



Motivational Orientations and Attitudinal Challenges in Learning English among Information Technology Students at Mahweet University, Yemen.

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التوجهات الدافعية والتحديات المرتبطة بالاتجاهات نحو تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية لدى طلبة تكنولوجيا المعلومات
في جامعة المحويت، اليمن

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Abstract:

This study investigates motivational orientations and attitudinal challenges in learning English among Information Technology students at Mahweet University, Yemen. The study used a descriptive cross-sectional quantitative survey design. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire from all 60 available first-level IT students and were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation analysis. The findings showed that participants reported relatively high levels of motivation to learn English, with external motivation as the strongest dimension. Major motivating factors included future career opportunities, academic success, communication with international professionals, teacher support, and examination achievement. Internal motivation was also evident, particularly in students' sense of achievement in understanding English and their desire to improve their proficiency, while family support contributed positively to their motivation. The results further indicated generally positive attitudes toward learning English, although speaking anxiety, nervousness when comprehension failed, fear of making mistakes, and perceived difficulty remained notable challenges. Pearson correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between motivation and attitudes toward English learning. The study concludes that first-level IT students are motivated to learn English mainly for academic and professional purposes, but anxiety-related challenges may limit their communicative confidence. Therefore, supportive, practical, and field-specific English instruction is recommended to enhance both motivation and confidence in English use.

Keywords: Motivation, attitudinal challenges, English language learning, Information Technology students.

المخلص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استقصاء التوجهات الدافعية والتحديات المرتبطة بالاتجاهات نحو تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية لدى طلبة تكنولوجيا المعلومات في جامعة المحويت، اليمن. واعتمدت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي الكمي باستخدام تصميم مسحي مقطعي. وجمعت البيانات من خلال استبانة منظمة طبقت على جميع طلبة المستوى الأول المتاحين في قسم تكنولوجيا المعلومات، والبالغ عددهم 60 طالباً وطالبة، ثم حُللت البيانات باستخدام الإحصاءات الوصفية ومعامل ارتباط بيرسون. أظهرت النتائج أن المشاركين يتمتعون بمستويات مرتفعة نسبياً من الدافعية نحو تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية، وكانت الدافعية الخارجية أكثر الأبعاد قوة. وتمثلت أبرز العوامل المحفزة في فرص العمل المستقبلية، والنجاح الأكاديمي، والتواصل مع المتخصصين الدوليين، ودعم المعلمين، وتحقيق نتائج جيدة في الاختبارات. كما ظهرت الدافعية الداخلية بوضوح، ولا سيما في شعور الطلبة بالإنجاز عند فهم محتوى جديد باللغة الإنجليزية ورغبتهم في تطوير كفاءتهم اللغوية، في حين أسهم دعم الأسرة بصورة إيجابية في تعزيز دافعيتهم. وأشارت النتائج كذلك إلى وجود اتجاهات إيجابية عمومًا نحو تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية، على الرغم من استمرار بعض التحديات الملحوظة، مثل القلق من التحدث، والتوتر عند عدم فهم ما يُقال باللغة الإنجليزية، والخوف من ارتكاب الأخطاء، والشعور بصعوبة تعلم اللغة. كما كشف تحليل ارتباط بيرسون عن وجود علاقة إيجابية ذات دلالة إحصائية بين الدافعية والاتجاهات نحو تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن طلبة المستوى الأول في قسم تكنولوجيا المعلومات يمتلكون دافعية لتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية، ولا سيما لأغراض أكاديمية ومهنية، إلا أن التحديات المرتبطة بالقلق قد تحد من ثقتهم في التواصل

باللغة الإنجليزية. ولذلك، توصي الدراسة بتقديم تعليم داعم وعملي ومرتبطة بمجال تخصصهم، بما يساهم في تعزيز دافعيتهم وثقتهم في استخدام اللغة الإنجليزية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الدافعية، التحديات المرتبطة بالاتجاهات، تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية، طلبة تكنولوجيا المعلومات.

1. Introduction

English has become one of the main languages of academic communication, digital knowledge exchange, and professional interaction. Its role is especially important in Information Technology (IT), where it is used in technical terminology, programming documentation, software manuals, online tutorials, technical support, and workplace communication (Zaquinaula & Idrovo, 2024). For IT students, English is more than a compulsory university subject. It is an important tool for accessing updated technical knowledge and participating in wider academic and professional communities. Their language needs include technical reading, digital communication, academic writing, and the use of programming-related resources. English learning among IT students should consequently be understood in relation to their academic specialization and future professional needs.

Motivation plays an important role in determining how students approach English learning and how much effort they invest in it. IT students may be motivated by future employment, academic achievement, access to technical information, or communication with international professionals. Their motivation may also be influenced by classroom activities, teacher support, family expectations, and previous learning experiences. Dörnyei's (2009) L2 Motivational Self System provides a useful framework for understanding this motivation through the Ideal L2 Self, the Ought-to L2 Self, and the L2 Learning Experience. The Ideal L2 Self refers to the future identity that learners wish to develop as competent English users, while the Ought-to L2 Self reflects external expectations and obligations. For IT students, these dimensions may involve seeing themselves as future professionals who can use English in technical settings, as well as responding to academic requirements, family or social expectations, and employment needs. The L2 Learning Experience concerns learners' immediate classroom environment and previous learning experiences. It is especially relevant in IT education because students may become more motivated when English instruction is connected to their specialization. Dörnyei (2019) also emphasized that the L2 Learning Experience is a central part of motivated behavior because it reflects learners' actual engagement in the learning process.

Previous research suggests that motivation becomes stronger when learners see English as relevant to their academic, professional, and personal needs. In technical fields, this relevance is closely connected with access to digital knowledge, workplace communication, and future professional opportunities. Authentic tasks and meaningful classroom activities may strengthen motivation when they are linked with practical uses of English (Khawaji, 2025; Wahidiyati et al., 2025). At the same time, motivation is also shaped by students' backgrounds, social environments, confidence, anxiety, and previous learning experiences (Masood et al., 2025; Wahidiyati et al., 2025). This means that recognizing the importance of English does not always lead to confident participation. Students may remain strongly motivated while using English less because of anxiety, low confidence, or fear of making mistakes.

