

# English Language Learning Demotivating Factors for Saudi High School EFL Students

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## Abstract

Demotivating factors are one of the sources that can reduce students' motivation toward language learning. This study investigated language learning demotivating factors among high school EFL students. It also explored the educational implications and recommendations for promoting EFL students' motivation from teachers' perspectives. A total of 365 Saudi high school EFL students and 18 secondary English language teachers from six public schools participated in the study. The data of the study were collected via two research instruments: a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews with students and teachers. The results revealed that subject-related and teacher-related demotivating factors were the most reported demotivating factors for Saudi high school EFL students. The results also showed that lack of interesting topics, lack of activities for practicing English, overemphasis on grammar, and incompetence of teachers were the most demotivating factors for EFL students toward English learning. Moreover, several recommendations for promoting students' motivation have been suggested by teachers such as technology use, extrinsic motivation and encouragement, and competitive and collaborative work.

**Keywords:** demotivation, EFL, English, high school, language learning, motivation, recommendations, Saudi, students, teachers

## 1. Introduction

It is undebatable that motivation is fundamental in second or foreign language learning. Previous studies showed that motivation is one of the influential factors that can affect the process of language learning (Al-Hoorie, 2018; Bradford, 2007; Dornyei & Ushioda, 2021). Dörnyei (2005) stated "without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long term goals, and neither are appropriate curricula and good teaching enough on their own to ensure student achievement" (p. 65). Motivation researchers were strongly interested in the positive effects of motivation that increase students' interest toward learning (Al-Hoorie & MacIntyre, 2020; Boo et al., 2015; Dornyei, 2020; Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Peacock, 1997). However, there are negative factors that can affect motivation and disturb any process of learning, specifically language learning. Dornyei (2001) named such factors 'demotivating factors'. As opposed to the positive factors that can enhance language students' motivation, demotivating factors gradually lessen motivation and hinder effective language learning.

Recently, demotivation has been a focus of educational research; yet, it has not received much attention in the field of language learning. In fact, language learning researchers were mostly interested in how motivation can positively affect language learning (Dörnyei, 2001). However, Baldauf (2007) argued that demotivation is a major concern in the field of foreign or second language learning. He stressed the need for a framework that considers the different sources of demotivation toward language learning. Given the negative impact that demotivation can have on language learning in different settings around the world, understanding demotivation factors is important for L2 teachers and learners (Albalawi, 2017).

Previous demotivation studies in language learning showed several demotivation factors considering language learners from various contexts (Al-Khasawneh, 2017; Çankaya, 2018; Evans & Tragant, 2020; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009; Zang, 2007). Most of these studies investigated demotivation among university students. However, very few studies explored demotivation among high school students in spite of its importance in this stage. Investigating demotivation factors for high school students is fundamental as it can help to identify major problems before university admission. In addition, there is a need for further research on demotivation in the EFL setting. Being

motivated in an EFL setting is of paramount importance to compensate for the insufficient language practice opportunities. More importantly, demotivation research seems to be scarce in the Arab world, and in the Saudi context, in particular. Thus, this study aims to explore Saudi high school EFL students' demotivating factors toward language learning at public schools. It also investigates the educational implications and recommendations for promoting students' motivation toward language learning from teachers' perspectives. More specifically, the study is set out to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the most prevailing English language learning demotivating factors as perceived by Saudi high school EFL students?
- 2) What are EFL teachers' recommendations for promoting Saudi high school EFL students' motivation toward English learning?

## 2. Literature Review

While motivation is regarded as a main factor influencing L2 learning, Dornyei (2001) introduced the term 'demotivation' to refer to "specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioural intention or an ongoing action" (p. 143). Other researchers expanded Dornyei's definition of demotivation to include internal forces (Arai, 2004; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009). Thus, L2 demotivation can be viewed as a decrease in the motivational level toward language learning because of specific external or internal factors. In other words, demotivation doesn't mean that the L2 learner completely loses motivation toward language learning, but it means that his own motivation has been reduced because of different demotivating factors that might be related to the teacher, the learner, the subject, or the learning context. In this regard, Dornyei and Ushioda (2011) elaborated that demotivation does not indicate a total loss or absence of motivation. Rather, it means that there are factors that negatively affect or limit a learner's normal level of motivation.

