AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE ENGLISH LEARNING MOTIVATION AND STRATEGIES OF EFL STUDENTS AT A CONTINUING EDUCATION CENTER IN THE MEKONG DELTA, VIETNAM

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Abstract:

Numerous studies have highlighted the strong connection between language learning motivation and the use of learning strategies (e.g., Oxford, 1989; Chamot *et al.*, 1999). This study investigates the level of motivation among students at Long My Continuing Education Center in Hau Giang Province, in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam, in learning English, as well as the strategies they employ. Also, it explores the correlation between their motivation and strategy use. Using a descriptive research approach, the study surveyed 70 of 10th-Grade students from the Center. Data were collected through a Motivation questionnaire (adapted from Schmidt *et al.*, 1996) and a Strategy Use questionnaire (adapted from Oxford, 1990). The results indicated that the students' motivation was generally high, with extrinsic motivation significantly surpassing intrinsic motivation, which remained at an average level. Regarding strategy use, students applied learning strategies at an average level. Moreover, a strong correlation was found between their motivation and the strategies they used. Based on these findings, the study offers several practical recommendations aimed at enhancing both students' motivation and strategy use, ultimately improving their English language learning outcomes.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Rationale

In Vietnam, the importance of English education is increasingly emphasized across all levels. English is taught as a foreign language in schools, beginning either in Grade Three or, in some cases, Grade Six. The language is widely used in various sectors such as economics, tourism, telecommunications, and more. As a result, it is clear that English plays a crucial role in Vietnam's educational system, much like in other countries across Asia. It is, therefore, essential for Vietnamese students to acquire a strong command of English in order to meet the demands of contemporary society.

This demand has raised concerns about how to learn English effectively. Numerous studies have been conducted to identify the factors that contribute to successful English learning. Among these, motivation and language learning strategies are considered key variables that distinguish proficient language learners from those who struggle (Ellis, 1985). Recent studies, both internationally and in Vietnam, have explored these topics separately or together (Chang, 2005; Yu, 2006). These studies suggest that motivation and the use of appropriate learning strategies have a significant positive impact on students' language achievements. While there are several studies on motivation and strategy use in Vietnam (Nguyen, 2011; Le, 2011; Lam, 2009), most focus on college or university students, with less attention given to high school students.

At Long My Continuing Education Center (CEC), Hau Giang Province, English is a core subject, but it is not compulsory for the students' final exams. However, students are encouraged to study English in order to obtain proficiency certificates at levels A or B, which can improve their scores on the exit exam and increase their employability in the future. Despite these potential advantages, it is unclear whether they serve as motivating factors for students to learn English. The question of what motivates these students to study English has yet to be fully explored. Furthermore, since English is not mandatory for them, it is uncertain whether students are employing effective learning strategies, and, if so, which strategies and to what extent they use them. These issues have not been adequately addressed in the literature, highlighting the need for further research focused specifically on these students. Key questions remain about the level of motivation students have, the types of learning strategies they use, and how frequently they use them in their English studies.

The study addressed the following research aims and questions:

1.2 Research Aims

This study investigated the level of motivation among students at Long My Continuing Education Center to learn English. Additionally, the research focused on identifying the learning strategies employed by these students in their English studies. A further

objective was to explore the relationship between students' motivation and the strategies they used in learning English.

1.3 Research Questions
To achieve the stated aims, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1) To what extent are students at Long My Continuing Education Center motivated to learn English?
2) To what extent do these students employ learning strategies in their English studies?
3) Is there a correlation between the students' motivation and their use of learning strategies in English?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Motivation
2.1.1 Definition of Motivation
Motivation has various definitions, especially in the context of language learning. Harmer (1991) describes motivation as the "*internal drive*" that compels an individual to act. When we perceive a goal as worthwhile and attractive, we are motivated to achieve it—this is the "*action driven by motivation.*" In essence, motivation is the process triggered by stimuli to reach desired goals, behaviors, or conditions, and it is a continuous process rooted in an individual's desire.

