differences at school levels are also an influential factor in determining motivational outcomes. Differences in leadership style, access to resources, and organizational culture are some of the factors that affect the repetition of the curriculum between teachers in the process of experiencing it. These contextual factors need to be understood to generate specific interventions to facilitate teacher motivation and sustainability of instruction.

Implications for english language education

The overall evidence analyzed in the section of the development highlights the complicated interaction between curriculum repetition, teacher motivation, and the quality of instruction in secondary English education. Although standardized curricula have some advantages in the sense of consistency, there is a long-term and unquestioning reuse of the curriculum that can lead to the loss of motivation, free will, and professional identity of teachers. These impacts have direct consequences to student engagement and learning.

To handle the issue of curriculum repetition, there is need to have a holistic approach in which there would be the incorporation of curricular flexibility, professional autonomy, and institutional support. Instructional adaptability is especially helpful in English language education which is dynamic and rooted in a particular culture. The identification of the motivational implications of curriculum design decisions can enable learning institutions to promote sustainable pedagogies that can address teacher well-being and educational quality.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This paper has used a qualitative research method with descriptive and analytical scope due to the intention to unify and critically debate the existing academic information regarding the

topic of curriculum repetition and the motivation of secondary-school English teachers. A narrative literature review was chosen as the main research design because this research approach will provide an opportunity to conduct a profound analysis of conceptual trends, empirical results, and theoretical approaches to the specific research area.

A structured narrative review of secondary sources was used to conduct this research. The rationale of this design was due to the exploratory character of the research as well as due to lack of empirical evidence on the long-term motivational impacts of curriculum implementation that was repeated. The review was aimed at exposing the trends, connections, and thematic coherence in past research pertinent to the topics of teacher motivation, instructional resources, repetition of curriculum and burnout in the context of secondary education institutions.

The research used a descriptive and explanatory scope of a qualitative methodology. It described existing studies on teacher motivation and curriculum use in terms of a summary and generalization of their findings. Analytically, it examined how prior studies describe and interpret the role of long-term use of unchanged instructional materials in motivational and professional outcomes for English teachers. Such a dual scope allowed achieving an in-depth perception of the phenomenon of investigation.

The data was gathered in the form of a documentary analysis of academic databases commonly utilized in the field of educational research such as peer-reviewed journal repositories. The inclusion criteria included pre-specified factors, including topicality to teacher motivation, curriculum repetition, instructional materials, and secondary education. Those studies that were not directly related to these themes or their methodological clarity were rejected.

The thematic analysis was used in analyzing the selected studies. The given process included coding the key concepts, finding the common themes, and sorting results referred to motivation, autonomy, burnout, instructional flexibility, and professional identity. Similarities and differences among the studies were also determined through comparison and contrasts which enabled the synthesis of evidence and the production of analytical interpretations that related to the research objectives.

Due to the limitation of secondary sources, there was no direct involvement of human subjects in the research. Ethics was adhered to when proper citation and giving credit to the original authors was observed and also applying the principles of academic integrity.

The comparison of the analyzed studies showed that there are common tendencies in terms of the influence of long-term curriculum repetition on the motivation of English teachers in secondary schools. In literature, however, there was a gradual reduction of interest, instructional involvement, and professional satisfaction among teachers in case of repeated exposure to invariant instructional materials. Some studies also record a lower level of teacher motivation whereby instructional materials are not altered within a long time especially where teachers are not given time to adapt the content.

The most frequent observation was that curriculum rigidity was related to lower pedagogical creativity. Research also showed that inert instructional materials limited the capability of teachers to become innovative and meet the changing needs of the students, thus, teaching became more routine and mechanical. This tendency was particularly noticeable in the area of English language education where communicative relevance and contextual adaptation are the key points of successful teaching.

The institutional support also played a moderating role as indicated by the results. The schools with focus on professional growth, planning and instructional renewal were characterized by greater teacher motivation even in the environment where standardized curricula were practiced. On the other hand, the institutional support aggravated the adverse impact of the redundancy of curriculum, which also added to emotional burnout and lesser instructional interest.

Additionally, the reviewed studies suggest that there is a reciprocal relationship between student engagement and teacher motivation. Teacher demoralization was always associated with poor student engagement and interest, which means that the repetition of the curriculum is indirectly related to the learning outcomes due to the influence it has on teacher motivation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The literature reviewed supports the interpretation that a long-term repetition of the same instructional materials used by the teacher represents the major risk factor in motivational drop among the teachers in the English classes in secondary schools. In line with this paper's analytical focus, the reviewed evidence indicates curriculum repetition restricts pedagogical autonomy and lowers intrinsic motivation especially where the teachers are not given the chance to rewrite or modify instructional materials.