Therefore, attitudes are closely connected with motivation in the language learning process. Positive attitudes may encourage students to participate, practise, and continue learning when they face difficulties. In contrast, negative feelings may reduce their willingness to communicate even when they understand the academic and professional value of English. In the present study, attitudinal challenges refer to factors such as speaking anxiety, nervousness, low confidence, perceived difficulty, and fear of making mistakes. These challenges may affect students' classroom participation and their willingness to use English in academic or professional situations. Examining motivation and attitudes together can

therefore provide a clearer understanding of the factors that support or hinder students' engagement in English language learning.

Motivation and attitudes are also influenced by wider emotional, social, and educational conditions. Limited learning resources, economic difficulties, restricted opportunities, and weak exposure to English may reduce students' engagement (Noori et al., 2025). Emotional variables such as enjoyment, grit, motivated behavior, and burnout may also affect how learners respond to English learning (Song, 2024). These findings show that motivation cannot be explained only through personal interest or effort. It is also shaped by students' emotional well-being, learning conditions, and opportunities to use English. For IT students, these factors may determine whether they can benefit fully from English as a tool for academic progress and professional preparation.

This issue is particularly relevant in the Yemeni EFL context, where students usually encounter English through formal education, textbooks, examinations, and digital resources rather than through daily communication. Opportunities to practise English outside the classroom may be limited, and students may enter university with different levels of language preparation. Such conditions can influence their confidence, participation, and attitudes toward English learning. Although motivation and attitudes have received considerable attention in EFL research, their relationship among students in specialized academic fields remains less clearly understood. Much of the existing literature has focused on general EFL learners, school students, English majors, or broad university populations. Little is known about how motivational orientations and attitudinal challenges are related among first-level IT students at Mahweet University.

Accordingly, the present study investigates motivational orientations and attitudinal challenges among Information Technology students at Mahweet University. It aims to identify the factors that influence students' motivation to learn English and examine the attitudes and challenges that affect their engagement. It also explores the relationship between motivation and attitudes in English language learning among IT students. By focusing on IT students, the study connects English learning with technical study, academic requirements, and future professional preparation. It may help explain why students can remain motivated while experiencing anxiety or limited communicative confidence. The findings may also provide useful evidence for developing practical and field-related English instruction that responds to students' academic and emotional needs.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Motivation

Motivation refers to the force that gives learners direction, energy, and persistence in pursuing a learning goal. In English language learning, it explains why students engage in learning, how much effort they invest, and how long they continue when they face difficulty. Ryan and Deci (2020) related motivation to the energizing and sustaining of goal-directed behavior, while Al-Hoorie and MacIntyre (2020) described it as a central construct in second language acquisition because it shapes engagement and persistence. For university students, motivation is not fixed, since it may rise or weaken according to classroom experience, personal goals, social expectations, and perceived usefulness. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021) also emphasized that motivated learners usually show stronger commitment and more positive involvement in language learning. Therefore, motivation is treated in the present study as a dynamic factor that connects learners' goals, effort, and classroom participation.

Motivation may appear in different but related forms. Intrinsic motivation occurs when students learn English because they enjoy the language, feel personal satisfaction, or experience achievement when they understand new content. Extrinsic motivation appears when students learn English for external outcomes such as examinations, employment, teacher approval, academic success, or future professional opportunities. Self-Determination Theory also distinguishes between autonomous motivation, in which learners value or enjoy the activity, and controlled motivation, in which learners act because of pressure,

obligation, or fear of negative consequences. Alamer et al. (2025) indicated that autonomous motivation is associated with stronger achievement and lower anxiety, whereas excessive pressure may weaken confidence. These distinctions are useful for the present study because IT students may learn English both for personal improvement and for practical academic and professional purposes.

2.2 Motivational Orientation in English Language Learning

Motivational orientation refers to the main direction behind students' desire to learn a language. It explains whether learners study English for practical, academic, professional, social, or personal reasons. Gardner and Lambert's (1959) distinction between instrumental and integrative orientations remains relevant because it separates learning English for practical benefits from learning it for wider social or cultural affiliation. Instrumental orientation is especially important in EFL contexts where English is needed for study, work, technology, travel, and access to information. For IT students, this orientation is highly relevant because English is closely connected with programming resources, software documentation, technical tutorials, online platforms, research articles, and professional communication. Prasetya (2021) similarly found that IT students and professionals associate English with reports, communication, instructions, and access to information.

The L2 Motivational Self System provides another useful framework for understanding motivational orientation. It includes the Ideal L2 Self, the Ought-to L2 Self, and the L2 Learning Experience. The Ideal L2 Self refers to the learner's desired future identity as a successful English user, while the Ought-to L2 Self reflects duties, expectations, and pressures from family, teachers, society, or future employers. The L2 Learning Experience concerns the immediate classroom environment, including teachers, classmates, materials, tasks, and previous learning experiences. Dörnyei (2019) argued that the L2 Learning Experience is often the strongest predictor of motivated behavior because it reflects learners' real participation in learning. This framework suits the present study because IT students' motivation may combine future professional identity, external expectations, and direct classroom experiences.

2.3 Attitudes toward English Language Learning

Attitude refers to students' beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendencies toward English and the process of learning it (Salinas, 2024; Yuliani et al., 2023). In language learning, attitude affects how students receive instruction, respond to errors, participate in class, and continue learning when they face difficulty. Researchers commonly explain attitude through cognitive, affective, and behavioral components. The cognitive component refers to what students believe about English, such as its usefulness for IT, employment, and communication. The affective component refers to feelings such as enjoyment, confidence, anxiety, fear, or dislike. The behavioral component refers to students' actions, such as attending classes, practising English, asking questions, reading materials, or avoiding participation. This view is important because a student may believe that English is useful but still feel afraid of speaking or making mistakes.

