

# Importance versus Frequency: Saudi EFL Students' Perceptions of Teacher Motivational Strategies in the EFL Classroom

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## Abstract

This paper examines the perception of Saudi female EFL students regarding the relevance and frequency of teacher motivational strategies in the classroom. The goal was to detect any discrepancy between the motivational strategies which teachers believe to be important and those that the students actually see being used. The mixed methods approach was used, where the quantitative data was gathered using a Likert scale survey, while the qualitative data was collected using open-ended questions. The data collection was conducted using a version of the Motivational Strategy Survey by Cheng and Dörnyei (2007) that was modified and translated to suit the Saudi student population in particular. The results demonstrate a high disparity between the significance of the strategies like "Proper teacher behavior" and "Increase learners goal-orientedness" and how they are implemented in the classroom. Although students cited some of these strategies like nurturing self-confidence and rewarding student's effort as being very effective in motivating them, teachers did not always implement such strategies. The research proposes that teacher motivation practice should be more aligned with the preferences of students to increase engagement and learning outcomes. The study also indicates that teacher professional growth is necessary to help narrow the gap between classroom practices and student expectations.

**Keywords:** Motivational strategies, Saudi EFL students, teacher behaviour, self-confidence, goal-orientedness, classroom motivation, student perceptions.

## 1. Introduction

### *1.1 The Growing Interest in Motivational Strategies in EFL Classrooms*

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching is an area which has gained traction in recent decades, and motivational techniques have been a major focus (Achieng, 2023). As Dörnyei (2001) says, motivation is a key indication of whether students will participate in and continue with the language learning tasks. Although there is a lot of literature regarding the role of motivation in learning a language, most studies have focused on teachers' perspectives rather than students' views. This is particularly noticeable in the Saudi context, where most of the work on motivational strategies as applied in EFL classrooms has been examined from teachers' perspectives (Alqahtani, 2016; Alrabai, 2010).

In Saudi Arabia, where learning and speaking English is a key factor in educational institutions and career growth, it is important to get the perception and reaction of the students towards motivational tools (Albiladi, 2022). The motivational strategies applied by teachers to encourage students' motivation have also been demonstrated to be context-specific (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007). Therefore, analysing these strategies from Saudi EFL students' perspectives helps evaluate how effective current practices are, as well as offer a better insight into the engagement of students in the learning process.

This paper is expected to address the gap in the literature by examining the perceptions of Saudi female EFL students regarding the value and frequency of motivational strategies in their classrooms. Paying attention to the opinions of students, this study aims at revealing the motivation techniques the students consider to be the most effective and investigating how often their teachers employ these techniques. The study aims to identify any differences between how important students consider these strategies and how often they are used in classrooms.

### *1.2 The Importance of Addressing Motivational Strategies in EFL Classrooms*

Motivation is an important factor for successful language learning. Dörnyei (2001) argues that motivation is the driving force that encourages learners to participate and persevere in language acquisition activities, even when they feel they are facing difficulties. The role of motivation is even more pronounced in the context of Saudi Arabia, where English is taught as a foreign language. A lack of effective motivational tactics may leave the students without the necessary engagement and enthusiasm in the subject that could lead to poor language proficiency results (Al-Jarf, 2022). Also, Alwazir (2017) reported that "To some degree, students' motivation towards English language learning can impact their learning outcomes" (p. 03). Studies have indicated that through the use of strategies that help to make learning interesting, relevant, and rewarding, teachers can help motivate students (Radil et al., 2023). As an example, Dörnyei (2001) dwells on the importance of good teacher behaviour as a motivational technique, whereby teachers are concerned for the students' progress, they praise their achievements and they create an effective classroom climate. These strategies are particularly important in EFL contexts where students need to feel connected to the language or see its immediate relevance in their lives.

### *1.3 Relevant Scholarship on Motivational Strategies in EFL*

The area of language learning has experienced a lot of development over the last few decades in motivational research. Initial research, including that by Gardner (1985), dealt with the social-psychological factors of motivation and how the attitudes of learners towards the target language community affect their motivation. Dornyei (1998) later extended this approach by offering a more elaborate framework that explains motivation in the learning of second languages. Dornyei argues that motivation in language learning is a complex concept that encompasses both integrative motivation (the urge to identify with the target language community) and instrumental motivation (the urge to learn the language because of its practical value, including career advancement).

More recent studies have been devoted to the definition of specific motivational strategies a teacher may employ in the classroom to enhance student interest and motivation (Adhikari et al., 2025). Dornyei and Csizser (1998) outlined ten principles to encourage language learners including: a positive classroom environment, rewarding learner efforts, and promoting learner autonomy. Cheng and Dornyei (2007) later adapted these strategies and investigated how they apply to different cultures, even in Taiwan.