Lightbown and Spada (1999) note that motivation in second language learning is complex and can be understood through two primary factors: the learner's communicative needs and their attitude towards the language community. Parsons *et al.* (2001) define motivation as a crucial element in the learning process. Both learning and motivation are equally important for achieving success: learning enables the acquisition of new knowledge and skills, while motivation drives and encourages individuals to persist in the learning journey.

In his socio-educational model, Gardner (1982) identifies three key components of motivation: effort, desire, and affect. Effort refers to the time and energy a learner invests in studying the language, while desire reflects the learner's goal to achieve proficiency. Affect pertains to the learner's emotional responses to language learning. Ellis (1997) asserts that motivation encompasses attitudes and emotional states that influence the level of effort learners invest in acquiring a second language.

Despite the diverse definitions, motivation is generally regarded as the force that directs and reinforces effort in language learning. In this study, motivation is understood as students' attitudes, interests, and efforts in learning a second language. Motivation plays a vital role in the success or failure of language learners. According to Spolsky (1990), motivated students tend to learn more quickly and efficiently compared to less motivated learners. Students with low motivation often struggle with attention,

discipline, and behavior issues, while highly motivated students engage more actively and remain focused on learning tasks.

2.1.2 Types of Motivation

Harmer (1991) categorizes motivation in second language learning into two types based on students' goals. Short-term goals are those that students aim to achieve in the near future, such as passing an exam or obtaining a good grade. Long-term goals, on the other hand, are more distant and often linked to future career aspirations or the ability to communicate effectively in the target language.

Krashen (1988) further discusses motivation in relation to second language proficiency, distinguishing between integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation refers to the desire to become part of a community that speaks the second language, often driven by an interest in learning the language to engage with its speakers, culture, or society. This type of motivation is emotionally charged and focuses on integration into the target language community (Saville-Troike, 2006). Instrumental motivation is driven by practical benefits, such as career advancement, social status, or the acquisition of technical knowledge, often with the goal of passing exams or gaining professional advantages (Saville-Troike, 2006).

Language learning motivation is also divided into two main categories: *extrinsic and intrinsic motivation*. Extrinsic motivation is based on external rewards or the desire to avoid punishment. It often revolves around tangible outcomes like grades, homework completion, or pleasing teachers (Arnold, 2000). Both integrative and instrumental motivations are included in this category (Harmer, 1991). However, extrinsic motivation may have negative impacts, as learners may focus on external rewards rather than internal interests. Once the external incentives are removed, motivation may decrease.

In contrast, intrinsic motivation comes from within the learner, driven by the enjoyment or value they find in the learning process itself (Arnold, 2000). Learners with intrinsic motivation are more likely to engage in the learning process willingly, without external rewards. According to Lightbown and Spada (1999), intrinsic motivation is shaped by the learner's personal interests and the supportive learning environment provided by teachers.

The distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is further explored in Schmidt *et al.*'s (1996) motivational factors questionnaire, which identifies intrinsic motivation as being driven by inherent interest or pleasure, while extrinsic motivation is focused on achieving an external outcome. This distinction is also highlighted in the self-determination theory of Deci and Ryan (1985), which posits that intrinsic motivation arises from the inherent enjoyment of an activity, while extrinsic motivation is driven by external rewards or consequences.

Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are crucial in understanding language learning motivation (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Brown, 2000). Given their significant role in the learning process, these two types of motivation will be the central focus of this study.

2.2 Language Learning Strategies

2.2.1 Learning Strategies

People are not born with an inherent understanding of everything; rather, they must learn in order to understand. This is especially evident in language learning—while not everyone is naturally proficient in English, some non-native speakers manage to use the language fluently. The same applies to other subjects. During the learning process, some individuals grasp concepts quickly and efficiently, while others struggle. Research has therefore sought to understand why some learners succeed while others face difficulties. Williams and Burden (1997) argue that investigating learning strategies is key to answering these questions.