Positive attitudes help connect motivation with actual learning behavior. Students who value English and feel comfortable in the classroom are more likely to participate, practise, and benefit from instruction. However, positive beliefs alone are not always enough because negative emotions and previous experiences may reduce participation. Salinas (2024) notes that language learning goals are influenced by motivation, culture, previous experiences, attitudes, and other internal and external factors. Getie (2020) also found that attitudes toward EFL learning are related to social, educational, and learner-related factors. Therefore, the present study examines attitudes not only as general approval of English but also as a factor that may support or hinder active learning.

2.4 Attitudinal Challenges in English Language Learning

Attitudinal challenges refer to negative beliefs, feelings, and behaviors that limit students' engagement in English learning. These challenges include fear of mistakes, low self-confidence, speaking anxiety, weak previous preparation, lack of vocabulary, pronunciation problems, grammar difficulty, and limited practice. Such challenges may affect students even when they recognize the importance of English for their studies and future careers. A student may need English for IT-related learning but remain silent in class because of anxiety or fear of criticism. Özdemir and Seçkin (2025) reported that high foreign language anxiety can hinder the development of language skills, particularly productive skills such as speaking and writing. This is relevant to IT students because they need English not only for reading technical materials but also for presentations, reports, emails, and explanations of technical issues.

In the Yemeni EFL context, attitudinal challenges are often strengthened by limited exposure and insufficient communicative practice. Al-Hassaani and Qaid (2021) found that Yemeni learners at Aden University faced speaking difficulties related to limited English background, inadequate syllabus, inappropriate materials, anxiety, and fear of mistakes. They also emphasized that Yemeni EFL learners need enough time to practise speaking skills. This situation is important for Mahweet University because many students may study English for years without enough opportunities to use it communicatively. If classroom materials ignore students' field-related needs, English may be perceived as difficult or disconnected from specialization. Therefore, English instruction for IT students should provide safe, regular, and purposeful practice linked to their academic and professional tasks.

2.5 English Language Learning among IT Students

English has a special value for IT students because information technology depends heavily on the language. Students encounter English in programming syntax, software interfaces, documentation, system messages, tutorials, digital platforms, and professional communication. Consequently, their English-learning needs are closely connected to the academic and professional requirements of their specialization. Effective English instruction should consider what students need the language for, the difficulties they experience, and the tasks they are expected to perform during their studies and future careers. For IT students at Mahweet University, relevant tasks may include reading a software manual, explaining an error message, writing a short technical report, presenting a project, describing a network problem, or summarizing a tutorial. Such tasks make the value of English clear and may strengthen students' instrumental motivation by linking classroom learning with future IT practice.

2.6 English Learning in the Yemeni EFL Context

English in Yemen is mainly learned as a foreign language, so students usually meet it through classrooms, textbooks, examinations, and digital content rather than daily communication. This limited exposure affects fluency, confidence, pronunciation, and listening comprehension. Students also enter university with different levels of preparation because school English learning varies across regions and institutions. Some students have studied English mainly through grammar and translation, while others have had few opportunities to speak or listen to English. These differences influence students' motivation and attitudes when they begin university English courses. In the IT field, the practical value of English is particularly clear because students need it for online learning, scholarships, employment, freelancing, technical documentation, and communication beyond Yemen. The present study, therefore, views Yemeni IT students as learners who may strongly value English while still facing limited resources, weak exposure, and anxiety-related barriers.

2.7 Previous Studies

Recent research has examined how social, economic, and personal conditions influence students' motivation to learn English. Noori et al. (2025) found that financial dependence and limited learning resources reduced students' motivation more strongly than parental encouragement. Similarly, Masood et al. (2025) reported that motivation, attitudes, and anxiety may vary according to gender, family background, and socioeconomic conditions. While both studies emphasize the influence of learners' environments, they focus on different aspects of that influence. Noori et al. (2025) gave greater attention to economic barriers and access to resources, whereas Masood et al. (2025) considered a wider range of social and personal variables. Their findings indicate that motivation is shaped not only by personal interest but also by the conditions surrounding the learning process.

Other studies have focused on the relationship between attitudes, emotional experiences, and learners' participation in English. Wahidiyati et al. (2025) found that attitude was the strongest predictor of willingness to communicate in Indonesian English classrooms. Their findings suggest that learners are more likely to participate when they value English and hold positive feelings toward the learning experience. Song (2024) extended this emotional perspective by showing that learning enjoyment and L2 grit supported motivated behavior, whereas academic burnout weakened it. However, Twin (2025) found that strong instrumental motivation related to academic success and future careers could coexist with low confidence, fear of mistakes, and limited authentic exposure. These findings show that motivation and positive attitudes may encourage engagement, but emotional barriers can still restrict actual language use.

Research involving specialized learners has also highlighted the importance of connecting English instruction with students' academic and professional purposes. Khawaji (2025) found that Computer Information Technology students became more motivated when English lessons were linked with realistic professional tasks. These tasks included reading computer instructions, writing technical reports, and communicating with global clients. This finding shows that professional relevance can make English learning more meaningful for students in technical fields. While Khawaji (2025) emphasized the motivational value of field-related instruction, Twin (2025) showed that professional motivation may still coexist with anxiety and limited confidence. Therefore, field-related content may strengthen motivation without being sufficient to ensure active language use.

The reviewed studies establish several common patterns in English language learning. Motivation is influenced by social and economic conditions, attitudes affect willingness to communicate, and emotional experiences may strengthen or weaken motivated behavior. Research also shows that connecting English with realistic professional tasks can increase its relevance for students in specialized fields. At the same time, the studies differ in their populations, contexts, and main areas of emphasis. Noori et al. (2025) and Masood et al. (2025) focused more strongly on contextual and background factors, while Wahidiyati et al. (2025), Song (2024), and Twin (2025) gave greater attention to attitudes, emotions, and participation. Khawaji (2025) provided more direct evidence from a technology-related English-learning context.

Despite these contributions, motivation, attitudes, and anxiety have often been examined separately rather than as related dimensions within the same learning experience. Khawaji (2025) focused on Computer Information Technology students, but the study examined an instructional intervention rather than the relationship between motivational orientations and attitudinal challenges. Therefore, available research provides limited evidence about how these constructs interact among students in specialized academic fields. Their relationship among first-level IT students at Mahweet University remains underexplored.

