



Motivational Strategies in EFL Classrooms: Insights from Students' Perspectives

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-05-20 Revised: 2026-06-28 Accepted: 2026-10-12 Keywords: Motivation; Perceptions; Teachers' strategies DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i2.10717 Corresponding Author: Maemuna Muhayyang maemarasyid@unm.ac.id English Language Education Study Program, English Language Department, Faculty of Languages and Literature, Universitas Negeri Makassar	<i>Teachers' motivating strategies are essential for fostering and encouraging students to feel more capable and completely engage in their learning. The psychological responses of the students are intrinsically linked to the motivational strategies, underscoring the necessity of a comprehensive study to identify the most effective approaches for teachers to provide a supportive and motivating learning environment. Therefore, this study is to find out how students perceive the motivational strategies used by teachers to increase their desire to learn English at SMPN 18 Makassar. This study employed a qualitative design to gain an in-depth understanding of how teachers' motivational strategies were perceived by demotivated students in an authentic EFL classroom context. The demotivated nine eighth-graders and three English teachers participated in this study. In order to provide comprehensive insights into teachers' tactics and students' perspectives, data were gathered through structured interviews and classroom observations using observation checklists and field notes. Qualitative data analysis techniques, including data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification, were used to study the data. The results showed how students viewed the three methods that teachers employed: a) instructional strategies, such as game-based learning, group discussions, and contextual teaching; b) media usage, such as Quiziz, Canva, and Worksheet; and c) student-teacher, student-student, and teacher-student interactions can increase students' motivation to learn English because they become more engaged, confident, and engaged in English classes. The findings reveal that motivational strategies have a positive impact on students both emotionally and behaviorally. Students reported feeling more confident, valued, and motivated, which encouraged greater participation and engagement in classroom activities. In conclusion, when teachers use engaging and effective teaching techniques, students become more enthusiastic and confident about learning English, which improves the quality of the teaching and learning process.</i>

1. Introduction

Since motivation has a significant impact on students' engagement, interest, perseverance, and success in learning English, it is regarded as one of the most crucial components of language learning. Motivation promotes students' active participation in class activities and aids in the development of their communication skills in the setting of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Abdullaev (2021) asserts that motivation fosters the growth of communicative competence and raises students' willingness to engage in language learning. Additionally, during the learning process, motivated students typically exhibit higher levels of confidence and enthusiasm.

Furthermore, Lee and Lin (2019) discovered that motivational strategies like interactive and group learning exercises have a big impact on how engaged students are in class. Additionally, according to Engin (2020), encouraging instructors can foster a school environment that boosts students' self-esteem and motivation. Additionally, Liu and Chiang (2019) emphasized that students' motivation to learn is influenced by outside assistance from peers, family, and teachers. According to Pranawengtias (2022), students can sustain their drive to learn and foster a more inclusive learning environment by receiving emotional and social support from their teachers and peers. According to these studies, classroom interaction and motivational strategies play a significant role in boosting students' motivation to study English.

According to Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), students are more intrinsically motivated when their psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled. Similarly, Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura, 1997) suggests that students' confidence in their abilities influences their willingness to participate and persist in learning activities. These theories offer a useful lens through which to understand the effect of teachers' motivational strategies on students' engagement and confidence in learning English.

Both internal and external factors affect students' motivation to study English. Students' curiosity, self-assurance, and personal objectives are examples of internal influences; peers, family, teachers, and the classroom setting are examples of external elements. Among these elements, teachers play a crucial part in fostering an environment in the classroom that can keep students motivated. Since many students find English to be a challenging subject, teachers are expected to sustain students' interest and offer relevant learning experiences. Positive interactions between teachers and students can boost students' enthusiasm and academic performance, according to Akhtar et al. (2019).

However, many students continue to show little interest in learning English, according to preliminary observations and casual conversations with an English teacher at SMPN 18 Makassar. Students' lack of confidence, minimal participation, and limited involvement during class activities are signs of this disease. During English classes, some students are also hesitant to share their thoughts or respond to inquiries. As a result, teachers' motivational strategies are seen to be crucial in inspiring students to take an active and motivated approach to learning English.