But what exactly do we mean by "learning strategy"? Wenden (1987) defines learning strategies as the various techniques learners use to make sense of their learning. Williams and Burden (1997) also describe learning strategies as the different resources students draw upon to solve a learning task. This can be understood as a process—essentially, the methods students use to acquire, store, and retrieve information during learning. Oxford (1990) expands on this by defining learning strategies as "*specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations*" (p. 8). These strategies not only facilitate language learning but also apply to other subjects, such as mathematics or chemistry. In other words, when learners engage in a task, they apply certain skills to manage their learning in an efficient and effective way. Just as football players use tactics to win a match, learners use strategies to improve their chances of success.

Over the last two decades, there has been a growing body of research into language learning strategies. Researchers aim to identify which strategies are most effective for learning a language and which ones support specific types of language learning.

2.2.2 Language Learning Strategies

Since the 1970s, research into language learning strategies has increased significantly, as these strategies play a critical role in successful language acquisition. Many studies have explored how learners process new information and the strategies they employ to understand, retain, or recall it in the context of second or foreign language learning. Researchers such as Naiman *et al.* (1978), Rubin (1975), and Stern (1975) found that some learners are more successful than others in acquiring a second or foreign language, even when exposed to the same teaching methods and environments.

Language learning strategies have been defined in various ways. According to Wenden (1987), they can be viewed from three perspectives: as behaviors related to learning and regulating the meaning of a language; as cognitive processes involving learners' strategic knowledge of language learning; and as affective factors, such as motivation and attitude. These three perspectives work together to improve language learning.

O'Malley, Chamot, and their colleagues (Chamot & O'Malley, 1987; O'Malley *et al.*, 1985) focused their research on ESL learners in the United States, categorizing language learning strategies into three main types: metacognitive, cognitive, and social-affective. These strategies include planning, thinking about the learning process, monitoring comprehension and production, and evaluating learning outcomes. Rigney (1978) and Rubin (1987) further describe language learning strategies as actions, steps, or techniques that learners use to facilitate their language learning. Oxford's (1990) definition also incorporates cognitive, emotional, and social aspects, highlighting how these strategies enhance learners' proficiency and self-confidence.

When language learners face tasks like reading or writing, they can apply various strategies to successfully complete these tasks. By understanding these strategies, educators can better support learners in navigating the challenges of language acquisition.

In short, language learning strategies are techniques used by learners to acquire, retain, and apply information, which can also foster autonomous learning (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Nisbet & Shucksmith, 1986). Given the various definitions provided by researchers, the next section will briefly summarize the classification of these strategies.

2.2.3 Types of Language Learning Strategies

The study of language learning strategies can be traced back to the early 1970s, when researchers began investigating the strategies used by successful language learners (Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975; Naiman *et al.*, 1978). These early studies identified various strategies that contributed to the success of ESL/EFL learners. As a result, numerous classifications of language learning strategies have been proposed over time.

Oxford (1990), building on prior research, developed a comprehensive framework that classifies language learning strategies into two main categories: *direct strategies and indirect strategies*. Direct strategies involve the active use of the language itself, and they are further subdivided into three types: memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies. Indirect strategies, on the other hand, do not directly engage the language but support the learning process, and they are divided into metacognitive, affective, and social strategies (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990).

These six broad categories of strategies include memory strategies, which are aimed at remembering and retrieving new information; cognitive strategies, used for understanding and producing the language; compensation strategies, employed to use the language despite gaps in knowledge; metacognitive strategies, which help learners manage and coordinate their learning process; affective strategies, focused on regulating emotions and maintaining motivation; and social strategies, which facilitate learning through interaction with others.

Oxford's framework provides a detailed classification of language learning strategies, which includes 19 secondary strategies and 62 specific strategies. This system serves as the foundation for the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), a widely used tool for assessing language learners' strategy use (Oxford, 1990).

Compared to earlier research, Oxford's (1990) classification is both more comprehensive and more detailed. Subsequent studies (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Phillips, 1991; Green, 1991) applying the SILL have demonstrated that using appropriate language learning strategies positively influences language proficiency.