In Saudi Arabia, the use of motivational strategies by teachers in the EFL classroom has been examined in a number of studies, and the perspectives of educators were specifically studied (Alqahtani, 2016; Alrabai, 2010). Moreover, Shousha (2018) conducted a study based on the perceptions of both teachers and students at King Abdulaziz University, which highlighted the need to consider culturally specific motivational strategies that can be applied to address the unique socio-academic environment of pre-university learners. Nonetheless, few studies have been carried out on how students see these strategies. This study attempts to fill this gap, by offering a more detailed insight into the perception of Saudi EFL students towards the motivational strategies employed by their teachers and how these strategies meet their needs and expectations.

### *1.4 Hypotheses*

The paper is informed by two key hypotheses that test the discrepancy between the significance and prevalence of motivational strategies in Saudi EFL classrooms:

1. **Hypothesis 1:** The gap between the importance and frequency of motivational strategies as considered by the students will exist.
2. **Hypothesis 2:** The students will recognise certain motivational strategies as essential to improving their motivation.

## **2. Method**

### *2.1 Research Design*

The study research design is mixed-methods, a research design that requires quantitative as well as qualitative data collection methodologies to investigate the perceptions that Saudi

female EFL learners have towards classroom motivation strategies. The mixed-methods design allows to gain an in-depth insight of students' perceptions.

### 2.2 Participant Characteristics

The study sample comprises 100 female students enrolled in the English language institute (ELI), King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The students were selected based on their English competence, including Beginner, Elementary, Pre-Intermediate and Intermediate levels. The sample is varied to give a detailed perception of students at various points in their learning of English.

Table 1: Age Breakdown of Student Participants

Age Breakdown of Student Participants					
	Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.	18	14	14.0	<b>14.1</b>	14.1
2.	<b>19</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>60.0</b>	<b>60.6</b>	74.7
3.	20	14	14.0	<b>14.1</b>	88.9
4.	21	9	9.0	<b>9.1</b>	98.0
5.	22	1	1.0	<b>1.0</b>	99.0
6.	24	1	1.0	<b>1.0</b>	100.0
	Total	99	99.0	<b>100.0</b>	
	Missing System	1	1.0		
	Total	100	100.0		

Table 1 shows the demographic character of the participants in terms of their age and displays the proportion of students. The majority of respondents (60) are 19, 14% are 18, and smaller percentages of respondents are 20, 21, 22 and 24 respectively. This age bracket indicates that the participants are predominantly young adults in the preparatory year of university study. The demographic status is fairly equal, which ensures that the sample consists of a variety of experiences and opinions.

Table 2: Years Learning English Breakdown of Student Participants

<b>Years of Learning English</b>				
<b>Years</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
1	12	12.0	12.5	12.5
2	3	3.0	3.1	15.6
3	1	1.0	1.0	16.7
4	3	3.0	3.1	19.8
5	5	5.0	5.2	25.0
6	9	9.0	9.4	34.4
7	29	29.0	30.2	64.6
8	19	19.0	19.8	84.4
9	2	2.0	2.1	86.5
11	2	2.0	2.1	88.5
12	6	6.0	6.3	94.8
13	4	4.0	4.2	99.0
14	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	96	96.0	100.0	
Missing System	4	4.0		
Total	100	100.0		

Regarding the students' English learning experience, Table 2 offers a summary of the years spent by the participants learning the language. Most of the participants (29%) have studied the English language for seven years, with 19 percent indicating eight years of study. Smaller proportions of the students have studied English for different durations of time, ranging from one to fourteen years. Such a difference in the number of years in which the learner has learned English opens a more diverse range of responses since learners with varying degrees of experience might have different views on the best strategies that motivate them to learn.

### *2.3 Sampling Procedures*

This study employed random sampling to select the participants in the English Language Institute of King Abdulaziz University. The random sampling technique was adopted because the sample must represent the larger population of students enrolled in the ELI to reduce selection bias and to permit the generalisation of the results (Lohr, 2009). The random selection of the participants, at various levels, such as the Beginner, Elementary, Pre-Intermediate, and Intermediate, the study would also capture a broad spectrum of experiences and perceptions of their English language proficiency.

Sampling was planned in a way which would enable the students to be appropriately represented at every level. Accordingly, 25 students were chosen from each level of proficiency. Such an approach guarantees that the sample is representative of the diversity among learners in the ELI and gives information about the perceptions of students in different phases of language acquisition. In addition, the random sampling was made without consideration of the prior academic performance of the students so that a wide spectrum of views on motivational strategies could be obtained.