Despite the benefits of motivational strategies, motivating EFL learners remains challenging. Students differ in their interests, learning styles, confidence levels, and responses to instructional practices. Some students may respond positively to game-based learning and collaborative activities, while others may remain reluctant to participate due to anxiety, low self-confidence, or limited language proficiency. Therefore, understanding

students' perceptions is important to identify which motivational strategies are perceived as most effective in a particular learning context.

When students are not interested in learning English, teachers can encourage them in a variety of methods. Using efficient methods of instruction, engaging material, and encouraging interaction between teachers and students are a few of these tactics. When teachers employ a variety of teaching strategies, students may become more engaged and engaged in their education. By making learning more enjoyable, the media, such as games, movies, or interactive apps, can also increase motivation. Effective communication between teachers and students is one of the most crucial factors in inspiring students to learn.

These tactics were intended to increase students' motivation to learn and assist them in achieving their maximum level of English language proficiency (Dörnyei, 2001). In addition, low learning motivation among students can be caused by a lack of control over learning, passive behavior, and an inability to manage the learning process. Understanding these factors was very important for educators to design interventions that can increase student motivation and engagement in the learning process.

Motivation in learning English has been covered in a number of earlier research. Purnama et al. (2019) used a qualitative descriptive approach to investigate students' motivation for learning English. According to the study, motivation is crucial for raising students' engagement and performance in their English language studies. However, the study did not particularly look at how students perceived teachers' motivational strategies; instead, it concentrated mostly on students' motivation in general. In a similar vein, Vibulphol and Jutarat (2016) used Self-Determination Theory to study teachers' motivational strategies and students' motivation in Thailand. Their results demonstrated that teachers' use of motivational strategies could have a favorable impact on students' motivation to learn. However, the study was carried out in a different cultural and educational setting.

In the Indonesian junior high school context, there is still limited study focusing especially on students' insight of teachers' motivational strategies, notably at SMPN 18 Makassar, despite earlier studies discussing students' motivation and teachers' motivational strategies. The majority of earlier research either concentrated on the viewpoints of teachers or students' overall motivation, or it was carried out in various educational environments and nations. Additionally, depending on the classroom setting and learning opportunities, students may react to teachers' tactics in different ways. As a result, it's critical to look into how students view the motivational techniques professors employ when teaching English.

Based on the gap identified above, this study focuses on students' perceptions of teachers' motivational strategies in enhancing their motivation to learn English at SMPN 18 Makassar. This study aims to answer the research question: "How do students perceive teachers' motivational strategies in enhancing their motivation to learn English?" The objective of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of how students perceive the strategies implemented by English teachers and how these strategies influence their motivation.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on students' perceptions of teachers' motivational strategies within the context of Indonesian junior high school EFL classrooms by using a qualitative case study approach. The findings of this study are

expected to provide useful contributions for teachers in developing more engaging and motivating English learning environments.

2. Method

This study used a qualitative approach with a case study design to investigate students' perceptions of the motivational strategies employed by teachers to help demotivated students become more capable and fully engaged in learning English at SMPN 18 Makassar. A case study design allows researchers to explore a phenomenon in depth within its real-life context (Creswell, 2017). Through this approach, the researchers were able to gain a comprehensive understanding of how motivational strategies were implemented by teachers and perceived by students in an authentic classroom setting.

The subjects of the study consisted of three English teachers and nine eighth-grade demotivated students. The teachers having at least one year of teaching experience were selected using census sampling. Based on the result of preliminary data gained through classroom observation, the nine students were selected using purposive sampling, having motivation in learning English, such as a lack of participation, low focus during lessons, and limited involvement in classroom activities.

Students who were demotivated were selected based on preliminary observations in the classroom and recommendations from English teachers. Students were considered demotivated when they showed low participation, little interaction in the classroom, a lack of attention during the lesson, unwillingness to answer questions, and little or no engagement in learning activities.

The data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Classroom observations were conducted over six meetings, with each session lasting approximately 80 minutes. The observation process focused on teachers' instructional strategies, the use of learning media, classroom interaction patterns, student participation, and students' behavioral responses to motivational strategies. To obtain comprehensive data, the researchers used an observation checklist, field notes, and video recordings. The interview questions explored students' perceptions of teaching strategies, classroom interaction, learning media, engagement, confidence, and motivation in learning English.

