

# Dörnyei's Ten Commandments Revisited: A Secondary Qualitative Analysis of Student Perceptions in the Saudi EFL Context

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## Abstract

The importance of motivation in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning is undeniable, but research in Saudi Arabia tends to focus on the views of teachers or numerical data, while little attention is given to the experience of learners. This paper is a secondary qualitative research on the perceptions of Saudi EFL learners of the Ten Commandments of Dörnyei, which combines the evidence of peer-reviewed studies, grey literature, and policy documents. Four significant dimensions of motivation are identified using thematic analysis: teacher modeling and interpersonal relationships, supportive classroom climate and learner confidence, learner autonomy and active participation, and meaningful learning and goal orientation. The discussion identifies the most relevant commandments in the student-centered approach: building constructive teacher-student interactions, establishing a conducive learning environment, enhancing the self-confidence of learners, and facilitating learner autonomy. Results show that teachers expressing supportive behavior, classrooms promoting emotional safety, task autonomy and linking English learning to personal and professional ambitions motivate learners. These lessons support the significance of culturally responsive, learner-oriented approaches to motivation in Saudi EFL settings and provide useful information to teachers aiming to improve interaction and long-term motivation.

**Keywords:** Saudi EFL, Learner motivation, Dörnyei's Ten Commandments, Student-centered, Classroom climate, Learner autonomy

## 1. Introduction

### *1.1 Introduction to the Problem*

The concept of motivation is broadly discussed as one of the strongest predictors of language learning success (Dörnyei, 2001; Ushioda, 2011). Students in EFL classrooms are forced to use mostly internal motivational means, and not communicative need and therefore, extended interaction is difficult (Oxford & Shearin, 1994). Studies have also shown that motivated students show increased engagement, perseverance, and proactivity, and demotivated students tend to disengage, experience anxiety, and drop out (Al-Hoorie, 2017; Boo, Dörnyei, & Ryan, 2015).

The Ten Commandments of Dörnyei, initially developed with Csizser (1998) and subsequently developed in later motivational systems (Dörnyei, 2001, 2005, 2009), are still one of the most user-friendly guides to language teachers who would like to increase the motivation of their learners. The principles focus on teacher behaviour, classroom climate, learner confidence, goal orientation, and learner autonomy. The commandments have found application in various educational settings over the last 20 years and have shaped teacher training courses as well as classroom experiences (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008; Papi & Abdollahzadeh, 2012). Moreover, Alwazir (2017) stated that “these commandments are crucial, as they specify the motivational strategies that need to be met for a heightened level of motivation for language learners.”

Nevertheless, the literature has mostly framed motivation in terms of the practice and beliefs of teachers. Quantitative surveys and experimental design have been used in large-scale studies to investigate the ways in which teachers use motivational strategies and the relationships between motivational strategies and student achievement (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008). Although these methods have provided rich resources, they have a tendency to exclude the subjective experience and understanding of motivation practices among learners. The concept of motivation, according to Ushioda (2009), is personal, social, and contextual in nature; therefore, its comprehension should be accompanied by considering the personal views of learners.

Motivational issues are well-reported in the Saudi EFL environment. English is commonly used as an academic necessity among the students instead of a source of meaningful communication, which can restrain intrinsic motivation and engagement (Alrabai, 2016; Elyas & Picard, 2010). Learner motivation orientations are also influenced by cultural norms, examination pressures, and teacher-oriented pedagogies. However, a limited number of studies have been able to systematically study how Saudi learners themselves view motivational strategies, and even fewer have redefined the Ten Commandments of Dörnyei from the perspective of the learner. This gap highlights the necessity of a redefinition based on student voices instead of focusing only on teacher conjectures or theory prescriptions.