Studies have examined demotivation from different perspectives. Largely, EFL research on demotivation has focused on identifying the external and internal factors of demotivation. Several studies identified teachers as one of the main sources of demotivation among language learners (Arai, 2004; Dornyei, 2001; Evans & Tragant, 2020; Hasegawa, 2004; Kim & Seo, 2012; 1998; Zhang, 2007). For example, Dörnyei (2001) classified demotivation factors into nine categories based on interview results with EFL secondary school students. He found that factors related to teachers were reported 30 times representing about 40% from the total factors. Further, Zhang (2007) focused on the teacher as a learning demotivator in four countries: China, Germany, Japan, and U.S.A. He found that teachers can explain up to 39% of the differences in students' demotivation. Particularly, teacher incompetence is the most reported demotivating factor in teacher misbehaviors.

However, some recent studies (Çankaya, 2018; Kim, 2009; Liu, 2020; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009) showed that the teacher is not an important cause of demotivation compared to other demotivation factors such as class environment, learning contents and materials or test scores. In a similar vein, other studies (Hamada, 2008; Qashoa, 2006) indicated that the course book, leaning materials, learning aids, class environment are generally fundamental demotivators in language learning contexts, including the Saudi context (Al-Khairi, 2013; Al-Khasawneh, 2017).

In addition, some studies revealed that learners' characteristics, self-confidence, and attitudes can be demotivating, particularly with low proficiency students or students with low academic achievements (Falout & Maruyama, 2004; Ikeno, 2002; Tsuchiya, 2006). In their study, Falout and Maruyama (2004) investigated the demotivating factors among 64 college students who were divided into high and low proficiency groups. The results showed that both groups identified lack of self-confidence as the most demotivating factor.

The above review indicates the need for further research on demotivation, especially when considering the conflicting results among some studies. In fact, language learning demotivating factors may vary among L2 learners because of the change in context, level, or stage. Kikuchi (2015) stressed the need for further research in L2 demotivation since demotivating factors may change as learners proceed in language learning. Given such reasons, this study considers categorizing demotivation into four main demotivating categories based on the literature of demotivation research. The categories are teacher-related demotivating factors, learner-related demotivating factors, learning context-related demotivating factors, and subject-related demotivating factors. These demotivating categories are investigated among Saudi high school EFL students.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Study Design

The study followed a mixed-method research design that combines a collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. A questionnaire and semi-structured interviews with students and teachers were used to answer the research

questions. The qualitative data from the interviews helped to elaborate, confirm, and clarify the quantitative data of the questionnaire.

### *3.2 Study Population and Sample*

The population of this study is Saudi female high school EFL students at public schools in Riyadh, whose ages range between 16 to 18. The sample consisted of 365 Saudi female high school EFL students randomly selected from six different public schools. Generally, students at public schools in Saudi Arabia start taking English courses from grade four to grade twelve.

Furthermore, 18 secondary EFL teachers working at the same six schools participated in this study. Six teachers had more than 15 years of experience, eight teachers had 4 to 8 years of experience while four of them had less than 4 years of experience.

### *3.3 Ethical Considerations*

The ethical approval was obtained from the Ministry of Education. In addition, the participants were informed that their participation was voluntary, and they could withdraw at any time. They were also ensured that their data would be kept confidential and would be used for research purposes only.