In addition, documentation such as lesson plans, teaching materials, curriculum documents, and student records was used to support and enrich the research findings. By reviewing documents such as lesson plans, the researchers could gain important insights into the alignment between the curriculum and motivational theories, as well as the impacts of the teaching strategies employed to boost the learning demotivation possessed by the nine students.

The data were analyzed using the qualitative data analysis model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1992). The analysis consisted of four steps: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. First, the researcher collected data through observations, interviews, and documentation. Second, the data were reduced by selecting, simplifying, and categorizing relevant information into themes, including teaching techniques, classroom interaction, media use, student engagement, and self-confidence. In the data reduction process, open coding was used to identify meaningful statements from interview transcripts, observation notes, and supporting documents.

Then, similar codes were grouped into wider categories based on repeating patterns and ideas. These categories were then grouped into major themes: instructional strategies, media usage, classroom interaction, student engagement, and confidence. Third, the data were displayed in descriptive and thematic forms to facilitate interpretation of the findings. Finally, conclusions were drawn and verified by identifying patterns and relationships across the data.

To ensure the credibility and reliability of the findings, this study applied several validation techniques. Triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation to ensure consistency across different data sources. Member checking was also applied by asking participants to confirm the accuracy of interview summaries. In addition, peer debriefing was conducted through discussions with peers or supervisors to minimize researcher bias and strengthen the interpretation of the data. An audit trail was maintained through detailed documentation of the research process to ensure transparency and dependability of the study.

3. Result

This section presents the main findings of the research question, namely how students perceive the motivational strategies used by teachers to increase their motivation to learn English. The research findings are organized thematically based on the results of the interviews conducted. This section presents the results of student interviews regarding their views on the various motivational strategies implemented by teachers to increase their learning demotivation in English, which in turn influence students' engagement and self-confidence in the learning process.

Students' engagement

Some students shared their views on the motivational strategies teachers use to increase their engagement during the learning process. Several students explained that the strategies teachers use encourage them to participate more actively and be interested in class. The following quotes illustrate the strategies teachers use to increase student engagement during classroom learning activities.

Extract 1 (NF, 27 January 2026)

"Saya lebih berpartisipasi karena pelajaran terasa mudah dengan game menggunakan gambar yang ada di smart board" (I **participate more** because the lessons feel easier with games that use images on the smart board).

Extract 2 (AH, 27 January 2026)

"Saya menjadi lebih aktif karena saya tidak takut membuat kesalahan karena guru akan mengajarkan yang benar." (I became **more active** because I wasn't afraid of making mistakes, because the teacher would correct me).

Extract 3 (NH, 27 January 2026)

"Saya merasa senang karena pelajaran ini tidak membosankan karena menggunakan gambar-gambar yang menarik." (I feel **excited** because the lesson was not boring, using interesting pictures).

Extract 4 (MR, 27 January 2026)

"Saya lebih tertarik belajar ketika ada diskusi dan permainan." (I am **more interested** in learning when there are discussions and games).

Overall, the interview data indicate that students perceived game-based learning, visual media, and collaborative activities as the most engaging motivational strategies. These strategies helped create an enjoyable learning environment that encouraged active participation, reduced boredom, and increased students' willingness to engage in classroom activities. The extracts above simply figure out that students' engagement is significantly influenced by how learning materials are presented in the classroom. When the teacher uses visual-based games via the smart board, the learning process becomes more engaging and easier to understand.

This suggests that the use of engaging visual elements, interactive activities, and game-based learning can create a more enjoyable classroom atmosphere, thereby encouraging students to actively participate during lessons. Additionally, the use of games via the smart board helps students understand the material more clearly because information is presented visually and interactively, not just through verbal explanations alone. As a result, students become more focused, motivated, and enthusiastic about participating in classroom learning activities.

Furthermore, the use of visual media plays a crucial role in enhancing student engagement during the learning process. Engaging images and visual elements are more effective at capturing students' attention and creating a more engaging classroom atmosphere. When teachers use visually appealing media, students tend to become more enthusiastic and motivated to participate in learning activities because the material is presented in a clearer and more enjoyable way. Additionally, visual media helps students understand concepts more easily through concrete illustrations that support the teacher's explanations. As a result, students become more involved in classroom activities and are more interested in the learning process. The use of visual media not only helps students understand but also produces a more interactive and engaging learning environment that can increase students' motivation, involvement and overall learning experience.