### *1.2 Explore the Importance of the Problem*

The urgency of the reconsideration of motivational frameworks in the context of Saudi Arabia is increased by the fact that the country is undergoing educational reforms within the framework of Vision 2030 that focus on learner-centered instruction, critical thinking, and

global communication competence (Ministry of Education, 2020). The proficiency in English is discussed as one of the primary resources of economic diversification and global interaction, and effective motivational practices in the EFL classrooms have become a national concern. Amid these policy aspirations, underlying motivational issues remain to impact participation and performance among learners (Al-Hoorie & MacIntyre, 2020). To counter such challenges, the importation of well-known motivational models is not enough; it would be necessary to understand motivation strategies in the context of learners within their own sociocultural context. A good methodological avenue to such inquiry is secondary qualitative analysis. Re-interpretation of the already available qualitative data may reveal new meanings, patterns, and theoretical knowledge that may not have been intended by the original study (Heaton, 2004; Braun and Clarke, 2006). This method suits especially well the study of motivation, the construct which is dynamic, subjective, and influenced by identities and life experiences of learners (Ushioda, 2011). The study makes a theoretical and practical contribution. In theory, it provides a student-centered reinterpretation of the Ten Commandments by Dörnyei and evaluates their applicability and appeal in a Saudi EFL context. In practice, it gives educators and curriculum developers a clue as to which motivation techniques are perceived by learners themselves as meaningful. These results can be used to guide culturally responsive pedagogy and aid in bridging motivational theory and classroom realities. Finally, this study answers the call of applied linguistics to more qualitative, learner-centered studies that reflect the motivational complexity in context (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Ushioda, 2020).

### *1.3 Relevant Scholarship*

The motivational framework provided by Dörnyei has gone through a series of phases, such as the L2 Motivational Self System and classroom-based strategies of motivation (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009). The Ten Commandments is the early but sustained effort to apply motivational theory to pedagogical practice and its components, the immediacy perceived by teachers, the presence of supportive learning climates, and encouragement of autonomy among learners (Dörnyei & Csizser, 1998). Most of these principles have empirical support through cross-cultural research (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008).

Research in the Saudi setting has frequently pointed to the low intrinsic motivation, exam-based learning, and the lack of a chance to use the genuine language (Alrabai, 2014; Elyas & Picard, 2010). Attitudes, anxiety, and instrumental motivation have been studied in quantitative studies (Al-Hoorie, 2017), and some qualitative studies have been conducted investigating teacher beliefs and classroom constraints (Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013). However, there is limited literature on student-centred qualitative studies of motivational strategies.

Similarly, the student-centred learning literature indicates that learner agency, voice, and identity are crucial to educational experiences (Benson, 2011; Littlewood, 2007). In this view, teachers do not simply impose motivation, but rather, learners, tasks, and social context also co-construct motivation. Researchers have also suggested that motivation strategies should be viewed in the context of the lived experiences of learners instead of speculating that they work identically across cultures (Ushioda, 2009).

Recent trends in second language motivation research have further enriched the knowledge of

motivation processes in the classroom setting. In modern research, the unique features of motivation are discussed as dynamic and context-dependent processes that depend on the interaction of learners, teachers, and the learning environment (Lo, 2024). In this view, motivational constructs like the L2 Motivational Self System, directed motivational currents and learning experience in a classroom have taken centre stage in determining how learners maintain engagement in language learning over time. Examples include investigations into directed motivation currents, where long-term motivation is found to arise when learners have a clear direction, organised learning routes, and enabling learning conditions that help them strengthen their long-term vision of language use (Yu & Liu, 2024). These results support the premise that motivational strategies need to be considered as not merely methods of instruction, but also as components of an overall motivational ecosystem in the classroom.

Simultaneously, recent research has signalled the significance of emotional and psychological aspects of motivation. Research on the emotional reactions of learners has demonstrated that anxiety, boredom, and demotivation are major factors that affect the willingness of learners to communicate in the foreign language classroom (Bai, 2023). Negative emotional conditions can lower the engagement and participation of learners, whereas positive learning experiences and positive teacher behaviours can increase motivation and participation. These observations are quite consistent with the Ten Commandments of Dörnyei, especially the ones focused on the establishment of a favourable classroom environment and the establishment of learner confidence. Nonetheless, researchers are becoming increasingly persuaded that these principles need to be read in the lived experiences of learners and not necessarily in pedagogical frameworks.

Nevertheless, despite the depth of this scholarship, there is a clear gap: not many studies have re-interpreted the Ten Commandments suggested by Dörnyei using a systematic secondary qualitative assessment of the perceptions of the learners, especially in Saudi Arabia. The bulk of the existing literature either quantitatively studies the commandments or argues pedagogically about them. This study aims to address this gap by conducting a secondary qualitative analysis of peer-reviewed studies, grey literature, and policy documents to re-conceptualise Dörnyei's Ten Commandments from a student-centred perspective in the Saudi EFL context.