3. Methodology

The present study adopts a descriptive cross-sectional quantitative survey design to investigate motivational orientations and attitudinal challenges in English language learning among Information Technology students at Mahweet University, Yemen. This design is suitable because quantitative research enables the researcher to collect numerical data and analyze students' responses statistically. It also helps describe trends, measure responses, and examine relationships among variables (Creswell, 2014).

The population of the study consisted of all first-level students in the Information Technology Department at Mahweet University during the academic year 2025/2026. These students study English as a compulsory course within their academic program. English is relevant to their academic and professional development because it is widely used in IT-related study, technical resources, and professional communication. The sample included 60 first-level IT students, representing the entire target population. Because all members of the target group were included, total population sampling, also known as census sampling, was used. First-level students were selected because they were at the beginning of their university studies.

A structured questionnaire was used as the main instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was newly developed by the researchers based on the objectives of the study, the relevant literature, and previous studies related to motivation and attitudes in English learning. It was not copied from a single previous instrument. Instead, its items were formulated to suit the Yemeni university context. Some item ideas were informed by previous research, but the final wording and organization were prepared by the researchers. Therefore, the questionnaire was considered researcher-developed with literature-based guidance. It consisted of 29 items organized into four main aspects: internal motivation, external motivation, family influence, and attitudes and attitudinal challenges toward English learning. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Higher scores indicated stronger agreement with each item. The scale enabled the researchers to calculate means, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients. These aspects covered students' personal interest, academic and career-related motivation, family support, confidence, anxiety, classroom behavior, and general feelings toward learning English.

The validity of the questionnaire was checked by specialists in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) at the Faculty of Education, Mahweet University, and Sana'a University. The panel consisted of four experts specializing in TEFL and applied linguistics. They reviewed the items in terms of clarity, relevance, suitability, and alignment with the objectives of the study. Based on their comments, necessary modifications were made to improve the quality and accuracy of the instrument. The reliability of the questionnaire was examined using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, and the overall value was 0.78. This value indicates an acceptable level of internal consistency, as Cronbach's Alpha values of approximately 0.70 or above are generally regarded as acceptable in educational and social science research (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

Ethical considerations were observed during the data collection process. The students were informed about the purpose of the study before completing the questionnaire. Their participation was voluntary. They were also informed that they could choose not to participate without any negative consequences. No names or personal identifiers were required in the questionnaire, and the responses were treated confidentially. The collected data were used only for research purposes. The questionnaire was administered to 60 first-level IT students during regular class sessions. Before answering, the students were given clear instructions about the purpose of the questionnaire and the way they should respond to its items. After the questionnaires were collected, the data were coded and entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, version 26 (SPSS 26). Descriptive statistical techniques, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to analyze the students'

responses. In addition to descriptive statistics, the Pearson correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between students' motivational orientations and attitudinal challenges. The level of statistical significance was set at 0.05. This means that relationships were considered statistically significant when the p-value was less than or equal to 0.05.

4. Results

4.1 Motivational Factors Influencing IT Students' Engagement in English Learning

The results are presented through internal motivation, external motivation, and family influence because these aspects correspond to the questionnaire structure and represent different sources of motivation. Internal motivation refers to students' personal interest, enjoyment, achievement, and desire to improve English for themselves. External motivation refers to academic, professional, social, and teacher-related reasons for learning English. Family influence refers to encouragement, expectations, and support provided by parents or family members. Presenting the findings through these three aspects makes it possible to identify which motivational sources are the strongest among IT students at Mahweet University.

4.1.1 Internal Motivation

Table 1: Internal Motivation

No.	Item	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std.	Level of agreement	Rank
1	I enjoy learning English because it gives me personal satisfaction.	2	5	13	31	9	3.67	.951	Agree	4
2	I feel a sense of achievement when I understand something new in English.	0	0	3	26	31	4.47	.596	Strongly agree	1
3	I enjoy practicing English even outside the classroom.	1	10	14	22	13	3.60	1.061	Agree	5
4	I am eager to improve all aspects of my English.	1	0	17	23	19	3.98	.873	Agree	3
5	I like communicating in English with others.	4	15	8	22	11	3.35	1.233	Agree	7
6	I am working towards becoming fluent in English.	0	1	8	26	25	4.25	.751	Agree	2
7	I enjoy English lessons at university.	8	4	14	22	12	3.43	1.267	Agree	6
Axis	Internal motivation as a whole						3.82	.962	Agree	-

Table 1 shows that IT students have a generally positive level of internal motivation toward learning English, with an overall mean of 3.82 and a standard deviation of .962. The students also have internal reasons that encourage them to learn English. However, the general standard deviation indicates some variation in the students' internal experiences. In other words, although the general tendency is positive, the level of enjoyment, confidence, and willingness to use English differs from one student to another.

The highest item in this aspect is the statement "I feel a sense of achievement when I understand something new in English," with a mean of 4.47 and a standard deviation of .596. This is the strongest internal motivational factor in the table. The low standard deviation means that students' answers were highly consistent. More than half of the students strongly agreed, and most of the remaining students agreed. This result is very important for the study because it shows that achievement is a central motivational cause. IT students become more motivated when they feel that they can understand new

English content. In the IT field, this may include understanding a programming term, a software instruction, an error message, a technical tutorial, or a simple academic text. Therefore, teachers should not treat achievement as a general emotional factor only. It should be linked to measurable learning tasks that allow students to experience progress.

The second strongest item is “I am working towards becoming fluent in English,” with a mean of 4.25 and a standard deviation of .751. This result indicates that students do not view English as a temporary subject only. They have a future-oriented goal of becoming better English users. This finding matches the nature of IT studies because English is strongly connected with programming, digital learning, technical documentation, international communication, and job opportunities. The result also supports the idea that students’ internal motivation contains an Ideal L2 Self component; they can imagine themselves as more competent English users in the future. This future image can help sustain effort if the teaching environment gives students practical steps toward improvement.