Regarding this issue, it suggests that students tend to participate more actively in learning activities when teachers employ a variety of teaching strategies rather than relying on a single method. The combination of discussions and games, for example, can create a more engaging, interactive, and dynamic classroom atmosphere, thereby capturing students' attention and spark their interest in learning.

Through discussion activities, students are encouraged to express their opinions, exchange ideas, and communicate with their classmates, which ultimately boosts their self-confidence and active participation in the learning process. This also shows that social interaction plays a crucial role in enhancing student engagement. Students become more engaged when they are given the opportunity to interact, communicate, and collaborate with their classmates in learning activities. One strategy that fosters such interaction is group discussion, which allows students to exchange ideas, express their opinions, and solve problems together. Through group discussions, students are encouraged to actively participate in the learning process, rather than merely passively listening to the teacher's explanations.

Additionally, student engagement is greatly influenced by the presence of a safe, comfortable, and supportive learning environment. Teachers play a crucial role in creating a non-judgmental classroom atmosphere so that students feel accepted and valued throughout the learning process. When teachers respond positively to students' mistakes and encourage them to participate without fear of embarrassment, students tend to be

more willing to express their opinions, ask questions, and actively engage in classroom learning activities. In such an environment, students can develop greater self-confidence because they understand that making mistakes is a natural part of the learning process, not something to be ashamed of.

Confidence

This section presents students' perceptions regarding teacher motivation strategies that can improve their confidence. The following extract illustrates how teachers' strategies can increase students' confidence.

Extract 5 (NF, 27 January 2026)

"Saya lebih percaya diri berbicara ketika kami melakukan games untuk menang dalam game nya" (I feel more confident speaking when we play games to win).

Extract 6 (AH, 27 January 2026)

*"Saya tidak takut membuat kesalahan." (I'm **not afraid** of making mistakes.)*

Extract 7 (AAP, 27 January 2026)

*"Diskusi kelompok membantu saya lebih percaya diri berbicara." (Group discussions help me **speak more confidently**).*

Extract 8 (NS, 28 January 2026)

*"Saya merasa percaya diri ketika teman saya ikut berpartisipasi) (I feel **confident** when my friends also participate).*

Extract 9 (AK, 28 January 2026)

*"Saya merasa lebih percaya diri ketika mendapat pujian saat menjawab pertanyaan" (I feel **more confident** when I receive praise for answering questions).*

Extract 10, (WAS, 28 January 2026)

*"Saya lebih percaya diri ketika belajar dengan game, saya suka belajar sambil bermain" (I feel **more confident** when learning with games; I like learning while playing).*

Those extracts slightly reveal that student confidence can be significantly boosted through competitive, enjoyable, and game-based learning activities. These activities create a positive, relaxed, and supportive classroom atmosphere where students feel motivated to participate and less focused on the fear of making mistakes. This enjoyable environment effectively reduces students' anxiety, especially in speaking activities where learners often feel nervous or lack confidence in using English in front of others. Ultimately, successful experiences in games build strong belief and confidence in their language skills.

In addition to games, group discussions effectively boost students' confidence in speaking. Group discussions provide opportunities to communicate, share ideas, and express opinions in a smaller, safer, and more supportive setting. The interactive nature of discussions allows students to collaborate and exchange thoughts rather than only listening passively to the teacher's explanation.

Furthermore, peer participation and teacher praise play important roles. Seeing classmates actively participating encourages others to join, creating an interactive atmosphere where students do not feel alone or overly pressured. Meanwhile, praise from teachers serves as positive reinforcement that makes students feel appreciated and recognized. This non-judgmental environment allows students to participate freely, helping them realize that making mistakes is a natural part of the learning process. Students' confidence, in short, increases when learning takes place in an enjoyable (game-

based), safe (no fear of making mistakes), collaborative (discussion and peer support), and supportive (praise from the teacher) environment. Together, these factors help students become more courageous, confident, and active in using English.

4. Discussion

The research findings above obviously show that the teachers of English at SMP 18 Makassar deeply understood their students' learning demotivation and the influencing factors. Firstly, they lack participation: Unmotivated students tend to be inactive in class activities. They may not ask questions, participate in discussions, or engage in group assignments. Secondly, they lack focus; students with low motivation often lose focus during lessons. They may appear inattentive, play with gadgets, or talk to their peers. This lack of focus can disrupt the learning process not only for the student themselves but also for their classmates.