### *3.4 Research Instruments*

In order to address the study questions, two major instruments for collecting the study data were used: a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews with students and teachers. To answer the first question, the researchers adapted some of the questionnaire items from several studies in the literature (Albalawi, 2017; Al-Khairi, 2013; Bekleyen, 2011; Sakai & Kichuki, 2009; Sahragard & Alimorad, 2013). The questionnaire consisted of two main parts: demographic questions, and five-point likert scale questions. In the demographic part, there were questions about academic achievement and grade level. The second part of the questionnaire contained the scale questions that were divided into 4 sections with items ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. These sections were: learner-related demotivating factors (8 items), teacher-related demotivating factors (8 items), subject-related demotivating factors (9 items), and learning context-related demotivating factors (9 items).

Moreover, semi-structured interviews were carried out to complement the data of the questionnaire. The interviews were with 30 students randomly chosen after completing the questionnaire. The main aim for collecting the qualitative data of the interviews was to provide in-depth information about EFL demotivating factors. Furthermore, the qualitative data served to explain and clarify the questionnaire data. The interviews were conducted in Arabic, the native language of the participants. This was done to ensure the participants' understanding of the questions. In addition, it allowed participants to speak freely without any language obstacles.

To answer the second question, semi-structured interviews with 18 English language teachers were conducted. The main question of the interview was about teachers' recommendations of the possible ways for promoting Saudi high school EFL students' motivation toward language learning.

The interviewees' responses were recorded. Notes were also taken during and after the interviews. The interviews were conducted during visits to the schools. Both teachers' and students' interviews consisted of several open and subsequent questions to find out more data that elaborate the questionnaire data.

### *3.5 Pilot Study*

A pilot study was conducted before collecting the main data of the study. The purpose of the pilot study was to check the reliability, identify unclear statements and paraphrase them, and make sure of the comprehensibility of the instrument in general. A total of 32 students participated in the pilot study. Those participants were excluded from the actual study afterwards.

For the validity, English language university professors in the field of applied linguistics had evaluated the questionnaire items and the interview questions in terms of clarity and relevance. The questionnaire items and the interview questions had been modified based on their recommendations and suggestions.

The reliability was measured by using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The results showed that the general reliability for all items was 0.862. This result was acceptable and appropriate for the purpose of this study.

### *3.6 Data Analysis*

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used for analyzing the questionnaire data. The interview results were analyzed based on recurrent themes.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Results Concerning the Demotivating Factors for Saudi High School EFL Students toward English Learning

To investigate the demotivating factors for Saudi high school EFL students toward English learning, the means and standard deviations for each section of learners' responses to the questionnaire items were calculated.

Table 1. Means and standard deviations for each factor

No.	factor	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
1	Learner-related demotivating factors	2.39	.81	4
2	Teacher-related demotivating factors	2.92	.50	2
3	Learning context- related demotivating factors	2.89	.45	3
4	Subject-related demotivating factors	2.96	.48	1
<b>Overall</b>		<b>2.78</b>	<b>.40</b>	

Table 1 shows that the overall mean of the demotivation questionnaire is 2.78. The highest mean among the different factors is subject-related demotivating factors ( $M=2.96$ ). This result is supported by EFL students during the interviews. One student mentioned, "The main thing that frustrates me is that the book doesn't deal with high and low levels. It is of an average level and compels students to learn the same information in spite of students' different levels". Another student said, "The book focuses only on grammar which is not useful for communication".

On the other hand, English language teachers opposed this result. They approved the book 'Traveller' during the interviews. One of them said, "It is the closest book to IELTS". Another teacher added that even when considering the topics that are not related to students' life, they are still very useful and increase students' curiosity. Many of English teachers also appreciate the listening and speaking activities in the book.