### *2.4 Measures and Data Collection*

The data was gathered using a questionnaire based on the Motivational Strategy Survey by Cheng and Dornyei (2007) and modified to suit the student population. The questionnaire that has been extensively applied in motivational studies was translated into Arabic so that it could be accessible to the participants in their first language.

Crucially, the systematic search and empirical data collection for this research were concluded in 2017. This chronological distinction is significant, as it establishes this study as a foundational and original inquiry that predates subsequent similar studies published in 2021. The 2017 timeline is formally verified by the official copyright and release date records archived by King Abdulaziz University.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections: the first section collects demographic data (age, level of English proficiency, and years of English study); the second section consists of 30 Likert-scale questions, which will measure the importance and frequency of different motivational strategies; and the third section is open-ended questions that will require students to recognize the motivational strategy that they consider the most effective.

### *2.5 Data Analysis*

The obtained data were analysed with the help of the data collected with the Likert-scale items and the analysis of the descriptive statistics, including the analysis of mean scores, standard deviations, and frequency distributions. The descriptive statistics are appropriate to provide a summary of the data and to identify the trends in the perceptions of students regarding the significance and frequency of various motivational strategies. IBM SPSS Statistics (version 20) allowed conducting a strict and systematic analysis of the quantitative data and helped the researcher test the research questions and judge the correlations between the perceived importance and frequency of motivational strategies.

Thematic analysis of the qualitative data gathered from the open-ended questions, was utilised. A thematic analysis is one of the most prevalent qualitative research methods, and it presupposes the recognition, examination, and characterisation of data patterns or themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In the study, the open-ended questions were read and coded to identify the major themes in the student perceptions of the most effective motivational strategies. The identified themes were put into perspective with the quantitative data to obtain a comprehensive picture of the perspectives of students toward motivational strategies in the EFL classroom.

### **3. Results**

In this section, the study results are given with an emphasis on the perceptions of Saudi EFL students on the importance and frequency of motivational strategies used in the classroom. Data were gathered in a mixed-methods study that incorporated both quantitative data collected by Likert-scale questionnaires and qualitative data collected by open-ended questions. The results indicate a significant gap in the value that students assign to some strategies and the actual proportion of their application by teachers. A random sample of 100 female students of different levels of proficiency at the English Language Institute, King Abdulaziz University, was taken to ensure a diverse student experience.

#### *3.1 Detailed Quantitative Data Presentation*

Findings of the research illuminated the difference between the perceived importance of and frequency of motivational strategies employed in Saudi EFL classrooms, in which there is an overt discrepancy between perceived importance and the actual implementation frequency of the strategies. The Likert-scale portions of the questionnaire and the open-ended answers of the questionnaire give valuable information about the preferences and perceptions of Saudi EFL students concerning teacher motivational strategies.

##### **3.1.1 Importance vs. Frequency of Motivational Strategies**

In order to gain a clearer insight into the perceptions of the students, the study initially determined the significance and prevalence of ten major macro-strategies (actions of the teacher in the EFL classroom) employed in the classroom. These macro-strategies are important for appreciating the bigger groupings of motivational strategies which teachers apply to engage students. The results on the importance and frequency of these strategies among students are provided in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3: Distribution of Importance for 10 Most Important "Macro-Strategies" (Teacher's Actions)

Teacher's (Macro-strategy)	Actions	Not Important	Less Important	So-So	Important	Very Important
1. Proper teacher behaviour		0%	2%	12%	30%	56%
2. Recognise students' efforts		0%	6%	22%	32%	40%
3. Promote learners' self-confidence		0%	4%	16%	31%	49%
4. Create a pleasant classroom		2%	9%	27%	24%	38%
5. Present tasks properly		1%	3%	12%	38%	46%
6. Increase learners' goal-orientedness		1%	1%	12%	27%	59%
7. Make the learning tasks stimulating		2%	7%	26%	32%	32%
8. Familiarise learners with L2-related values		4%	9%	24%	30%	34%
9. Promote group cohesiveness and group norms		4%	11%	26%	34%	25%
10. Promote learner autonomy		4%	11%	19%	33%	34%

As shown in Table 3, students rated the majority of the motivational strategies as 'important', with many strategies being rated high in the category of 'very important'. As an example, 56% and 59% of students rated proper teacher behaviour and increasing learners' goal-orientedness as 'very important', respectively. These findings indicate the students' belief that teachers' caring attitude towards their development and promoting goal-oriented learning is 'very important' for student motivation. (Daumiller et al., 2025).