Finally, suboptimal learning outcomes: demotivated students often show poor learning outcomes. They may not complete assignments well or receive low grades on exams. This indicates that low motivation can directly impact students' academic achievement. By recognizing the indicators of low motivation the students possess, the teachers develop some more effective strategies to enhance their engagement and confidence in learning.

The motivational strategies employed to boost and nurture the nine demotivated students among other students in the classrooms were the instructional techniques, media usage, and interaction. Creating a positive learning environment coming with these teaching methods could help engage the students' motivation, enabling them to reach their full academic potential as well. The description of these motivational strategies is described in the following lines.

Students' Engagement

Based on the results of the interviews conducted, the demotivated students felt that the strategies implemented by teachers to boost their motivation to learn had been effective. Students demonstrated higher engagement in game-based learning because they felt the learning process became more enjoyable when games were incorporated into learning activities. Consequently, the teaching and learning process became more engaging, interactive, and provided greater benefits for students. This is also supported by Dörnyei's (2001) view, who states that teachers need to create a pleasant and engaging classroom atmosphere so that students become more enthusiastic and motivated in learning English.

In the context of gamified learning, students are given the opportunity to make choices, interact socially, and actively engage in the learning process. These elements are closely related to the psychological needs described in Self-Determination Theory (SDT), namely, the needs for autonomy, competence, and social connection, which must be met for intrinsic motivation to emerge. When students have more choices in the learning process, such as in game-based learning that involves decision-making, they tend to feel more independent in their learning.

Additionally, when students achieve milestones within a gamified context, such as earning points or reaching a certain score, they feel more competent. Meanwhile, when students compete and communicate in game-based learning, they feel more socially

connected to others. All these elements help fulfill students' psychological needs, thereby enhancing their intrinsic motivation to learn.

Lee and Lin (2019) also share a similar perspective on gamified learning, namely that interactive, game-based learning methods can help reduce student boredom, increase emotional engagement, and encourage active student participation in the classroom. This demonstrates that students show high levels of engagement in game-based learning activities because they find them enjoyable and helpful in learning English. Despite its benefits, game-based learning may also present several challenges. Students can become overly focused on competition rather than learning objectives, and classroom management may become more demanding when games are not carefully structured.

Therefore, teachers should ensure that game-based activities remain aligned with instructional goals and learning outcomes. Additionally, the research findings indicate that students view group discussions as engaging activities. They stated that through group discussions, they become more involved in learning and feel more active during the learning process. Group discussions are also seen as helping students feel more comfortable sharing opinions and speaking in class. They feel safe expressing ideas because they can communicate and exchange thoughts with peers, teachers, and other students. In line with this, Slavin (2014) states that cooperative learning can increase student engagement in learning through collaborative learning activities, social interaction, and collective responsibility.

Empathetic interaction reduces students' anxiety because students feel understood, supported, and accepted by their teachers. When teachers respond kindly, provide encouragement, and allow students to make mistakes without judgment, students become more comfortable participating in classroom activities. This supportive interaction helps students feel safe when speaking English, which reduces fear and nervousness during learning activities. This finding can be connected to Self-Determination Theory, developed by Ryan and Deci (2000). Self-Determination Theory explains that students need relatedness, or positive social connection, to feel motivated and emotionally secure. When teachers show empathy and care, students feel respected and valued, which fulfills their need for relatedness.

As a result, their anxiety decreases, and they become more confident and motivated to participate in English learning activities. The Affective Filter Theory (Krashen, 1985), which contends that language acquisition is more successful when anxiety levels are low and emotional circumstances are favorable, can also account for these results. Students' emotional filters seemed to be lowered in the supportive classroom setting seen in this study, allowing them to engage in English learning tasks with greater assurance.

Feedback provided through teacher-student interactions is also a key factor in increasing student engagement in learning. Students reported that they were more motivated to answer questions in class and more willing to participate in discussions when teachers praised their work, highlighted improvements in their skills, and offered constructive criticism. Harmer (2007) states that positive relationships and meaningful learning activities can motivate students and create a comfortable learning environment, thereby helping to boost their motivation to learn. A supportive learning environment allows students to focus more on actively engaging in the learning process rather than fearing making mistakes.