#### 4.1.1 Learner-Related Demotivating Factors

Table 2. Means and standard deviations for each item in learner-related demotivating factors

No.	Paragraph	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
1	I have difficulty in memorizing English words and phrases.	3.06	1.23	1
2	I often get low scores in exams.	2.84	1.39	3
3	I get lost in how to self-study for English lessons.	3.00	1.48	2
4	I don't have an obvious reason to learn English.	2.07	1.25	5
5	English has no use for me.	1.61	1.02	8
6	There are other subjects which are more important for me to study.	2.79	1.30	4
7	English is a language of non-Muslims.	1.98	1.34	6
8	My opinion about English-speaking countries is negative.	1.70	1.02	7
<b>Overall</b>		<b>2.39</b>	<b>.81</b>	

Table 2 indicates that among learning-related demotivating factors, the difficulty in memorizing English words and phrases is the most frequent cause of demotivation in language learning ( $M=3.06$ ). This is also supported by students during the interviews. One of them said, "In spite of my good English, I have difficulty in memorizing words". Moreover, "Feeling lost in how to self-study for English lessons" is another important cause for demotivation ( $M=3.00$ ). In fact, many students stressed that English is not about studying. English is a language which has to be practiced.

The statement "English has no use for me" was ranked the last with the lowest mean ( $M=1.61$ ). This result indicates that Saudi high school EFL students are well aware of the importance of English language. One student mentioned, "Nowadays English is the key for all knowledge. Another student said, "English is a prerequisite for learning anything".

## 4.1.2 Teacher-Related Demotivating Factors

Table 3. Means and standard deviations for each item in teacher-related demotivating factors

No.	Paragraph	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
1	The negative attitude of teachers.	3.02	.77	3
2	The incompetence of teachers.	3.09	.79	1
3	Teachers speak English rapidly during the lesson.	3.03	.79	2
4	Teachers become angry when I use wrong English.	2.69	.80	6
5	Teachers don't give practice to improve all language kills.	2.96	.74	4
6	Teachers' pronunciation of English is poor.	2.75	.77	5
7	Teachers ridicule students' mistakes.	2.54	.75	7
8	Teachers' explanation is not easy to understand.	3.09	.75	1
<b>Overall</b>		<b>2.92</b>	<b>.50</b>	

Table 3 reveals that the incompetence of teachers and their incomprehensible explanation are among the most important causes of demotivation for Saudi female high school EFL students. This result is clear in statements 2 and 8 in teacher-related demotivating factors ( $M=3.90$ ). Moreover, this result is supported by students during the interviews. One of the students commented, "I trust the key answers on the internet more than English teachers". Another added, "Sometimes the teacher's explanation is hard to understand, which makes me frustrated and unsure about the answer".

On the other hand, the statement "Teachers ridicule students' mistakes" is ranked the last with the lowest mean ( $M=2.54$ ). Actually, many of the 30 students who were interviewed indicated that teachers are respectful, and they never mock students' misunderstanding. For example, one student said, "My teacher always appreciates my reading even though I hesitate when I read. This highly supports me to develop my reading skills". Furthermore, another student replied, "Absolutely they are not. When we make mistakes, English teachers always apply new strategy and support us with extra resources such as links, videos, or on-line games".

## 4.1.3 Learning Context-Related Demotivating Factors

Table 4. Means and standard deviations for each item in learning context-related demotivating factors

No.	Paragraph	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
1	English lessons are compulsory.	2.96	.82	3
2	I am forced to memorize the sentences in the textbook too often.	2.98	.82	2
3	The technological equipment in classrooms is not appropriate.	2.88	.83	5
4	The internet is not used.	2.82	.77	6
5	Visual and audio materials are not used.	2.89	.84	4
6	There are usually many students in class.	2.76	.74	7
7	I don't have any opportunities to practice English.	3.01	.83	1
8	My friends laugh when I speak English.	2.62	.73	9
9	My class fellows don't like to speak English with me.	2.74	.72	8
<b>Overall</b>		<b>2.89</b>	<b>.45</b>	

Table 4 shows that the lack of opportunity to practice English is the most frequent demotivating factor for Saudi female high school EFL students. This result is obvious in statement number 7 "I don't have any opportunity to practice English" which has the highest mean ( $M=3.01$ ). During the interview, one student mentioned, "English is a language not only a subject. It requires an open discussion, but because the teacher is unable to control the class, the discussion becomes of no use". Another student explained:

Teachers are only concerned about the syllabus such as vocabulary and grammar. They often ask us to write the same answers in the book. They don't accept answers outside the book even if they are correct. That is why we are frustrated toward English learning.