Item 4, which focuses on students’ eagerness to improve all aspects of English, ranked third with a mean of 3.98. This indicates that students’ internal motivation is not limited to one skill. They are interested in wider improvement, probably including reading, writing, speaking, listening, vocabulary, and grammar. This is a useful finding for course design. An English course for IT students should not focus only on grammar, translation, or exam preparation. It should include integrated skills through tasks such as reading a software manual, summarizing an online tutorial, explaining a technical problem orally, writing short reports, and using English terminology accurately.

The lower-ranking items are also important because they reveal areas where motivation needs support. The item “I like communicating in English with others” received the lowest mean, 3.35, and a relatively high standard deviation of 1.233. Although the level remains within agreement, the result is weaker than the achievement and fluency items. This means that some students like communication in English, while others hesitate or feel less comfortable. This variation may reflect anxiety, lack of speaking practice, weak vocabulary, fear of mistakes, or limited opportunities to use English outside the classroom. Therefore, the result should not be ignored. It shows that students’ internal motivation is stronger in understanding and self-improvement than in actual communicative use. This directly helps the study because it identifies a motivational gap: students want to learn and improve, but communication remains less attractive or less comfortable for part of the sample.

In brief, the internal motivation results show that achievement, fluency, and general improvement are the strongest internal motivators, while communication in English is a weaker area. The practical implication is that teachers should build classroom tasks that provide frequent success experiences and gradually move students from comprehension to communication. If students feel successful when understanding English, this success can be used as a bridge toward speaking, writing, and technical interaction.

4.1.2 External Motivation

Table 2: External Motivation

No.	Item / Focus	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std.	Level	Rank
1	Studying English is important for my future career.	1	1	0	16	42	4.62	.739	Strongly agree	1
2	I study English to communicate effectively in professional and academic contexts.	2	2	15	27	14	3.82	.948	Agree	6
3	I learn English because it improves how others perceive me.	2	9	8	22	19	3.78	1.151	Agree	7

4	I study English to achieve better results in exams.	0	3	5	24	28	4.28	.825	Strongly agree	5
5	I feel motivated to learn English when my teachers support me.	1	1	3	26	29	4.35	.799	Strongly agree	3
6	Learning English is essential for my academic success.	0	2	7	19	32	4.35	.820	Strongly agree	4
7	I want to improve my English to communicate with international professionals.	1	0	4	24	31	4.40	.764	Strongly agree	2
Axis	External motivation as a whole						4.23	.869	Strongly agree	-

Table 2 provides the clearest evidence that external motivation is the strongest motivational aspect among the IT students in this study. The overall mean is 4.23, which falls within the strongly agree level, with a standard deviation of .869. This result means that students' motivation is strongly shaped by practical, academic, and professional benefits. This is fully consistent with the focus of the study because IT students are not learning English in isolation from their specialization. They learn English in a field where technical knowledge, software documentation, programming concepts, online support, and professional communication are often presented in English.

The item "Studying English is important for my future career" ranked first with a mean of 4.62 and a standard deviation of .739. This is the highest mean in the whole results section. The distribution is also very strong: 70% of students strongly agreed, and 26.7% agreed. This near-unanimous agreement shows that career-related motivation is the dominant motivational factor for the participants. The result directly achieves the first objective because it identifies the strongest source of motivation. For IT students, English is not merely a university requirement; it is seen as a tool for employment, professional growth, freelancing, accessing global knowledge, and communicating beyond the local environment.

The second-ranked item is "I want to improve my English to communicate with international professionals," with a mean of 4.40 and a standard deviation of .764. This result deepens the career finding because it shows that students connect English with international professional communication. In the IT field, international communication may include reading online forums, contacting technical support, following global developers, communicating with remote clients, or participating in digital communities. Thus, English is perceived as a bridge between local students and the global IT community. This finding is important for adapting the study analysis because it connects motivation with the field-specific needs of IT students, not merely with general English learning.

Teacher support also appears as a powerful external motivator. The item "I feel motivated to learn English when my teachers support me" obtained a mean of 4.35. This indicates that students' motivation is not only future-oriented but also classroom-dependent. A supportive teacher can strengthen students' willingness to engage, especially when students face anxiety or low confidence. This finding connects objective one with objective two because teacher support can influence both motivation and attitudes. If students receive encouragement, clear explanations, patient correction, and relevant tasks, they may become more confident and more willing to participate.

Academic success is another strong motivator. "Learning English is essential for my academic success" also recorded a mean of 4.35, and "I study English to achieve better results in exams" recorded a mean of 4.28. These results show that students recognize English as important for their university performance. This has two implications. First, students are likely to respond positively when English lessons are linked to their IT courses and academic tasks. Second, if English is taught only as a subject for passing exams, its professional value may be reduced. Therefore, the teaching approach should balance exam preparation with real IT-related language use.

The lowest two items in the external motivation table still fall within agreement, but they are weaker than career and academic items. The item about communicating effectively in professional and academic contexts recorded a mean of 3.82, while the item about improving how others perceive the student recorded a mean of 3.78. These results show that social image and broad professional communication are less powerful than concrete career, academic, and teacher-related motives. This does not weaken the study; rather, it clarifies the hierarchy of external motivation. IT students appear more motivated by practical future benefits than by prestige or social recognition.

In conclusion, Table 2 identifies external motivation as the most influential dimension, especially future career, international professional communication, academic success, exam achievement, and teacher support. The analysis also suggests an adaptation for the study: the results should emphasize instrumental and career-oriented motivation as the dominant orientation among IT students. This adaptation makes the study more coherent because the population is specialized in Information Technology, where English has direct practical value.

4.1.3 Family Influence

Table 3: Family Influence

No.	Item / Focus	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std.	Level	Rank
1	My parents encourage me to learn English.	1	6	6	25	22	4.02	1.017	Agree	3
2	My family believes that learning English is important for my future.	0	5	7	20	28	4.18	.948	Strongly agree	1
3	My parents want me to spend more time studying English.	2	5	11	21	21	3.90	1.085	Agree	5
4	My family supports me when I practice English at home.	0	3	12	23	22	4.07	.880	Agree	2
5	I feel motivated to learn English because of my family's encouragement.	1	1	16	25	17	3.93	.880	Agree	4
Axis	Family influence as a whole						4.02	.962	Agree	-

Table 3 shows that family influence has a positive role in students' motivation to learn English, with an overall mean of 4.02 and a standard deviation of .962. This means that students generally perceive their families as supportive of English learning. Although family influence is not as strong as external career motivation, it remains an important motivational source in the Yemeni university context, where family expectations and support can shape students' academic priorities.