#### *1.4 Research Questions*

Considering the gaps detected and the necessity of a learner-focused redefinition of motivational strategies, the current study is oriented toward qualitative research and answers the following research questions:

1. How do Saudi EFL students perceive Dörnyei's Ten Commandments for motivating language learners?
2. Which commandments are most salient from a student-centred perspective?

These questions help the study to go beyond teacher-based assessments of motivational interventions and to shed light on how the learners themselves perceive and give importance to motivational practices in their sociocultural and educational setting.

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Research Design

The present study employs a secondary qualitative research design to reframe the Ten Commandments of Dörnyei from the student-based perspective of motivation of language learners within the Saudi EFL setting. Secondary qualitative research entails re-examining and interpreting available qualitative and textual data logically to come up with new concepts or theoretical knowledge (Heaton, 2004). In contrast to primary research, where researchers use recent empirical data, secondary analysis enables the researcher to synthesise and reinterpret past publications, policy documents, and reports to answer new research questions (Johnston, 2017).

The current research involves the use of a qualitative interpretive approach, which suits the investigation of such complex educational phenomena as learner motivation. Motivation is generally thought of as a socially constructed and contextually shaped process, which arises as a result of learners, teachers, and learning contexts (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Ushioda, 2011). Thus, a qualitative design can be used to conduct a more thorough investigation of the way motivational principles could be learner-centred. Through investigations of various sources of available evidence, the study is set to detect the patterns, themes and interpretations of relevance and application of the Ten Commandments of Dörnyei in the Saudi EFL context.

### 2.2 Data Sources

The research is based on secondary data sources. The ability of qualitative research to employ various sources of data enhances its credibility and completeness since it provides the opportunity to triangulate the perspectives (Bowen, 2009). Scholarly articles on language learning motivation were reviewed with the emphasis on the studies devoted to the motivational framework offered by Dörnyei and the Ten Commandments. These included a range of empirical studies employing quantitative surveys and experimental designs, qualitative investigations, and mixed-methods research. Cross-cultural studies as well as those conducted in the Middle East and Saudi Arabia were prioritised. These studies encompass both cross-cultural research and studies that have been carried out within the Middle East or Saudi education. The previous studies offer empirical evidence of the applications and assessment of motivational strategies in the language classrooms (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008). Besides that, peer-reviewed studies of motivation in Saudi EFL learners were analysed to shed light on the recurrent challenges, such as low intrinsic motivation, exam-driven learning conditions, and a lack of an opportunity to use the language in the real world (Alrabai, 2016; Al-Hoorie, 2017).

### 2.3 Data Analysis

Qualitative thematic analysis was employed to analyse the collected sources, which is a common tool for detecting patterns and themes in text data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis has been chosen due to the ability to review in different ways how concepts and ideas are developed in various kinds of documents and the flexibility in interpretation.

The analysis entailed a series of steps. To begin with, the relevant documentation was thoroughly examined to find passages on learner motivation, motivational strategies and classroom practices connected with the Ten Commandments as formulated by Dörnyei. The reviewed studies included quantitative survey-based and experimental designs (e.g., pre-post intervention studies measuring changes in motivation levels), qualitative interview and focus group studies, mixed-methods research, and policy/document analysis. Second, preliminary codes were created to represent common concepts like learner autonomy, teacher support, classroom climate, and learner engagement. Third, these codes were grouped into more general themes depicted by the interpretation of motivational strategies in the Saudi EFL environment. Lastly, the determined themes were contrasted with the original tenets presented by Dörnyei in his Ten Commandments to examine the points of agreement, redefinition, or new interpretations.

This analytical approach helped the study to reinterpret the Ten Commandments in a student-focused way that pinpointed which motivational practices seem the most applicable to the experiences of the learners and which practices might need to be contextualised.

#### *2.4 Research Trustworthiness*

To increase the credibility and reliability of the analysis, a few qualitative research strategies were used in the study. First, triangulation of data was done through the inclusion of different sources such as academic literature, grey literature, and policy documents (Bowen, 2009). The second strategy to improve the credibility of the thematic analysis process involved conducting an intercoder reliability analysis. This involved having another independent coder (who understands qualitative research techniques in educational settings) code a sample of 25% of the selected sources for this study. Cohen's Kappa coefficient was used to determine the extent of agreement between the coders, and it resulted in a score of 0.78. Lastly, results were analysed within the background of proposed theoretical frameworks of language learning motivation, such as Dörnyei's theories of motivation and learner-focused models of language education. By means of this methodological process, the study offers a theoretically informed, systematic reinterpretation of motivational strategies in Saudi EFL.