In fact, these opinions are reflected in statements 1 and 2 “English lesson are compulsory” and “I am forced to memorize the sentences in the textbook too often” with means of (2.96) and (2.98), respectively.

Moreover, Saudi female high school EFL students support each other in learning English. This result can be inferred from statements 8 and 9 “My friends laugh when I speak English” and “My class fellows don’t like to speak English with me” which have the lowest means (2.62) and (2.74), respectively. The students also confirmed that they always support each other in speaking English and never ridicule each other’s mistakes.

#### 4.1.4 Subject-Related Factors

Table 5. Means and standard deviations for each item in subject-related demotivating factors

No.	Paragraph	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
1	Topics of English passages used in lessons are not interesting.	3.18	.79	1
2	English passages in textbooks are too long.	2.99	.79	4
3	English sentences dealt with in lessons are difficult to interpret.	2.89	.76	5
4	A great number of textbooks and supplementary resources are assigned.	3.03	.74	3
5	English syllabus is very long.	2.85	.74	6
6	English grammar is much beyond students’ comprehension ability.	2.72	.75	7
7	I don’t like English course book.	2.89	.74	5
8	Most of the lessons focus on translation.	2.89	.72	5
9	Most of the lessons focus on grammar.	3.12	.75	2
<b>Overall</b>		<b>2.96</b>	<b>.48</b>	

The results in Table 5 indicate that the uninteresting topics used in English lessons are one of the most demotivating factors for Saudi high school EFL students toward English learning. This result is indicated in statement number 1 “Topics of English passages used in lessons are not interesting” which has the highest mean ( $M=3.18$ ). In line with this result, one of the students commented, “There is a passage in our book about the durian. What can we do with this fruit? We got highly bored because we are asked to read and comprehend useless information”.

Another important demotivating factor for Saudi female high school EFL students is the grammar-focused syllabus as evident in statement 9 “Most of the lessons focus on grammar” ( $M=3.12$ ). Many of the students maintained that they don’t benefit from grammar in English practice. One of the students said, “There is no grammar subject in English-speaking countries”. Another student added, “The book extremely focuses on grammar. It lacks good stories, open discussion and idioms”.

Saudi female high school EFL students are satisfied to some extent with the amount and level of information they study. This finding is implied in items number 3 “English sentences dealt with in lessons are difficult to interpret”, 5 “English syllabus is very long”, and 6 “English grammar is much beyond student’s comprehension ability”. These items have got the lowest means (2.89), (2.85), and (2.72), respectively. This result is emphasized by students during the interviews. Many of the students appreciate the appropriate length and level of English courses.

#### 4.2 Results of the Study Concerning EFL Teachers’ Recommendations for Promoting Saudi High School EFL Students’ Motivation toward English Learning

English language teachers suggested different recommendations for promoting Saudi female high school EFL students’ motivation toward English learning. These recommendations have been categorized as follows: use of technology, extrinsic motivation and encouragement, competition and cooperative work.

##### 4.2.1 Use of Technology

Based on the interviews, using the internet and technology is the most frequently suggested recommendation for promoting high school EFL students’ motivation toward English learning. All English language teachers recommended technology and internet implementation to motivate students. One experienced teacher commented, “Nowadays, all of us are aware of the significance of technology. Thus, we have to activate learning through technology”. Furthermore, another teacher added, “When I look for teaching strategies, I always find a technological alternative for the traditional way. For example, I found that using videos in warming up was more attractive and effective”. This comment was supported by an experienced teacher “These years, students prefer using applications such as Kahoot, and Blickers as evaluation tools rather than, for instance, Fan-N-Pick strategy”.

Several teachers stressed that using technology motivates students and saves class time, as well. In this regard, one teacher commented:

In the past, we spent all time to teach the lesson content. However, with using the appropriate technology, students can understand the lesson in less than 10 minutes. Thus, we have more time for developing higher thinking skills.