2.4 Why Use Language Learning Strategies

Having established the concept of learning strategies, it is important to understand why these strategies are effective in the learning process. Through a review of various resources on learning, the rationale for their use becomes clear.

Wittrock (1986) emphasizes that "*good teaching includes teaching students how to learn, how to remember, how to think, and how to motivate themselves*." He argues that helping students develop effective ways to manage the vast amount of information coming from their environment, as well as from their own cognitive processes, is a major educational goal that will continue to grow in importance. In essence, teaching students how to learn is a foundational skill for long-term success.

Strichart & Mangrum (1993) also highlight the necessity of strategic practices in learning. They assert that "*for learning to occur, students must be able to remember newly acquired information so that they can retrieve it and use it whenever necessary. Information that is not remembered holds no value for students in meeting their needs, whether in or outside of school*." Since it is impossible for students to retain all information, it becomes crucial to teach them techniques for recalling the most important information.

In this context, Oxford (1990) notes that educators today must take on the role of teaching-learning strategies. She points out that, beyond traditional content instruction, teachers are now expected to identify students' learning strategies, provide training in those strategies, and help students become more autonomous in their learning process. This shift in the teacher's role presents a challenge but is essential for fostering independent and effective learners.

2.5 The Correlations of Learning Motivation, Strategy Use, and Achievement

Motivation plays a crucial role in students' achievement, a fact supported by numerous studies. Gardner (1985) found a strong correlation between motivation and learners' achievement. In his study, he examined the influence of attitude and motivation on second language acquisition. He focused on a group of students learning French as a second language, assessing their language aptitude, attitudes toward the French-speaking community, their reasons for studying French, and the effort they were willing to invest in learning the language. Additionally, the students' achievements in French were measured. The findings showed a significant relationship between language aptitude and achievement and highlighted that motivational and attitudinal factors were also closely related to students' success in learning French.

In his language learning model, Gardner (1985) posits motivation as an independent variable and achievement in the target language as a dependent variable. He asserts that the more motivated the learners are, the higher their achievements will be. Furthermore, the study reveals that motivation directly influences students' anxiety levels and their overall performance.

Krashen (2002) further supports this, suggesting that learners who are highly motivated, self-confident, and have a positive self-image, while experiencing low levels of anxiety, are more likely to succeed in second language acquisition.

Research has also examined the connection between types of motivation and academic achievement. Intrinsic motivation, in particular, has been shown to be significantly correlated with better performance and higher academic outcomes. Noels *et al.* (1999) demonstrated that intrinsic motivation is a critical predictor of learners' academic success, confirming that intrinsic motivation positively impacts both language learning and performance. Similarly, Deci *et al.* (2004) found that intrinsic motivation strongly influences students' learning and achievement.

Moreover, studies such as those by Harter & Coonel (1984) and Henderlong & Lepper (1997) have confirmed the strong relationship between intrinsic motivation and academic achievement, suggesting that a decline in intrinsic motivation may lead to a decline in academic performance.

However, Noels *et al.* (2001) cautioned that motivation, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, does not always determine a learner's effort or persistence in language learning. Some learners may be driven by rewards or punishment but may cease their efforts when external pressures are removed. In contrast, intrinsically motivated learners tend to be more persistent, which may ultimately lead to greater achievement in language learning.

It is important to note that the relationship between motivation and achievement can vary depending on the context in which the learning process occurs (Csilla, 1999).

2.6 Related Studies

Language learning motivation and strategy use have been the focus of numerous studies. Chamot & Kupper (1989), for instance, conducted a three-year project to investigate the learning strategies used by foreign language students and their teachers. Their longitudinal study revealed that students at higher levels reported using more strategies than those at the beginner level. The study found that cognitive strategies were used most frequently, while social and affective strategies were employed less frequently.