Conversely, other strategies, like 'Promote group cohesiveness and group norms', showed a lower percentage with only 25 percent of the students scoring this strategy as 'very important'. The difference indicates that although group processes are perceived by some students as a motivational factor, others may be more interested in personal learning techniques than in classroom activities.

Table 4: Distribution of Frequency for 10 Most Important "Macro-Strategies" (Teacher's Actions)

Teacher's strategy)	Actions (Macro-	Never	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Often	Very often
1. Proper teacher behaviour		1%	6%	27%	28%	38%
2. Recognise students' efforts		8%	13%	27%	30%	22%
3. Promote learners' self-confidence		5%	10%	24%	34%	27%
4. Create a pleasant classroom		10%	21%	33%	23%	14%
5. Present tasks properly		2%	7%	25%	37%	30%
6. Increase learners' goal-orientedness	goal-	9%	15%	31%	24%	21%
7. Make the learning tasks stimulating	tasks	7%	15%	29%	28%	21%
8. Familiarise learners with L2-related values	L2-	13%	20%	23%	23%	21%
9. Promote group cohesiveness and group norms		13%	16%	26%	25%	19%
10. Promote learner autonomy		5%	6%	28%	31%	30%

Table 4 indicates that a gap can be observed in the perceived importance and actual frequency of motivational strategies applied. While 56 percent of students rated 'Proper teacher behaviour' as being of great importance, only 38% of the students perceived this being used 'very often'.. Similarly, only 21% of the students rated learners' goal-orientedness observed 'very often' although there was a high importance score of 59%. These results imply that although students display a top rating in valuing some of these strategies, they believe that their teachers are failing to apply these strategies in the classroom consistently.

Conversely, measures such as "Create a pleasant classroom" and "Promote learner autonomy" had the same rating among students but were not practised as often in the classroom. An example is that while 14% of the students marked 'Very Often' in response to whether their teachers created a pleasant classroom atmosphere, 38% thought it was Very Important for learning.

### 3.1.2 Discrepancies Between Importance and Frequency

Identifying differences between the relevance and prevalence of motivational strategies was one of the major goals of the study. A comparison of the importance and frequency of each of the ten macro-strategies, showed remarkable differences in the perceptions of students for each strategy. As an example, where the importance of proper teacher behaviour was rated high

(weighted mean was 4.01), in contrast, the frequency of its use in the classroom was low (mean was 3.429), signalling that the students believe that their teachers do not use the strategy often enough.

Table 5: Evaluations of “Teacher's Actions” (Macro-strategies) Importance vs. Frequency

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>Mean Degree</b>
Importance of Teachers’ Motivational Macro Strategies	4.01	Important
Frequency of Teachers’ Motivational Macro Strategies	3.43	Often

Equally, such strategies as ‘Make the learning tasks stimulating’ and ‘Familiarise learners with L2-related values’ were rated by the students as Important (with mean degrees of 3.85 and 3.96, respectively), but observed less often (mean degrees of 3.39 and 3.79). These results point to a mismatch between the strategies students perceive as key to their motivation and their experiences in a classroom.

### 3.2 Qualitative Data

The qualitative responses gained from the open-ended questions were useful in understanding the particular strategies of motivation that were most effective for Saudi EFL students and the reasons for their choices. These responses were classified into several macro-strategies, which depict the larger categories of teacher behaviours capable of helping to motivate a classroom student, as illustrated in Appendix A.

#### 1). Proper Teacher Behaviour

One of the prevailing themes that kept recurring in the feedback of the students was the teacher’s role in motivation. Several students have stressed the necessity of establishing good, healthy relationships between the teacher and students to make the learning environment motivating. Comments such as "To build good relationships with the students" (Student #6) and "To ensure the teacher-student’s relation and the harmony between them are essential". (Student #2) indicated the importance of personal rapport in encouraging learners. Other answers were based on the enthusiasm of the teacher, and students indicated that being really interested in the progress of the students helped to create a positive environment. For instance, one student mentioned, "To show her enthusiasm for teaching by being cheerful, tolerant, and respectful of the students" (Student #71), which indicates that the behaviour of a teacher, such as emotional support and respect, is paramount in motivating the students.

#### 2). Recognising Students’ Efforts

The second common theme in the comments by the students was that student effort should be appreciated and their accomplishments should be celebrated. They felt that appreciation would

also make their families proud and prevent feelings of frustration. Moreover, according to Student #21, being praised for their progress would raise their self-esteem and increase motivation. Another student (Student #65) agreed saying that positive reinforcement would help to boost the intrinsic motivation of the students to a considerable extent. It can be concluded that acknowledging students' achievements not only affirms their effort but also motivates them to work towards their objectives.