The highest item is "My family believes that learning English is important for my future," with a mean of 4.18. This result shows that family belief in the future value of English is a strong source of motivation. Families may not always provide direct academic help, but their belief that English matters can encourage students to take the subject seriously. This is especially relevant for IT students because families may associate English with employment, social mobility, scholarships, or better professional opportunities.

The second-ranked item is family support during English practice at home, with a mean of 4.07. This is a positive finding because it suggests that many students receive at least some emotional or practical support when they try to practice English outside the university. However, the item does not necessarily mean that students have rich English exposure at home. It only indicates that family members tend to be supportive. For this reason, the analysis should not overclaim that students have sufficient home practice. The safer interpretation is that family support exists, but the classroom may remain the main environment for structured English development.

Parental encouragement ranked third with a mean of 4.02, while the item “I feel motivated to learn English because of my family’s encouragement” ranked fourth with a mean of 3.93. These results show that encouragement is present and meaningful, but it may not be the strongest direct driver of learning behavior. The item “My parents want me to spend more time studying English” ranked lowest, with a mean of 3.90 and the highest standard deviation in the family demension. This indicates that direct pressure to spend more time on English is less consistent than general encouragement and belief in English’s future value. Some students may benefit from pressure, while others may not view it as motivating.

Therefore, the family influence results add an important adaptation to the study: the analysis should distinguish supportive encouragement from controlling pressure. The findings suggest that students respond more positively to family belief and support than to direct pressure. This supports a balanced interpretation of the Ought-to L2 Self. External expectations can motivate students, but they are more effective when expressed as support and belief in future success rather than as obligation alone.

4.2 IT Students’ Attitudes and Attitudinal Challenges toward English Learning

Examining students’ attitudes toward English and the attitudinal challenges that may affect their learning requires careful interpretation because the attitude scale includes both positive items and challenge items. Positive items show confidence, comfort, interest, attention to feedback, and preference for practical learning. Challenge items show anxiety, nervousness, perceived difficulty, and fear of making mistakes. Therefore, the findings are discussed as attitudes and attitudinal challenges rather than as positive attitudes only. This interpretation is necessary because the study title and objectives focus on both supportive attitudes and barriers to English learning.

Table 4: Attitudes and Attitudinal Challenges toward English Learning

No.	Item	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std.	Level	Rank
1	I have a positive attitude toward learning English.	2	5	9	29	15	3.83	1.011	Agree	8
2	I feel comfortable when I speak English.	2	5	11	21	21	3.90	1.085	Agree	6
3	I feel anxious when I have to speak English in front of others.	2	3	14	21	20	3.90	1.037	Agree	6
4	I feel nervous when I don’t understand something said in English.	2	4	7	25	22	4.02	1.033	Agree	2
5	I am confident when answering questions in English class.	1	2	3	22	32	4.37	.863	Strongly Agree	1
6	I find English difficult to learn.	10	12	13	11	14	3.12	1.415	Neutral	10
7	I prefer learning English through practical activities rather than memorization.	2	1	11	26	20	4.02	.948	Agree	2
8	I pay attention to my teacher’s feedback in English class.	2	4	13	28	13	3.77	.981	Agree	9
9	I am motivated to improve my English even when I make mistakes.	3	3	9	29	16	3.87	1.033	Agree	7
10	I avoid speaking English because I am afraid of making mistakes.	6	9	13	11	21	3.53	1.371	Agree	5

Axis	Attitudes and attitudinal challenges as a whole						3.83	1.078	Agree	-
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Table 4 indicates that IT students generally hold positive attitudes toward English learning, with an overall mean of 3.83 and a standard deviation of 1.078. The Level column in the table is reported according to the normal Likert scale categories only, so the overall level is classified as Agree. However, the standard deviation is higher than in some motivation aspects, which means that students' attitudes are not completely uniform. Some students are confident and comfortable, while others experience anxiety, nervousness, difficulty, or fear of making mistakes. Since some items express attitudinal challenges, agreement with these items indicates that such challenges are present among students, although the Level column itself only reports the descriptive Likert interpretation. This mixed pattern is precisely what the second objective requires the study to reveal, because the results do not show a simple positive image, but positive attitudes existing alongside real challenges.

The strongest positive item is "I am confident when answering questions in English class," with a mean of 4.37 and a standard deviation of .863, and its level is Strongly Agree. This is a strong result and suggests that many students feel able to respond in class when they are asked questions. This confidence may be connected with the supportive role of teachers shown in the external motivation table. It may also be connected with students' desire to achieve academic success. However, this result should be interpreted carefully because being confident when answering questions does not necessarily mean that students are fully comfortable in open communication. Classroom answering may be controlled, predictable, and teacher-guided, while free communication may be more demanding.

This careful interpretation is supported by the lower result for communication in the internal motivation table and by the challenge items in the attitude table. For example, the item "I feel anxious when I have to speak English in front of others" recorded a mean of 3.90, and its descriptive level is Agree. Since this is a negative item, agreement with it indicates that anxiety is present among many students. Therefore, it would be incorrect to classify this item as a purely positive attitude simply because its level is Agree. The correct interpretation is that students may have classroom confidence in limited situations, but they still experience speaking anxiety when performance becomes public or when they fear evaluation by others. This is very important for the study because it explains why students may recognize the value of English and still avoid active speaking.

The item "I feel nervous when I do not understand something said in English" recorded a mean of 4.02, and its descriptive level is Agree. This is one of the strongest challenge indicators in the attitude dimension. It shows that comprehension difficulty causes nervousness for students. In an IT context, this may occur when students hear unfamiliar technical terms, English instructions, or explanations that are faster than their listening ability. The finding suggests that listening and comprehension support should be included in English courses for IT students. Teachers should not assume that students' motivation automatically removes anxiety because the data show that motivation and anxiety can exist together.