In a study by Chang (2005), the correlation between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and strategy use among Taiwanese college students was explored. The study, which involved 307 English majors, used two questionnaires—one based on Deci *et al.*'s motivational scale and the other on Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (adapted from Oxford, 1990). The results showed that external motivation was the most common type of motivation, and the most frequently used strategy was evaluating and planning strategies. Furthermore, there was a significant correlation between students' motivation and their use of learning strategies.

Yu's study (2006) focused on 133 junior high school students in Taiwan. Using the Motivational Questionnaire (adapted from Schmidt *et al.*, 1996) and Oxford's SILL (adapted from Oxford, 1990), the study found that the students were generally extrinsically motivated to learn English. The students demonstrated a moderate frequency of strategy use, with metacognitive and compensation strategies being the most commonly used. A significant correlation between motivation, strategy use, and academic achievement was also observed.

Several studies on motivation and strategy use have been conducted in the Vietnamese context, particularly in the southern provinces (e.g., Lam, 2009; Le, 2011). One such study, by Nguyen (2011), aimed to investigate the relationship between English learning motivation and strategy use among college students. The study involved 152 non-English major freshmen and utilized three instruments: a questionnaire (adapted from Schmidt *et al.*, 1996), Oxford's SILL (adapted from Oxford, 1990), and interviews. The findings indicated that the students were primarily extrinsically motivated, with metacognitive strategies being the most frequently used and social strategies the least. Additionally, the study found a strong correlation between students' motivation and their strategy use.

3. Methodology

3.1 Design

As previously stated, the aims of the current research were to investigate students' English learning motivation, explore their use of learning strategies, and identify the correlation between motivation and strategy use. In order to achieve these aims, the study employed a descriptive approach and utilized two questionnaires. These questionnaires investigated the motivation for learning English and the strategies the students used in learning the language. Also, the research examined the correlation between students' motivation and their strategy use.

3.2 Participants

The participants of this study were students from Long My Continuing Education Center in Hau Giang Province, located in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam. These participants were from two 10th Grade classes that had been assigned by the Continuing Education Center (CEC) management to the researchers. The total number of participants was 70 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. These students were learning basic English. It should be noted that English is not a compulsory subject in their high school exit exams, and they were encouraged to study English to obtain English proficiency certificates (level A or B). These certificates would provide them with extra marks in the high school exit exam or benefit them in securing future employment opportunities.

The group consisted of 28 female students and 42 male students, aged between 16 and 18. All participants had similar levels of English proficiency, as they had studied

English for four years in secondary school under similar conditions (same textbooks, teachers, and learning environment).

3.3 Instruments

The study used two key instruments: The Questionnaire on Motivation in Learning English (adapted from Schmidt *et al.*, 1996). And the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning, ESL/EFL version 7.0 (referred to as SILL, adapted from Oxford, 1990).

3.3.1 Questionnaire on Motivation in Learning English

The first instrument used in this study was the Motivation Questionnaire, adapted from the study by Schmidt *et al.* (1996). This questionnaire aimed to explore students' types of motivation (i.e., extrinsic vs. intrinsic motivation). The original version of the questionnaire consisted of 47 items. However, to suit the context of the current study, 25 items were selected and modified. The modified 28-item questionnaire was scored on a five-point Likert scale: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Uncertain (3), Agree (4), Strongly Agree (5).

Most of the items were worded positively and scored according to a scale from 1 to 5. However, there were a few reversed items that required a negative point of view. These items were recorded using the reversed scale: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Uncertain (3), Agree (4), Strongly Agree (5) as well. Out of the 28 items, 11 were related to intrinsic motivation, while the remaining items addressed extrinsic motivation.

3.3.2 Strategy Inventory for Language Learning

The second tool employed in this study was the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), ESL/EFL version 7.0, adapted from Oxford (1990) (see Appendix 2 for details). This questionnaire consisted of 50 items, which were slightly modified from the original version to better align with the practical context and to enhance clarity, ensuring more accurate responses. The SILL aimed to assess students' use of language learning strategies and was organized into six categories:
   1) memory strategies,
   2) cognitive strategies,
   3) compensation strategies,
   4) metacognitive strategies,
   5) affective strategies, and
   6) social strategies.