Another added, “The interactive board is one of the important helpful tools for teachers. It helps students to follow teachers and it also saves time”.

However, English language teachers asked for more technological availability. Many of the interviewed teachers maintained that they cannot deny the significance and benefits of using internet and technology in language learning. But the unavailability of technology and the internet in classes often forces them to teach traditionally in order to save time. One of the teachers stressed, “Regrettably, I need to spend at least 8 minutes setting the internet, the speaker, and the projector. That is why I become less interested in using it”.

#### 4.2.2 Extrinsic Motivation and Encouragement

According to English language teachers, inspirational stories and the discussion of the best universities around the world with the requirements of English tests such as TOFEL and IELTS can increase students’ motivation. One teacher commented:

Talking about the top universities in the world and the successful people who graduated from these universities encourage students to learn. For example, mentioning the successful stories of Bill Gates, or the founder of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg, and highlighting their universities will motivate students to join these universities. Consequently, students’ motivation toward English learning will increase.

Another teacher added “After discussing the biography of Ghazi Alqosaibi, many of the students searched about the requirements of London University, the university from which Alqosaibi graduated”.

Another recommendation suggested by several teachers is giving certificates or bonus marks. Many teachers emphasized the efficacy of honor and thanks certificates. One teacher said “There was a student who came from another country, she was shy and not confident. However, after being honored in front of the school, she became more confident, engaged, interactive and passionate to learn”. In fact, many teachers found a positive effect of appreciating students’ work. A teacher maintained “The more I recognize and appreciate students’ work, the better they do”.

Regarding bonus marks, a teacher commented:

Bonus marks are very effective as they do not only motivate students to learn but also reinforce talented students. For example, when asking students to do a writing task in order to get a bonus mark, the weak students will be motivated to do the task, and the good students will be encouraged to do better.

#### 4.2.3 Competition and Cooperative Work

Competition, challenge, and cooperative work were highly recommended by English language teachers to enhance students’ motivation. One teacher indicated that using teamwork, collected points, or apps like Kahoot greatly increases the nature of challenge, competition, and cooperation. Sometimes, student might not be motivated enough to learn but when they are challenged within a group work, they become interested and more motivated. One teacher commented, “Working with others promotes academic engagement as the additional responsibility of group work makes students persist in difficult tasks longer than they normally do”. Moreover, different teachers believed that group work provides opportunities for peer learning because successful student performance can be motivating to other students. Furthermore, many teachers maintained that they prefer to begin the lesson with a higher-thinking question in a challenging way in order to attract students’ attention and increase their willingness to learn and participate.

### 5. Discussion, Conclusion, and Pedagogical Implications

#### 5.1 Discussion

The results showed that subject-related and teacher-related factors were the most demotivating factors for Saudi female high school EFL students. Most of the previous studies on students’ demotivation indicated that teachers are considered as an important source of demotivation toward English learning (Arai, 2004; Dornyei, 2001; Evans & Tragant, 2020; Kim & Seo, 2012; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Zhang, 2007). Gorham and Millette (1997) argued that teacher-related demotivating factors were the most demotivating factors affecting EFL students’ motivation. The incompetence of English language teachers and their incomprehensible explanation were the most

frequent factors among teacher-related demotivating factors. This finding was in line with the findings of several studies (Arai, 2004; Dornyei, 1998; Hasegawa, 2004; Ikeno, 2002; Trang & Baldauf, 2007; Zhang, 2007).

However, other studies found that subject-related factors were the most demotivating factors for students. Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) argued that learning materials and test scores are more demotivating than teachers' incompetence. Also, Hamada (2008) indicated that the course book is more influential demotivating factor than a teacher's personality and style. Moreover, the findings of this study showed that demotivated Saudi high school EFL students didn't struggle with teachers' personality and behaviors. Instead, they struggle with teachers' lack of efficiency and incomprehensible explanation. This finding was indicated in previous studies (Kim, 2009; Kikuchi, 2011) which concluded that teachers' personality and direct behaviors were the least influential of all the demotivating factors. In addition, the result of the study showed that grammar concentration has been found to be one of the important demotivating factors toward English learning. This finding was similar to previous studies, as well (Busse & Walter, 2013; Hamada, 2008; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009).