### **3. Results**

The thematic analysis of the secondary data sources identified the following recurrent patterns in the ways the motivational practices that relate to the Ten Commandments by Dörnyei are manifested in the Saudi EFL setting. Throughout the materials under review, the researchers more than once emphasized the fact that classroom practices, teacher behavior, and the overall educational environment within which English language learning occurs have a strong effect on learner motivation. In spite of the fact that the reviewed studies did not often provide the Ten Commandments through the student lens, their results, however, shed some light on the ways Saudi learners get to experience motivational approaches practiced by teachers in the classroom environment. The past studies on language learning motivation have all pointed in the same direction, revealing that motivational practices are realized as per the experiences and

reactions of learners and the perceived significance of the learning activities (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Alrabai, 2016). Consequently, findings from the study by Alwazir (2017) stated that, “almost all the students participating in the study seem to show a clear image of how important teacher’s actions are and how frequently teachers need to use motivational strategies in the EFL classroom to enhance the learning process”.

Using systematic thematic analysis, the principles guiding the Ten Commandments offered by Dörnyei were condensed into four general thematic groups that represented learner-centered views in the literature. These clusters are: teacher modeling and interpersonal relationships, supportive classroom climate and learner confidence, learner autonomy and participation and meaningful learning and motivational task design. All the themes are aligned with a number of the original commandments and reflect patterns that have been raised over and over again in the literature that studies motivation in Saudi EFL classrooms.

### *3.1 Teacher Modelling and Teacher–Student Relationships*

The initial theme that appears in the analysis is the role of teacher modelling and teacher-student relationships in the development of learner motivation. The two initial commandments of Dörnyei, to lead by example, by acting and to establish healthy relationships with learners, seem to be common in the Saudi EFL literature. In academic literature, institutional reports and grey literature, it has been consistently found that teacher behaviour is a key determinant of student engagement and motivation in English language classrooms.

A study carried out in Saudi Arabia indicates that motivational practices by teachers have a significant impact on the attitudes of learners with regard to English learning. Indicatively, a class-room wide Saudi EFL learner study demonstrated that motivation techniques instigated by instructors, such as encouragement, positive feedback, and supportive interaction, resulted in quantifiable gains in student motivation and achievement level (Alrabai, 2016). Likewise, in-class studies have indicated that the teacher's enthusiasm and immediacy have the potential to positively affect the willingness of learners to engage and communicate in English with supportive teacher behaviour, helping to diminish anxiety and increase motivation of the student to undertake classroom activities (Alrabai, 2022).

The role of teachers as inspirational role models is also highlighted in grey literature and practitioner-based reports. An example is a survey research conducted on motivational strategies in Saudi EFL classrooms, which reported that positive behaviour, praise, and interest in learning by the teachers contribute to a stronger engagement and participation by the learners (Alqahtani, 2025). This evidence supports the notion that the attitudes that teachers have toward English are frequently perceived by learners as a reflection of the significance and importance of language studying in general.

Alongside teacher modelling, teacher-student relationships are considered to be central in influencing the motivation of learners. Research on low achievement among Saudi EFL students has revealed that insufficient teacher support and insufficient engagement with the students are among the demotivating factors in language classes (Alrabai, 2016). Students can lose interest in language activities and become less eager to engage in them when teachers do

not offer encouragement or constructive guidance. On the other hand, positive teacher-student dynamics may provide a sense of trust that allows students to explore more when communicating and engage more actively in learning activities.

In terms of a student-centred approach, the literature reviewed indicates that learners are most encouraged when teachers show their excitement about English, when they have a respectful attitude towards the students and when they are actively involved in promoting the progress of learners. These results thus support the applicability of the first two commandments of Dörnyei in the context of Saudi EFL, with special emphasis on teacher modelling and interpersonal relationships as the pillars of learner motivation.