Therefore, constructive feedback and encouraging teacher-student interactions are essential in promoting students' confidence and participation in English study. The pupils

that feel recognized for their accomplishments and supported in their problems are more likely to develop positive attitudes to learning, stay motivated and participate more actively in classroom activities.

Feedback increases students' self-efficacy because it helps students recognize their progress and believe in their abilities. Positive feedback and praise from teachers make students feel appreciated and capable of completing learning tasks successfully. When students receive encouragement after answering questions or participating in activities, they become more confident in using English and more willing to participate again in the future. This finding is supported by Lee and Lin (2019), who state that supportive teacher responses and positive teacher-student relationships can increase students' confidence and classroom participation. Positive feedback acts as encouragement that strengthens students' belief in their own abilities. Therefore, feedback not only improves students' motivation but also develops their self-efficacy, because students begin to feel that they are capable of learning and using English successfully.

Students appear to be more motivated to learn English when lessons are presented more engagingly. Teachers can create a more enjoyable classroom atmosphere by implementing interactive teaching methods, varying learning activities, and building positive relationships with students. Since students have diverse learning styles, the use of games, information and communication technology (ICT), and role-playing activities can help increase student engagement in the classroom and make the learning process more enjoyable for everyone. Consequently, students are more excited and engaged in learning activities, which might help them to increase their confidence and readiness to use English in classroom interactions. Offering various and interesting learning experiences also enables students to participate in a mode in which they feel comfortable and competent, thereby providing a more inclusive and compelling learning experience.

Students in this study not only received instructional material at school, but also played an important role through interaction, discussion and game-based activities. Students learn best when they actively construct knowledge from meaningful experiences. When students are involved in activities that actively engage them such as collaboration and participation, they are more emotionally invested in the teaching-learning process and are more willing to contribute to classroom activities. This is supported by Fredricks et al (2004) that state that behavioral, emotional and cognitive engagement are forms of student involvement in learning activities, and encourage students to participate more actively in class through meaningful experience.

Moreover, the results show that the students' engagement was not affected by one motivational strategy but by the combination of teaching techniques, media use, and classroom interaction. The combination of these strategies seems to create a supportive learning environment in which students are interested in the material, supported by the teacher, and encouraged by their peers. This finding is in line with Vibulphol and Jutarat (2016) who argue that the development of students' motivation in English classrooms results from the use of a number of motivational strategies, not just from isolated instructional practices. Likewise, Lee and Lin (2019) state that interactive and collaborative learning activities result in higher student engagement as learning is achieved through communication and active participation.

The results further emphasize the significance of classroom atmosphere in retaining student motivation. If the teacher established a joyful and not too tense learning

environment, students who had previously been less motivated were more likely to participate. This supports the preceding thesis in the literature study that motivation is best developed when students perceive learning as something pleasant, meaningful, and psychologically safe. Engin (2020) stated that a conducive environment in the classroom can increase students' participation and willingness to communicate in EFL learning. Likewise, Pranawengtias (2022) emphasizes teachers' emotional and social support as a means to maintain students' motivation and engagement in the classroom. So motivational tactics are not only a teaching tool but also a way to generate good emotions.

While similar findings have been reported in Thailand (Vibulphol & Jutarat, 2016) and other EFL contexts, this study highlights the importance of motivational strategies within Indonesian junior high school classrooms, where students often experience anxiety and limited confidence when using English. This suggests that contextual and cultural factors may influence how students respond to motivational strategies.

Students' Confidence

The way teachers motivate students has a significant impact on students' self-confidence in learning English. Based on the interview results, many students stated that they felt more confident in using English because they spoke more frequently during the learning process and because games were incorporated into their learning activities. In this regard, students enjoy game-based learning activities because these activities provide a safe learning environment for them to practice and improve their English skills enjoyably. Bandura (1997) also states that students' self-confidence develops when they have positive learning experiences and are given adequate opportunities to build their self-confidence.

Students also believe that group discussions can help boost their confidence in their English language skills. They feel more confident when speaking English through cooperation and collaboration with their classmates. In the learning process, students need to work together and support one another so that speaking in front of the class is no longer seen as something intimidating. Vygotsky (1978) argued that social interaction is a crucial component of the learning process. Students can enhance their self-confidence and proficiency in the knowledge and skills they are learning when they operate within the zone of proximal development (ZPD).