The item "I prefer learning English through practical activities rather than memorization" also recorded a mean of 4.02, and its level is Agree. This positive result is especially important for adapting the study to the IT field. IT students prefer practical learning, which matches their academic specialization. They are likely to benefit from tasks that simulate real uses of English, such as reading a code comment, explaining a software error, writing a short technical report, describing a device or network problem, presenting a project, or using English in problem-solving. This finding strengthens the study because it provides a direct pedagogical implication. English learning for IT students should therefore be practice-based and field-related rather than memorization-based.

The item "I find English difficult to learn" recorded the lowest mean, 3.12, and its descriptive level is Neutral, but it also had the highest standard deviation, 1.415. This means that students are strongly divided on whether English is difficult. Some students disagreed, some were neutral, and others agreed

or strongly agreed. This variation may be caused by differences in previous school background, vocabulary level, exposure to English, access to digital resources, and personal learning strategies. The result should not be deleted because it is useful for the objective of identifying attitudinal challenges. It shows that difficulty is not universal, but it affects a noticeable group of students, so teachers should diagnose students' levels and provide differentiated support rather than assuming that all students face the same level of difficulty.

The item "I avoid speaking English because I am afraid of making mistakes" recorded a mean of 3.53 and a high standard deviation of 1.371, and its descriptive level is Agree. This result indicates that fear of mistakes is present, although not equally among all students. It explains why some students may be motivated but still inactive in communication. Fear of mistakes can reduce participation, limit speaking practice, and weaken fluency development. This result is also consistent with the internal motivation finding that communication in English received the lowest mean. Together, these findings show that the major attitudinal challenge is not a lack of belief in English's value; rather, it is hesitation in using English communicatively.

Therefore, the examination is achieved, but only when the attitude results are interpreted with this adaptation: positive attitudes and attitudinal challenges must be discussed together. The students generally value English, feel some confidence, and prefer practical activities. At the same time, anxiety, nervousness, fear of mistakes, and perceived difficulty remain obstacles. This balanced interpretation makes the study more acceptable because it avoids exaggerating the positivity of the findings and recognizes the barriers that teachers need to address. The table itself should remain descriptive and should not include interpretive labels such as challenge present or moderate challenge in the Level column. In this way, the statistical presentation remains clean, while the discussion explains the meaning of agreement with both positive and negative items.

4.3 Relationship between Motivation and Attitudes

Table 5: Pearson Correlation between Students' Motivation and Attitudes toward English Learning

Variables	Motivation	Attitudes
Motivation	1	.68**
Attitudes	.68**	1
Significance	$p < .01$	$p < .01$

Note: **The double asterisk indicates that the correlation is statistically significant at the .01 level.

Table 5 presents the Pearson correlation between students' overall motivation and their attitudes toward English learning. The result shows a positive and statistically significant relationship, $r = .68$, $p < .01$. This means that students with higher motivation tend to have more positive attitudes toward English learning. The correlation is strong enough to be meaningful in an educational context, but it should not be interpreted as proof of causation. The result shows association, not that one variable definitely causes the other. This methodological caution is important because the study uses a descriptive quantitative survey design, not an experimental design.

The correlation result directly achieves the third objective. It proves that motivation and attitudes are not separate issues in the students' English learning experience. Instead, they move together. When students feel that English is important for their career, academic success, teacher-supported learning, family expectations, and personal achievement, they are more likely to develop positive attitudes, confidence, and willingness to learn. At the same time, students with weaker motivation may be more vulnerable to anxiety, fear of mistakes, and negative perceptions of difficulty.

The value of $r = .68$ also helps explain the earlier tables. External motivation was the strongest dimension, especially career motivation and international professional communication. These

motivational factors may improve attitudes because they make English meaningful for students. When students understand why English matters for IT, they may become more patient with difficulty and more willing to engage in classroom activities. Similarly, teacher support and family encouragement can reduce emotional barriers and increase positive attitudes. Therefore, the correlation is not an isolated statistic; it connects the motivation tables with the attitude table.

However, the attitude table shows that motivation does not remove all challenges. Even motivated students may feel nervous when they do not understand English or may avoid speaking because they fear making mistakes. This means that improving motivation alone is not enough. The correlation suggests that motivation and attitudes support each other, but the presence of anxiety means that teaching strategies must target both constructs. Teachers should strengthen career-related motivation while also creating a safe classroom environment, using gradual speaking activities, giving constructive feedback, and connecting English practice with IT tasks.

The correlation finding also supports the practical significance of the study. If the university wants to improve IT students' English learning outcomes, it should not focus only on grammar content or exam preparation. It should also strengthen students' motivation and attitudes through field-related materials, practical communication tasks, teacher support, and confidence-building activities. Because motivation and attitudes are significantly related, an improvement in one area may be associated with an improvement in the other.

5. Discussion

The findings show that Information Technology students at Mahweet University are strongly motivated to learn English, with external motivation emerging as the most influential dimension. Future career importance received the highest mean score, while academic success, examination achievement, communication with international professionals, and teacher support also appeared as strong motivational factors. These responses suggest that students do not view English merely as a compulsory university course, but as a practical resource for study, employment, and participation in the wider technological world. This result is consistent with Khawaji (2025), who found that Computer Information Technology students became more motivated when English instruction was connected with realistic professional tasks. It also agrees with Prasetya (2021), who emphasized the importance of English for accessing information, following technical instructions, writing reports, and communicating in IT-related contexts. Within the Yemeni EFL context, this strong professional orientation is understandable because students may have limited opportunities to use English in daily communication, while its value in technology, education, and future employment remains clearly visible. Internal motivation was also evident, particularly in students' sense of achievement when they understood new English content and in their desire to improve their fluency. However, the comparatively lower response to communicating in English with others suggests that students' willingness to improve may be stronger than their comfort with actual language use.