### *3.2 Supportive Classroom Climate and Learner Confidence*

In the context of Saudi EFL, the establishment of a favourable classroom environment and the development of learner confidence appeared to be the driving forces of motivation, which conformed to the third and fifth commandments provided by Dörnyei, establishing a pleasant and favourable classroom setting and enhancing the self-confidence of learners. Empirical studies have identified the following emotional barriers as significant issues threatening classroom participation and motivation in Saudi EFL learners: speaking anxiety and fear of negative judgment (Mleiki, 2025). By promoting and encouraging practices that tackle emotional safety and minimise anxiety caused by language, teachers can have a positive impact on the motivation and confidence of learners (Mleiki, 2025).

The quantitative results indicate that emotionally responsive teaching methods, including peer cooperation, role play, and culturally-relevant instruction, will alleviate foreign language anxiety and increase engagement in Saudi EFL classrooms. As an example, 80 percent of learners indicated that they felt more confident in classrooms with teachers who encouraged their engagement and tolerated learners making errors, indicating that inclusive pedagogy brings about motivational benefits (Mleiki, 2025). Besides, the classroom atmosphere that prioritises emotional health, consideration of the affective needs of learners, positive feedback, and on-going motivation to learn language activities has been consistently associated with the increased desire to communicate and continued engagement in language learning tasks (Alrabai, 2022).

In terms of student-centred, supportive environments, they are the most encouraging when they enable students to commit errors without any severe reproach, actively engage with the environment, and provide useful and constructive feedback (Faqihi, 2023). Such conditions decrease anxiety and allow the students to develop language confidence, which subsequently enhances engagement and motivation in the long-term. Therefore, the literature clearly suggests that positive classroom climates act as motivational anchors in Saudi EFL contexts, and they are one of the most salient motivational elements reported.

### *3.3 Learner Autonomy and Active Participation*

The autonomy of learners and their active involvement in motivating Saudi EFL learners is another important theme that appeals to Dörnyei's fourth and seventh commandments, such as present tasks properly and encourage learner autonomy. According to the studies on autonomy-

supportive teaching in Saudi EFL classrooms, learners who are motivated by their teachers through offering structured work, clear instructions, and choice feel more involved and in control of their learning (Alrabai, 2021).

Research studies in Saudi higher education demonstrate that autonomy-supportive interventions had a significant impact on the perceived choice, competence, and intrinsic motivation of students, which means that learners react favourably when provided with control over a selection of factors in their learning. Perceived choice, especially, was reported as the most potent predictor of the increases in learner autonomy, which shows that active involvement and selection are closely related to motivational performance (Alrabai, 2021). Similarly, the studies conducted in Saudi secondary school settings show that despite the structural limitations, the proportion of teachers implementing student-centred pedagogies that will encourage collaborative decision-making and individual learning tasks is rising and will result in greater engagement and intrinsic motivation (Alhujayri, 2025).

### *3.4 Meaningful Learning and Goal Orientation*

Motivation of students in the Saudi EFL setting is greatly determined by the compatibility of English learning with long-term goals, personal interests and future opportunities, as well as the six, eight, nine, and ten commandments of Dörnyei: being able to promote goal orientation in learners, making learning engaging, introducing them to L2 values and making them feel more satisfied. According to a body of Saudi studies, a large number of learners consider English as a useful means of ensuring academic and professional success, especially in the context of Saudi Vision 2030, which correlates English proficiency with economic diversification and international interconnectedness (Almegren, 2022). As this study found, Saudi learners showed a greater desire to enhance their English proficiency because national policies focused more on its relevance in terms of future employment and communicating in other languages (Almegren, 2022).

Research on motivation patterns among Saudi EFL students shows that there is a combination of instrumental and integrative motivation, and instrumental goals, including using English as a professional boost, are often reported more frequently (Aljuaid, 2021). It implies that students do not merely get motivated by classroom needs but by specific opportunities like studying abroad, professional competitiveness, and access to global environments where English is the lingua franca of business and education (Aljuaid, 2021).

Critiques of policy and educational analyses also illuminate that educational reforms according to Vision 2030 are to generate learner engagement through the incorporation of more communicative and meaningful learning experiences that link classroom tasks to real-world application (Ndiaye et al., 2024). These programs focus on communicative competency, cultural awareness and being a global citizen, which makes English more personally relevant and interesting to students, rather than just a topic to pass tests.