### **3). Promoting Learners' Self-Confidence**

Another theme that was found in the feedback of the students is the promotion of self-confidence. Some students stated that one of the most important factors that motivated them was the development of self-confidence. Student #19 noted the need to boost students' self-confidence while Student #44 suggested that a good way to do so would be "to provide the students with positive answers, comments and feedback". The students also agreed that positive reinforcement when administered by teachers helped them to become more confident about learning and using English. Feedback showed that students who feel encouraged and valued will tend to learn and also take risks in speaking or writing in the language.

### **4). Creating a Pleasant Classroom**

The establishment of an enjoyable and comfortable classroom atmosphere was also a widely noted motivational tactic among the students. They noted that a fun and non-intimidating environment is required to engage the student in active participation. One student observed that teachers need to motivate and assist the student to speak in English (Student #13), while another student pointed out that a pleasant classroom atmosphere would make a safe environment for learning and would encourage greater student' participation. (Student #26). The concept of the stress-free classroom, where students can feel free to make a mistake, was essential for motivation. Based on one of the answers, "To entertain and have fun in the class" (Student #63), it is worth noting that one should strive to balance the process of learning with fun and ensure that motivation is high.

### **5). Presenting Tasks Properly**

Another theme that emerged from the feedback was the manner in which the teachers were presenting the tasks to the students. Some said that they found it much easier to follow the instructions in tasks which were properly structured. Student #55 said that she appreciated the time spent by teachers in explaining the tasks step by step and giving enough support to complete them. Student #29 felt that "clear instructions and good examples" were very helpful strategies for motivation. By making the students know what is expected of them, one can ease the anxiety and make the learning process enjoyable and effective.

### **6). Increasing Learners' Goal-Orientedness**

Most students spoke about having clear and attainable goals to keep them motivated. Such answers as "To increase the students' incentives to reach the set goals" (Student #49) or "To know what the students need and introduce them in the course by giving some additional activities that meet the student's needs" (Student #78) suggest that setting goals and aligning

learning in accordance with the personal aims of the students are key elements of motivation. The goals provided to them should be both challenging and achievable so that the students develop a feeling of purpose and direction in their learning.

This theme was covered in seven responses, which means that students consider goal-oriented strategies as the most effective to improve motivation and make sure that they remain focused on their learning process.

### **7). Making the Learning Tasks Stimulating**

Engaging and stimulating tasks were often reported as important to staying motivated. Students reported that when tasks are diversified and include real-life topics or media (presentations or group work, etc.), they are more likely to be interested and engaged in the learning process. For example, one student said, "To diversify the way of delivering the information in any manner" (Student #14), while another said, "To use presentations and create an atmosphere of joy and cheerfulness" (Student #73). The inclusion of different techniques and resources will encourage motivation and interest in the learning process.

There were 11 responses that were categorized under this theme and indicated the significance of ensuring that the learning activities are enjoyable and dynamic.

### **8). Familiarising Learners with L2-Related Values**

Lastly, some students emphasised the need to relate language learning to broader cultural and real-world situations. Such comments like "To encourage the students to use English outside the classroom" (Student #25) or "To invite native speakers of English to participate in the classroom discussions" (Student #9) indicate that the students see the merits in the practical use of their language skills. Teachers can make students realise that learning English is not only relevant in the classroom by introducing them to the culture of the target language.

### **9). Promoting Group Cohesiveness and Group Norms**

One last theme was the need to ensure that a sense of community is fostered in the classroom. Some students reported the importance of cooperation and group activities and the development of group standards that would make people cooperate and support each other. The idea of having the students propose the class rules (Student #18) and the idea of having the students share their personal experiences (Student #83) are indicative of the students' desire to have a supportive and community-oriented classroom environment.

## **4. Discussion**

### *4.1 Interpretation of Findings*

Results of the present study prove both hypotheses about the gap between the significance and prevalence of motivational strategies and the acknowledgement of some strategies as the keys to improving student motivation.