Furthermore, the lack of opportunities to practice English was the most frequent factor among learning context-related demotivating factors. During the interview, a great number of students asked for additional practice to increase their motivation. In fact, different studies indicated that the lack of practice is a demotivating factor for students (Busse & Walter, 2013; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009). Such a result stressed the need for further authentic practice, especially when considering the EFL setting.

Additionally, the results of the study showed various recommendations suggested by EFL teachers to increase Saudi EFL students' motivation toward English learning. These recommendations are categorized into: technology use, extrinsic motivation and encouragement, and cooperation and competition. Concerning technology use, the finding of the current study implied that using technology in teaching English can promote students' motivation. This finding mirrors the results of previous research (Godzicki et al., 2013; Halat, 2013; Heafner, 2004). Therefore, it is recommended to use technology because students become actively engaged and motivated when technology is used appropriately in English classrooms.

Regarding extrinsic motivation and encouragement, the current study showed that discussing admission to universities and highlighting the requirements of English tests such as TOFEL or IELTS increase students' instrumental motivation. In fact, the effectiveness of extrinsic or instrumental motivation was recognized long time ago by Grander and Lambert (1959). In addition, teachers in this study believed that the discussion of role models and successful people biographies can enhance students' motivation toward language learning. In this regard, Al-Hoorie (2021) investigated the effect of using inspirational stories of successful English role models on the motivation of Saudi EFL university students. The findings indicated that motivational storytelling lowered the anxiety level of the students in the experimental group. However, no significant effect is found on students' motivation or attitudes toward language learning. Al-Hoorie explained that the short duration of the intervention might have not been enough to result in a durable effect, stressing the need for more studies on the effect of successful role model stories on motivation.

Another recommendation for promoting students' motivation is the use of competitive and collaborative work. This finding was similar to some previous studies (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000; Jeong, 2019; Stipek, 1996). Stipek (1996) emphasized the importance of using mixed-ability groupings to enhance students' motivation. Jeong (2019) also found that EFL online collaborative activities are motivating for students.

## 5.2 Conclusion

The present study examined the demotivating factors for Saudi high school EFL students toward English learning at public schools. In light of the results, it is concluded that subject-related and teacher-related demotivating factors are the most reported demotivating factors for Saudi high school EFL students. More specifically, grammar-focused syllabi, lack of interesting topics, and lack of opportunities to practice English affect Saudi EFL students' motivation toward English learning negatively. Furthermore, the incompetence of English teachers and their incomprehensible explanation demotivate Saudi EFL students. However, Saudi EFL students don't struggle with teachers' personality or behaviors. In addition, the difficulties in memorizing English words and phrases, and feeling lost in how to self-study for English lessons demotivate Saudi EFL students. To increase students' motivation, EFL teachers recommend technology use, having one source book, bonus marks, certificates, verbal praise, and competitive and collaborative work.



### 5.3 Pedagogical Implications

Considering the results of this study, the following pedagogical implications are proposed:

- 1) Teachers should appropriately integrate Information Communication Technology (ICT) tools into language teaching and learning practices.
- 2) Classes should be well-equipped with technology and with access to Wi-Fi.
- 3) It is recommended to focus on one source or textbook to increase students' motivation. Also, more interesting topics should be added.
- 4) Teachers can use cooperative and collaborative work to engage students and enhance their motivation.
- 5) Teachers need to provide students with appropriate and interactive worksheets to guide them in memorizing and self-study.
- 6) It is recommended that teachers should prepare the lessons appropriately using pictures, videos, or games.
- 7) Teachers should activate discussion, debating, role playing, and students' presentations in order to increase students' opportunities to practice English.

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