These results indicate that collaborative learning activities contribute to language development and also decrease anxiety and stimulate more active engagement in the classroom. Students are encouraged to communicate their views in English and to learn together with their peers. This engagement with their peers helps the students to be more comfortable and grow more confident in communication.

These findings can also be explained through Affective Filter Theory (Krashen, 1985), which suggests that learners acquire language more effectively when anxiety levels are low and emotional conditions are positive. The supportive classroom environment observed in this study appeared to reduce students' affective filters, enabling them to participate more confidently in English learning activities. When students felt comfortable interacting with their peers and teachers, they became less afraid of making mistakes and more willing to express their ideas in English. This indicates that a positive emotional climate can facilitate both language learning and active classroom participation.

Feedback also plays a role in boosting students' self-confidence and belief in their abilities. Researchers found that providing constructive and supportive feedback can help build students' self-confidence, reduce anxiety, and alleviate the fear of failure in the

classroom. These findings support Dörnyei's (2001) view that students require adequate encouragement and positive feedback to maintain their motivation to learn. Students believe that when teachers correct mistakes without delivering demeaning criticism, they can view errors as part of the learning process rather than as a form of failure. Based on Self-Determination Theory (SDT), positive feedback provides students with a sense of psychological competence because they feel valued and recognized for their achievements.

Thus, when students receive praise for their work, they feel a sense of accomplishment, which motivates them to participate more frequently in classroom learning activities. Other studies, such as that conducted by Lee and Lin (2019), show that immediate and effective feedback during interactive learning not only boosts students' self-confidence but also makes them more willing to speak up in class. Based on student comments, praise given after they completed a task in front of the class made them more confident and more motivated to engage in learning activities.

Therefore, feedback that enhances self-efficacy can reduce anxiety, demonstrate appreciation for students' efforts, and boost their confidence in their language abilities. These findings emphasize that positive and constructive feedback is a crucial source of encouragement for students in the learning process. Students who are rewarded for their improvement and hard work are more likely to have higher self-belief, more involvement in classroom interaction, and keep their desire to enhance their English ability. So, positive feedback not only builds up students' confidence but also fosters a more positive and engaging learning atmosphere.

In general, all the methods implemented have had a positive impact on students and have helped them become more confident in learning and using English. Creating a motivating classroom environment where students feel safe to try new things, participate, and improve their English skills can be achieved through the use of appropriate teaching techniques. Some of these techniques include game-based learning, group discussions, and teacher comments or feedback designed to support and motivate students in the learning process. Furthermore, the application of these strategies encouraged students to actively engage in classroom activities and enhanced their readiness to speak in English. As a result, the students obtained increased confidence and good attitudes towards English learning and their learning process.

Additionally, the motivational strategies employed by the teachers of SMP 18 Makassar contributed to the development of students' positive perceptions toward English learning. Their positive insights of teaching strategies could lead to a higher level of student engagement in learning English. When students feel that their interests and needs are being addressed, they are more likely to participate in class discussions, collaborate with peers, and take initiative in their learning (Lee & Lin, 2019). Their perceptions also affect their confidence, or belief in their ability to succeed and be self-confident. When students receive positive feedback and encouragement from teachers, they are more likely to develop a sense of competence and confidence in their language skills (Ariyanti et al, 2023).

This increased confidence can further enhance their motivation to learn English as a foreign language in a very comfortable classroom atmosphere designed by their teachers. Furthermore, a helpful and encouraging classroom environment can help students to communicate their thoughts more freely, to lessen their fear of making mistakes, and to

build a more positive approach towards learning English. Therefore, students are more involved in classroom activities and are more motivated to enhance their English communication abilities.

The rise in students' confidence found in this study may also imply that motivating tactics affect students' readiness to take chances in language acquisition. Students need a safe place where trying is supported rather than being perfect, because they learn English by speaking and making mistakes and being corrected. With positive comments, group exercises and fun experiences in the classroom, students gradually got more comfortable with expressing ideas and participating in English activities.