Dörnyei's (2009) L2 Motivational Self System provides a useful framework for interpreting these motivational patterns, although the study did not directly measure its three components through a validated instrument. Students' desire for fluency, professional readiness, and future employment may resemble aspects of the Ideal L2 Self because these responses reflect an imagined future identity as competent English users in an IT context. Academic requirements, employment expectations, and family encouragement may similarly be related to the Ought-to L2 Self, since they represent responsibilities and expectations that students feel they should meet. Teacher support and preference for practical classroom activities are more closely connected with the L2 Learning Experience because they concern students' immediate experience of learning English. Therefore, these links should be treated as theoretical interpretations rather than direct measurements of Dörnyei's constructs. The attitude findings also reveal

that strong motivation does not remove emotional difficulty. Students reported confidence when answering questions in class and showed a clear preference for practical learning, yet many also experienced speaking anxiety, nervousness when they could not understand spoken English, and fear of making mistakes. This mixed pattern is consistent with Özdemir and Seçkin (2025), who reported that foreign-language anxiety may restrict productive language skills, and with Twin (2025), who found that strong practical motivation can coexist with low confidence, fear of error, and limited authentic exposure.

The coexistence of confidence and anxiety becomes more understandable when the nature of classroom communication is considered. Answering a teacher's question is usually structured and predictable, whereas speaking freely in front of others requires more spontaneous language production and may increase the fear of negative evaluation. Hence, students may feel capable in controlled classroom exchanges while remaining hesitant in less prepared situations. Their preference for practical activities over memorization also suggests that they want opportunities to use English meaningfully, even though emotional barriers may limit their participation. Family influence supported students' motivation as well, although it was less prominent than career and academic factors. Students responded most positively to their families' belief that English would be important for their future, while direct pressure to spend more time studying received a slightly lower response. This pattern partly supports Masood et al. (2025), who emphasized the role of family and social background in shaping language-learning motivation, attitudes, and anxiety. It differs from Noori et al. (2025), whose findings indicated that socioeconomic barriers were more influential than parental encouragement. In the present context, family influence appears to operate mainly through encouragement, emotional support, and belief in the future value of English rather than through direct control.

The positive and statistically significant correlation between motivation and attitudes suggests that the two variables are closely connected in students' English learning experience. Students with stronger motivation tend to have more positive attitudes toward English, while weaker motivation may be associated with hesitation, anxiety, or negative perceptions of difficulty. This finding is in line with Masgoret and Gardner (2003), who emphasized the relationship between motivation, attitudes, and language achievement. It also supports Wahidiyati et al. (2025), who found that attitudes play an important role in students' willingness to communicate in English. These studies support the relevance of examining the relationship, but they do not replace the need for correct scoring in the present analysis. Even without relying on the current correlation, the descriptive findings have clear instructional implications. English courses for IT students should include activities such as reading technical instructions, interpreting software messages, explaining network problems, writing short reports, presenting IT projects, and practising professional communication. This recommendation is consistent with Dörnyei's (2019) emphasis on the L2 Learning Experience as an important influence on motivated behavior, particularly when classroom activities are meaningful, supportive, and connected to learners' immediate goals. Gradual task difficulty, vocabulary support, preparation time, and constructive feedback may help students use English with less fear of error and transform their strong professional motivation into more confident participation.

6. Conclusion

This study examined motivational orientations and attitudinal challenges in learning English among Information Technology students at Mahweet University, Yemen. The findings show that students are generally highly motivated to learn English, although some sources of motivation are stronger than others. Career prospects, academic success, communication with international professionals, teacher support, and examination achievement appeared to be the most influential factors. English was therefore viewed not simply as a university requirement, but as a practical tool for study, professional development, and access to IT-related knowledge. Internal motivation was also present, especially when students felt a sense of achievement after understanding new English content or

imagined themselves becoming more fluent. Family encouragement provided additional support, mainly through the belief that English could improve students' future opportunities. In general, the students' motivation appears to be shaped by both personal satisfaction and the academic and professional demands of their specialization.

The students' attitudes toward English were generally positive, but the findings also revealed several challenges. Many participants expressed confidence when answering questions in class, showed a willingness to improve, and preferred practical activities to memorization. At the same time, speaking anxiety, nervousness when comprehension failed, fear of making mistakes, and differences in perceived difficulty remained noticeable. This combination suggests that students may value English and feel motivated to learn it while still lacking confidence in actual communication. A student may understand the importance of English for IT and yet hesitate when speaking in front of others or responding without preparation. In this sense, English represents both an opportunity and a source of pressure. The main concern is therefore not a lack of motivation, but the emotional barriers that may prevent students from turning that motivation into active participation and regular language use.

The study makes an important contribution by focusing on IT students in a Yemeni university context, where English is closely linked to technical reading, software documentation, online tutorials, digital communication, and future employment. These needs suggest that general English instruction may not be sufficient for this group. Courses are likely to be more effective when they include tasks that reflect the situations students may encounter in their studies and future work. Reading technical instructions, interpreting software messages, explaining network problems, writing short reports, and presenting IT projects are relevant examples. Such activities can make the purpose of English clearer while giving students meaningful opportunities to practise the language. Practical content, however, should be supported by constructive feedback, preparation time, vocabulary guidance, and gradual increases in task difficulty. Teachers, curriculum designers, and university administrators can all contribute by providing field-specific materials, supportive learning environments, and more opportunities for students to use English with confidence.

The findings should still be interpreted within the limits of the study. The participants were 60 IT students from one academic level at Mahweet University, so the results cannot be generalized to all IT students in Yemen. Because the study used a descriptive quantitative design, it identified patterns and relationships in students' responses without establishing cause-and-effect relationships. Other factors may also have influenced motivation and attitudes, including previous learning experiences, language proficiency, classroom conditions, access to English resources, and socioeconomic circumstances. These limitations define the context in which the findings should be understood, but they do not reduce the value of the study. Future research could include larger and more diverse samples from different universities and academic levels. Interviews, focus groups, and classroom observations may also provide a deeper understanding of how students experience English learning in IT settings. In short, the study shows that strong professional motivation can exist alongside anxiety and limited communicative confidence, highlighting the need for practical, supportive, and field-specific English instruction in the Yemeni university context.

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