These findings indicate that teacher motivation is not necessarily an individual feature, but it is heavily dependent on structural and institutional conditions. The findings show that course material flexibility and access to professional development are the protective factors that maintain teacher engagement. Lack of such support leads to stagnation in curriculum, which leads to emotional fatigue and lack of professional commitment.

Implications of repeated course material use

These interpretations are consistent in their implication on the areas of secondary English education which are marked by a dynamic thirding and cultural needs in communication. The prolonged usage of the same instructional resources contradicts the capacity of educators to focus on current problems and various types of learners, which decreases the relevance of instruction.

Curriculum renewal and teacher development in institutions becomes a crucial measure that can be used to curb the decline in motivation. Nimble instructional designs enable teachers to exercise professional agency and match the emerging educational standards to teaching practices. These results are consistent with recent policy discussions on the significance of teacher

autonomy and flexible curriculum in maintaining motivation and the quality of instruction (OECD, 2024).

Comparison with existing literature

The findings of this paper align with these past studies that have identified that curriculum inflexibility is associated with low teacher discretion and high burnout risk (Collie and Carroll, 2023; Alamoudi, 2023). Consistent with the Self-Determination Theory and Expectancy-Value Theory, the results highlight the significance of autonomy, competence and task value in maintaining teacher motivation.

Also, the research is an expansion of the previous studies that presented the long-term impacts of curriculum repetition, as opposed to emphasizing short-term instructional practices only. Although previous researchers have fixed a positive correlation between teacher motivation and student performance (Sims et al., 2025), the current results prove the role of the long-term curriculum stagnation in interrupting the correlation because of deteriorating teacher engagement over the years. This effect seems to be magnified in times of increased stress levels, including times of educational disruption, in which rigidity increases the risk of burnout (Raducu and Stanculescu, 2022).

Table 1

Thematic synthesis of findings

Theme	Representative studies	Key finding
Curriculum rigidity and autonomy	OECD (2024); Collie & Carroll (2023); Alamoudi (2023)	Inflexible curricula constrain teacher decision-making and reduce intrinsic motivation.
Workload and burnout	Skaalvik & Skaalvik (2021); Madigan et al. (2023)	Persistent job demands increase emotional exhaustion and reduce professional efficacy.
Institutional support	Pietarinen et al. (2021); Pyhältö et al. (2021)	Supportive leadership and collaboration buffer negative motivational effects.
EFL-specific contexts	Alamoudi (2023); Sato et al. (2022)	Resource constraints uniquely affect motivation in language teaching.
Adaptive practices	Tikkanen et al. (2022); Răducu & Stănculescu (2022)	Flexible materials and professional development restore engagement.

CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, the repeated use of the same curriculum content over a long time period was synthesized and discussed in the literature in the context of motivation among English teachers in secondary schools. The reviewed literature suggests that the long-term use of the invariant

instructional material was correlated with the decreased teacher motivation, the lack of the pedagogic creativity, and the low rates of professional engagement. These results established the fact that the repetitions of the curriculum played the role of a structural factor affecting motivation processes in the work of the teachers especially in those settings where the chances to adapt materials were scarce.

The paper has also indicated that the adverse motivational impact of repeated use of the same material was neutralized by institutional support, flexibility of curriculum and professional development. The schools which embraced instructional renewal and teacher autonomy demonstrated greater teacher engagement, which supported the significance of organizational conditions in the maintenance of motivation in the long run.

The significance of this research to the field is that it helped in the expansion of the existing body of literature on the motivation of teachers by undertaking a narrow study on the subject of long-term repetition of the curriculum in secondary English education. The synthesis of empirical and theoretical research led to the expansion of the knowledge base about the role of instructional design choices in teacher well-being and high-quality instruction into the long-term classroom practices.

Regarding practical implication, the research findings indicated that the application of flexible curricular models and ongoing professional development programs were beneficial in educational institutions to facilitate instructional innovation. These measures were proved to be critical in keeping teachers motivated and making teaching sustainable.

To sum up, the paper has identified the necessity of future research to consider the empirical point of view empirically (qualitative, quantitative or mixed-method) to test these relationships in certain educational environments through longitudinal studies. These guidelines were found to be required to further comprehend the concept of curriculum sustainability and teacher involvement in learning English language.

Recommendations

Combining standardization of curriculum with regular renewal periods, autonomy of teachers to adjust curriculum materials, and long-term professional growth should be embraced in educational institutions. Empirical studies in the future should empirically investigate these relationships in secondary EFL settings with sound designs (e.g. longitudinal studies, validated measures of motivation) to find out under which circumstances curriculum stability contributes to teacher motivation and student engagement.

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