This conclusion can be explained using Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory, where students' confidence is built through their experience of performance achievement and support from their surrounding environment. These findings imply that motivational tactics not only affect the students' emotional states toward learning but also promote their more active participation in the process of strengthening their language skills. With good learning experiences of students and the ongoing support from teachers and peers, students are more willing to speak, overcome their anxiety to make mistakes and increase their confidence to use English in diverse classroom scenarios.

Another crucial discovery is that it seems that confidence develops through repeated positive experiences, not one-time encouragement. Students said they felt more confident since they were able to participate successfully again and again in the instructor's answers and classroom activities. This confirms Bandura (1997), who contends that repeated mastery experiences increase individuals' views in their skills and impact their motivation to continue participating in hard tasks.

Moreover, the students' positive view on the teachers' motivational strategies indicates that the emotional bond between teachers and students is quite significant for language learning. When students feel appreciated and supported, they tend to engage, even if they have been unmotivated in the past. This finding is consistent with Akhtar et al. (2019) who point out that teacher-student connection is of vital importance for students' motivation and academic progress since supportive communication generates a stronger emotional commitment towards learning. Similarly, Liu and Chiang (2019) claim that the external support from teachers might enhance students' motivation and encourage their perseverance in language acquisition. Therefore, excellent teacher-student interactions can be a crucial factor in developing an effective English learning environment. Supportive interactions and motivational tactics help students to gain confidence, sustain their enthusiasm in learning and participate more actively in classroom activities, which eventually contribute to higher language learning results.

Findings indicate that motivational strategies are significantly connected with students' views of learning experiences. Students' interest and confidence in learning English are likely to be higher when they see learning activities as meaningful, fun, and supportive. This is also supported by Purnama et al. (2019) and Abdullaev (2021), who suggest that the motivation of students in learning English is highly associated with classroom experiences, communicative engagement, and supportive teaching methods. These findings suggest that the design and delivery of classroom activities by teachers are crucial factors in developing students' attitudes about learning English. Teachers can make the learning process more engaging by using motivational and student-centered tactics. Therefore, students will be more willing to participate, confident, and motivated during the learning process.

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations to this study. First, regarding the number of participants, there were only nine students and three English teachers at a single junior high school, so the findings of this study are limited to that context. Second, the main focus of this study was on unmotivated students; therefore, the perceptions of highly motivated students have not been explored. Third, the study relied primarily on qualitative data obtained through observations and interviews, which may reflect subjective interpretations of participants' experiences. Future research could involve larger and more diverse samples from multiple schools and employ mixed-method approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of motivational strategies in EFL classrooms.

5. Conclusion

The findings contribute to the growing body of EFL motivation research by highlighting how instructional strategies, media usage, and classroom interaction work together to enhance the engagement and confidence of demotivated learners. The study also emphasizes the importance of creating supportive and psychologically safe learning environments that encourage students to actively participate in English learning. Based on the findings, students perceived teachers' motivational strategies as highly effective in increasing their engagement and confidence in learning English. Strategies such as game-based learning, group discussions, and interaction with students created a fun, supportive, and comfortable learning environment that encouraged students to participate actively without fear of making mistakes. Students felt more motivated, confident, and interested in learning English because they were given opportunities to interact, collaborate, and express their ideas freely.

Overall, motivational strategies successfully fostered students' active involvement and self-confidence in English language learning. Additionally, the strategies led to establishing a more pleasant atmosphere in the classroom where students were more inclined to communicate in English and exhibited more enthusiasm throughout learning exercises. This implies that the use of incentive tactics not only helped students to participate but also benefited their overall learning experience in the English classroom.

Based on the conclusions above, several suggestions can be offered for English teachers, students, and future researchers. English teachers are encouraged to continue applying interactive teaching methods such as game-based learning, group discussions, and the use of visual or digital media to increase students' motivation, interest, and confidence in learning English. In addition, teachers should provide constructive feedback and appreciation to create a supportive classroom environment where students feel comfortable making mistakes as part of the learning process. Students are expected to actively participate in learning activities, particularly collaborative and game-based activities, in order to improve their confidence and English language skills. They should also view mistakes positively and use the feedback from teachers and peers as an opportunity for improvement.

Furthermore, future researchers are encouraged to explore teachers' motivational strategies across different educational settings, language skills, and student levels by involving more diverse participants and using a range of research methods to gain deeper,

more comprehensive insights into students' motivation, engagement, and confidence in English learning.

6. References

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