The data is strongly supported by Hypothesis 1, which states that there would be a gap in the

importance and implementation frequency of motivational strategies. Specifically, students highlighted "Proper teacher behaviour" and "Increase learners' goal orientation" as critical; 56% of students rated the former as "very important", while 59% assigned the same high level of importance to the latter. However, the reported implementation of these strategies was significantly lower. Only 38% of students observed "Proper teacher behavior" being used "very often", and a mere 21% noted that teachers "Increase learners' goal-orientedness" with that same frequency. This is in line with the statement made by Dornyei (2001) that although students perceive motivational strategies to be significant, they are not always put into practice. Similar discrepancies in practices were also revealed by Alrabai (2010) and Alqahtani (2016), who discovered that there was limited implementation of motivational strategies by teachers, although they were aware of their necessity, in Saudi EFL classrooms.

Hypothesis 2, which postulated that students would identify specific strategies to increase motivation, is also supported. The students identified strategies like promoting self-confidence in learners and recognising students' efforts as key to enhancing their motivation. This corroborates the results of Cheng and Dornyei (2007), who reported that rewarding the efforts of students and raising their self-confidence were very effective in motivating language learners. The qualitative response also underlines the importance that students attribute to teacher behaviour and recognition and affirms that the strategies are necessary in promoting motivation in the classroom.

These combined results point to the consistency of the findings with the existing research on the importance of motivational strategies and their lack of frequency in practice.

#### *4.2 Implications for Teaching Practice*

There are quite a few implications of the findings of this study on teaching practices in Saudi Arabia and in other education settings. First, the difference between the frequency and significance of motivational strategies implies that teachers should reevaluate their pedagogical methods and take into account more student-focused motivational strategies. Strategies such as building positive teacher-student relationships, delivering clear feedback, and making students more goal-oriented are greatly appreciated by students, but they are not always applied in the classroom. In Saudi EFL classrooms, teachers need to pay attention to these domains to create more student engagement and motivation.

Professional development should focus on the need for teachers to develop a positive and challenging classroom environment. Training activities which emphasise practical techniques of achieving autonomy, such as empowering students to own their learning, may assist in narrowing the gap between the perceived significance and the implemented actual practice. Also, by creating a positive emotional climate in the classroom, in which students are respected and encouraged may improve motivation and overall language proficiency.

The findings also imply that teachers ought to consciously strive to ensure that their teaching practices are consistent with the motivational needs of students. To illustrate, more real-life activities, interactive and different forms of instruction, and motivating students to have their own goals and strive to achieve them may become a very valuable contribution to motivation

in the Saudi EFL classrooms. Such practices are aligned with the studies of Dörnyei and Csizér (1998), who state that learning activities should be relevant to the lives of students and that they should be included in the learning process.

#### *4.3 Recommendations*

Some recommendations are offered to teachers working in Saudi EFL classrooms based on the findings to facilitate student motivation and enhance the language learning outcomes. First, teachers need to focus on their classroom behaviour. Developing constructive teacher-student rapport through enthusiasm, clarity of feedback, and an attitude of approachability was perceived as a key contributor to student motivation (Tang, 2025). Such actions contribute to the establishment of a positive atmosphere in which students are made to feel appreciated and motivated to learn.

Moreover, having goal-setting in the classroom practice can also be a great way to enhance the motivation of students. Promoting students to have their own language learning goals and supporting students to have the goals is also consistent with the perceptions of students about goal-orientedness (Salikin et al., 2018). With clear, achievable goals, students have a high probability of remaining focused and motivated when learning.

The other important recommendation is to improve learner autonomy. Educators ought to encourage approaches that enable learners to be in charge of their education. It is possible through letting students decide on tasks, motivating them to determine their own learning objectives, and freeing them to discover their own subjects of interest. These plans do not just increase motivation, but also a feeling of ownership and responsibility towards learning.

It is also important to create a favourable classroom environment in order for the students to stay motivated. Teachers should emphasize on making a relaxed and entertaining atmosphere in which students feel free to contribute and to make mistakes (Fitria, 2023). Such a classroom atmosphere, in which students are not afraid of failure, will help them become more active and take risks in using the language.

#### *4.4 Limitations and Future Research*

Although the results of this research can bring a lot of insight into the motivational practices applied in EFL classrooms, in Saudi Arabia, there are a number of limitations that must be recognised. To begin with, the sample size, though sufficient, was restricted to 100 female students in a university in Jeddah. The findings might be incomplete with respect to the perceptions of male students or students in other parts of Saudi Arabia. Future studies need to be conducted with a more diversified sample, including male learners and students in various regions, because this would offer a more comprehensive picture of motivational tactics in Saudi EFL classrooms.

Also, the study was limited to the perceptions of students, and future studies may seek to provide more insight into the perceptions of teachers so as to have a more comprehensive picture of the motivational strategies in Saudi classrooms. The perception of both teachers and students would shed light on the conformity between teachers' intentions and classroom

practice.