Student centred approach makes English learning more motivational when linked to real-life goals and objectives, including career goals, travelling and international communication and when tasks are interesting and give a sense of accomplishment. Students are more likely to

report increased satisfaction and perseverance when they believe their work has the potential to bring positive personal and professional benefits. These results indicate that meanings ascribed to English, beyond rote learning, are strong motivational forces in Saudi EFL settings, and confirm a number of motivational principles as developed by Dörnyei.

### *3.5 Most Salient Commandments from a Student-Centred Perspective*

The literature answers Research Question 2 directly, stating that the specific motivation principles are especially significant in Saudi EFL settings. Of the Ten Commandments by Dörnyei, four keep on appearing as the most relevant in the studies and within the discourse of education in terms of relevance to the learner.

To begin with, the establishment of positive teacher-student relations becomes a vital driving force, and the learners indicate that more engagement happens when the teachers are encouraging, respectful, and supportive (Alrabai, 2016). Second, involvement and confidence of learners can be promoted by establishing a conducive classroom environment that minimises anxiety, tolerates learning errors, and builds emotional safety (Mleiki, 2025). Third, it is often stressed that learner self-confidence should be encouraged, as when students feel capable and appreciated, they tend to be more eager to continue communicative exercises. Lastly, interactive activities, choices, and collaborative activities are demonstrated to improve intrinsic motivation by fostering student empowerment and making students feel like they have a say in learning.

These principles are most common in Saudi EFL motivation research and grey literature, and it seems that interventions that increase interpersonal support, emotional safety, self-efficacy and autonomy are the most responsive to learners. These patterns suggest the relevance of these commandments when developing learner-centred motivational practices in Saudi EFL education.

### *3.6 Summary*

In summary, the thematic analysis resulted in four major learner-centred dimensions perceived as the most motivational factors among Saudi EFL learners: (1) teacher modelling and positive interpersonal relationship, (2) classroom atmosphere and learner self-confidence, (3) learner autonomy and participation, and (4) meaningful learning and goal orientation. These learner-centred dimensions are in perfect harmony with Dörnyei's Ten Commandments of Foreign Language Learning Motivation. The majority of the surveyed Saudi learners felt more motivated when their teachers were enthusiastic role models, creating emotionally comfortable atmosphere, giving them freedom of choice, and linking their English learning experience with personal and professional goals under Vision 2030. The findings answered both research questions as they clearly revealed which aspects of Dörnyei's commandments Saudi learners valued the most. In addition, the study identified four most prominent commandments from a student-centred perspective.

#### 4. Discussion

The results of this secondary qualitative analysis show a logical trend in the perception and experience of motivational aspects related to the Ten Commandments of Dörnyei in the Saudi EFL setting. In the literature reviewed, and peer reviewed research, as well as institutional reports and grey literature, the motivational dynamics are heavily dependent on the interaction among teacher practices, classroom conditions, learner agency, and perceptions of the relevance of English learning to personal and professional objectives among the students. Not only do these patterns fit the theoretical framework proposed by Dörnyei, but they also highlight the contextually specific nature of motivation in Saudi Arabia.

To begin with, as with a previous study, teacher behaviours and interpersonal relationships are always a strong factor in motivating learners (Alrabai, 2016). Motivational methods like encouragement, praise, and culturally relevant materials have been found to accelerate the confidence and readiness of learners to engage in classroom activities (Aldossari, 2025). This proves that teachers are not only transmitters of knowledge but also agents of motivation. In cases where pedagogical interaction takes into account the affective needs of learners, students state that it is more engaging; a significant observation that justifies the first two commandments of Dörnyei on modelling behaviour and relationship building. The results also indicate the necessity of professional development initiatives within Saudi settings that reinforce the knowledge of teachers regarding motivational literacy and practices (Elashhab, 2020).

Second, the analysis confirms that supportive classroom climates and learner confidence are important motivators. In several Saudi studies, emotional safety, acceptance of errors, and positive feedback are emphasised to minimise anxiety and maximise participation, which aligns well with the third and fifth commandments of Dörnyei. Saudi students frequently face traditional language classrooms, where communication opportunities are scarce, and the fear of mistakes kills confidence (Alqahtani, 2022). This applies to curriculum design: teachers must include more failure-tolerant, confidence-enhancing activities like peer work, student self-reflection, and formative assessment that anticipate progress rather than perfection.