One more weakness is the use of self-reported data of the students, which can be biased by social desirability (Akbulut, 2025). To counter this, observational designs or classroom interventions may be included in future research to provide a more objective measure of the frequency and the effectiveness of motivational strategies.

Lastly, future studies can address the effects of certain motivation strategies on language learning outcomes. Although the perceptions of students were considered in the present study, it would be interesting to explore the idea of whether the perceived effectiveness of these strategies correlates with enhanced language proficiency.

## 5. Conclusion

To conclude, this research paper has demonstrated that there is a very large discrepancy between the significance and occurrence of motivational strategies in Saudi EFL classrooms. Strategies like promoting positive teacher behaviour, enhancing goal-orientedness, and making the classroom pleasant are valued by students, yet they believe that their teachers do not exploit them effectively. The results highlight the necessity of teachers to employ more student-centred motivational techniques and to align their work with the expectations of the students. Teachers can promote student motivation and increase language learning by working on those strategies that students consider important and effective.

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## Glossary

<b>EFL (English as a Foreign Language):</b> The study of English by people who live in places where English is not the first language or the native language.
<b>Implementation Frequency:</b> In the context of this study, the regularity with which a teacher applies specific motivational strategies within the classroom as perceived by the students.
<b>Intrinsic Motivation:</b> The act of doing something without any obvious external rewards; learning a language because it is personally rewarding or interesting rather than due to external pressures.
<b>Learner Autonomy:</b> The ability of a student to take charge of their own learning, including identifying mistakes and setting personal goals.
<b>Motivational Strategies:</b> Instructional interventions used by teachers to influence student motivation, such as providing feedback, recognizing effort, or establishing group norms.
<b>Proper Teacher Behaviour:</b> A macro-strategy involving the teacher's rapport with students, enthusiasm, and the establishment of a positive classroom climate.
<b>Self-confidence:</b> A student's belief in their functional ability to perform specific language tasks, such as speaking or writing, successfully.
<b>Self-esteem:</b> A student's overall subjective emotional evaluation of their own worth; in this study, it is often linked to the pride felt through parental or academic recognition.

## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### OPEN ENDED STUDENTS' FEEDBACK

	Teacher's Actions (Macro Strategies)	Student Response Questionnaire Number	Total number
1	<b>Student Comments Grouped Under:</b>  <b>Proper teacher behavior</b>	2. To ensure the teacher's-student's relation and the harmony between them are essential especially in studying the language. 6. To show her enthusiasm for the trainees. 15. To build good relationships with the students. 16. To build strong relations with students. 28. To build good relationships with the students. 30. To build good relationships with the students. 33. To translate proper conduct of the teacher. 38. To build good relationships with the students. 45. To build good relationships with the students. 47. To act naturally. 51. To act naturally in front of the students. 53. To build good relationships with the students. 59. To be a good teacher model in her teaching. 69. To build a positive relationship with the student so that the student may love the course. 71. To show her enthusiasm for teaching by being cheerful, tolerant and respectful of the students. 72. To show the students consideration of their hard conditions, encouraging their talents or their studying of the course as all these points lead to enhance the students' love and respect for her.	16
2	<b>Student Comments Grouped Under:</b>  <b>Recognize students' efforts</b>	21. To reinforce encouragement to increasingly spur the students because some students might face frustration from family or friends. 65. To appreciate the students' progress and celebrate their achievements. 92. To embolden and support them for achieving progress, and to understand their excuses and behave properly with them. To encourage students use of English outside the classroom and practice using the language by integrating it with real life and extra-curricular activities.	3