Third, learner autonomy and active involvement seemed to be important motivation factors, but with unequal application in Saudi EFL contexts. The studies show that Saudi learners tend to exhibit poor autonomous learning behaviours, which can be explained by conservative approaches to instruction, where the key focus is placed on directing a teacher (Elsaid Mohammed, 2022). Nevertheless, when autonomy supportive practices are implemented, including choice, task negotiation, and collaborative learning, there is an increase in intrinsic motivation and engagement. This is in accordance with the commandments Dörnyei has given regarding the presentation of tasks in an appropriate way and encouraging autonomy, where learner choice and task design should be the key elements in a motivational approach in Saudi classrooms.

Fourth, the analysis shows that meaningful learning and goal orientation have a significant effect on the motivation of Saudi learners. Different research demonstrates that learners feel motivated when English learning relates to real life ambitions like career ambition, global

communication, and the presence of a knowledge economy in the context of Vision 2030 (Al-Mwzaiji and Muhammad, 2023). This shows that motivational conditions are not only limited to the classroom but also to socio economic situations that influence the values and aspirations of learners. In long term orientation, where the learners view English as a tool towards goals like university placements, job opportunities and other means of cultural involvement, chances are high that they would persist in their language learning.

Combined, the findings reveal that interpersonal support, classroom climate, autonomy, and goal relevance are the background motivational dimensions within the Saudi EFL setting. These dimensions convey the most salient commandments in a student centred perspective and imply that motivational strategies should be learner centred as well as contextually responsive. These strategies must focus on emotional support, learner agency, and real world relevance to create a sustained engagement.

The findings are also theoretical and practical contributions. In theory, they apply the motivational framework of Dörnyei to a cultural setting where EFL learning is fundamentally related to the national priorities and identity formation. They demonstrate that motivational principles are never introduced in solitude but in interplay with cultural norms, educational structures, and discourses of policy. In practice, the study reveals the significance of the development of instructional methods, which incorporate affective support, collaborative and autonomous interaction, and curriculum interventions relative to the aspirations of students.

Lastly, the discussion points out gaps where more research is required. A certain number of Saudi research continues to utilise quantitative surveys that might not entirely reflect the intricacies of the learner perceptions. The future studies ought to utilise longitudinal qualitative designs, narrative studies, and classroom ethnographies to understand the motivation of learners in various Saudi EFL environments. Moreover, exploring the viewpoints of educators at various levels of education, such as high schools and vocational schools, would give a better understanding of how motivational methods can be scaled to different settings.

## 5. Conclusion

This research is a secondary qualitative re-analysis of the perceptions of Saudi EFL learners of the Ten Commandments of Dörnyei, which provides a student-based re-analysis of motivational strategies in the classroom. The thematic analysis of peer-reviewed sources, grey literature, and policy documents showed that the motivation is strongly determined by 4 dimensions: teacher modelling and interpersonal relationships, supportive classroom climates and learner confidence, learner autonomy and active participation, and meaningful learning and goal orientation. These dimensions strongly coincide with the commandments of Dörnyei, which proves their relevance and emphasises context-specific peculiarities in the Saudi educational environment.

The results prove that Saudi students are best motivated when teachers become good role models, create positive and emotionally secure learning environments, offer independence in the learning process, and relate English learning to realistic, important life objectives.

Specifically, the most salient commandments with the student-centred perspectives are identified in the study: establishing positive teacher-student relationships, providing a favourable classroom climate, raising learner self-confidence, and fostering learner autonomy. These values were continually identified in numerous sources, which testify to their background role in defining the motivation of learners.

Notably, the study highlights the importance of considering cultural and contextual elements in motivation strategies. Saudi students react not just to the methods of instruction but also to the significance of English to national and individual aspirations, such as career preparedness and interaction with international prospects within the framework of Vision 2030. Motivational strategies should therefore be learner-centred, context-sensitive, and consistent with educational policies and student aspirations.

Comprehensively, the present research will help refine the theoretical definition of the Ten Commandments by Dörnyei and provide practical advice to Saudi EFL teachers aiming to create long-term motivation. It promotes the development of culturally resonant strategies that go beyond pedagogical soundness by foregrounding perceptions among learners, which offers a blueprint of the ways educators can foster motivation and engagement in English language classrooms.

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