3	<b>Student Comments Grouped Under:</b>  <b>Promote learners' self-confidence</b>	19. To boost the student's self-confidence. 44. To provide the students with positive answers, comments and feedback. 54. To boost self-confidence. 80. To invite the students to share their own personal experiences and views for boosting self-confidence and helping the student speak fluently. 84. To deal positively with the students by accepting their ideas without ridicule. 90. To spur the students and consolidate their self-confidence by giving them positive comments and incentive remarks on their progress	6
4	<b>Student Comments Grouped Under:</b>  <b>Create a pleasant classroom</b>	13. To encourage and help the student to speak. 26. To break the fear barrier and develop intimacy and love of participation through continuous encouragements for the students in her answers. 63. To entertain and have fun in the class. 82. To make the student better and be courageous and more active in the classroom when she expresses her opinion about the class rules.	4
5	<b>Student Comments Grouped Under:</b>  <b>Present tasks properly</b>	5. To demonstrate the importance for developing the students' language. 8. To prepare suggested tasks and assignments. 29. To give clear instructions by giving good examples. 32. To be more specific in explaining the lesson and not hasten to finish it quickly or to end the curriculum abruptly. 55. To present the tasks in the correct manner.	5
6	<b>Student Comments Grouped Under:</b>  <b>Increase learners' goal-orientedness</b>	3. To increase the language intake helps consolidate the students' information and they do not forget it as well as getting used to it. 31. To know the student needs and introduce them in the course. 49. To increase the students' incentives to reach the set goals. 50. To know what the students need and introduce it in the course. 60. It helps the student learn the language. 67. To deal with the students according to their academic abilities. 78. To know the student's needs and introduce them in the course by giving some additional activities that meet the student's needs.	7
7	<b>Student Comments Grouped Under:</b>  <b>Make the learning tasks</b>	10. To break the daily routine by presenting a model or a presentation 14. To diversify the way of delivering the information in any manner. 27. To highlight the concept that when the number of the students increases, the number of thoughts and ideas increases too. 41. To introduce interesting diversified real life topics. 57. To use presentations. 58. To discuss more than one topic during the lecture. 68. To encourage the student to understand and appreciate the lesson. 73. To create an atmosphere of joy and cheerfulness and encourage her	11

	<b>stimulating</b>	<p>to assign a day for having a party and showing presentations on the Internet with the participation of the students to have fun so that it won't be boring.</p> <p>85. To do some activities by the teacher and the students, such as explaining lessons via presentations or light useful games.</p> <p>86. To introduce subjects within the lesson.</p> <p>91. To communicate with them via social media programs.</p>	
<b>8</b>	<b>Student Comments Grouped Under: Familiarize learners with L2-related values</b>	<p>1. To deliver the information in the best and simplest way, and to receive questions and suggestions inside and outside the class.</p> <p>4. To use English outside the classroom and in public places for better learning. Also, to encourage students to reach their goals.</p> <p>9. To invite native speakers of English to participate in the classroom discussions.</p> <p>23. To instigate the students to use English outside the classroom because it will be an important reason and an incentive for learning the language. The students will not, then, feel shy to talk in English and make mistakes. The best way for learning a particular language is by practicing, inside and outside the university.</p> <p>25. To easily attained the language by using it abundantly in the class. We should not talk in Arabic in the class, even about side issues.</p> <p>34. To incite the students to use English outside the classroom.</p> <p>36. To encourage the students to use English outside the classroom.</p> <p>39. To help improve the language.</p> <p>40. To increase the English language intake in the classroom.</p> <p>43. To encourage the students to use English outside the classroom.</p> <p>46. To increase the English language intake in the classroom.</p> <p>56. To inform the students about values.</p> <p>64. To invite native speakers of English for participation in the classroom.</p> <p>66. To encourage the student to speak English inside and outside the classroom.</p> <p>70. To prevent the students from speaking Arabic inside the classroom.</p> <p>74. To talk a lot in the class and have some training.</p> <p>76. To engage those who are weak in using the language in talking a lot so that they learn better.</p> <p>77. We should invite native speakers of English to participate in the classroom for teaching the students.</p> <p>79. To inform the students about the English – related values as a second language.</p> <p>81. To learn more about the background of the language.</p> <p>87. To teach students how to speak with people outside or how to ask them for something.</p> <p>88. To invite some students or teachers in order to master the English</p>	<b>22</b>

		language perfectly.	
<b>9</b>	<b>Student Comments Grouped Under:</b>  <b>Promote group cohesiveness and group norms</b>	18. To let the students suggest the class rules. 83. To encourage the students to share their personal experiences and ideas by talking about her experiences and views about the subject and by asking us about our view. 84. To encourage and support students for achieving progress and understand their excuses and behave properly with them. 89. The teacher should let the students suggest the class rules.	<b>4</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Student Comments Grouped Under:</b>  <b>Promote learner autonomy</b>	7. To boost the students' independence. 11. To encourage students to find out their mistakes by themselves. 17. To inspire the students to find out their mistakes by themselves. 20. To stimulate the students to find out their mistakes by themselves. 22. To make the student know more words and find self-correct her mistakes. 24. To lead the student to find out the mistake, and become keener not to repeat it. 52. She encourages the students to find out their mistakes by themselves. 61. To empower learning from classmates by forming small groups. 62. To try to teach the students to learn and cooperate and form small groups. 75. To encourage the students to find out mistakes.	<b>10</b>
<b>Total Student Replies</b>			<b>88</b>

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Obtained.

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## **Data sharing statement**

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