4. Findings

4.1 Students' Motivation in Learning English

To explore students' motivation for learning English, a 25-item questionnaire on motivation was administered to the participants. The collected data were analyzed using

SPSS. A Descriptive Statistics test was conducted to assess students' overall motivation, and the results are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Descriptive statistics of student's learning motivation

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Motivation	70	2.28	4.52	3.4669	.44148
Valid N (listwise)	70				

As shown in Table 4.1, the mean score of the participants on the motivation questionnaire was M = 3.47 (SD = 0.44). This mean score is close to the accepted benchmark of M = 3.5, suggesting a high level of learning motivation. To verify this conclusion, a One-sample t-test was performed, and the results are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: One-Sample t-test of students' motivation and the accepted mean

	Test Value=3.5					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Motivation	-.628	69	.532	-.03314	-.1384	.0721

As shown in Table 4.2, students' motivation level (M = 3.47) was not significantly different from the accepted mean for high motivation (M = 3.5), with a p-value of 0.532 (t = -0.628, df = 69). These results support the conclusion that students' motivation to learn English is at a high level.

Regarding the types of motivation—intrinsic and extrinsic—that students exhibited in learning English, a Descriptive Statistics test was conducted on both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation variables. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Descriptive statistics of students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Intrinsic	70	2.27	3.82	3.1662	.38475
Extrinsic	70	2.21	4.43	3.4531	.45613
Valid N (listwise)	70				

As shown in Table 4.3, the mean score for students' intrinsic motivation was M = 3.17 (SD = 0.38), while the mean score for extrinsic motivation was M = 3.45 (SD = 0.46). To determine whether these mean scores differed significantly from the accepted mean for high motivation (M = 3.5), a One-Sample t-test was performed. The results indicated that intrinsic motivation was significantly different from the accepted mean (p = 0.000), whereas extrinsic motivation did not differ significantly from the accepted mean (p = 0.392) (see Table 4.4). These findings suggest that students were highly extrinsically motivated, while their intrinsic motivation was at an average level.

Table 4.4: One-sample t-test of students'
intrinsic/extrinsic motivation and the accepted mean score

	Test Value=3.5					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Intrinsic	-7.258	69	.000	-.33377	-.4255	-.2420
Extrinsic	-.861	69	.392	-.04694	-.1557	.0618

Table 4.4 displays the results of a One-Sample t-test comparing students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation scores to the accepted mean score of 3.5. For intrinsic motivation, the t-value of -7.258 with a *p*-value of .000 indicates a significant difference, with a mean difference of -0.334, suggesting that students' intrinsic motivation is lower than the accepted mean. In contrast, extrinsic motivation showed a t-value of -0.861 and a *p*-value of .392, which indicates no significant difference from the accepted mean score. The mean difference for extrinsic motivation was -0.047, suggesting it closely aligns with the accepted score.

What's more, a Paired-Samples t-test was conducted to examine the difference between students' types of motivation. The results are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Pair-Sample t-test on students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	intrinsic - extrinsic	-.28683	.35026	.04186	-.37034	-.20331	-6.851	69	.000

Table 4.5 presents the results of a Paired-Samples t-test comparing students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The significant *p*-value of 0.000 indicates a notable difference, with intrinsic motivation being lower than extrinsic.

4.2 Students' use of English learning strategies
The student's use of English learning strategies was assessed using the SILL questionnaire, and the results were subsequently analyzed as follows.

Table 4.6: Descriptive Statistics of students' learning strategy use

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Strategy use	70	2.47	3.65	3.1659	.24767
Valid N (listwise)	70				

As shown in Table 4.6, the mean score for students' use of learning strategies was M = 3.17 (SD = 0.25). This mean score was significantly lower than the threshold for high strategy use (M = 3.5), as confirmed by the results of a One-Sample t-test, which revealed

a significant value of p = 0.000 (t = -11.29, df = 69) (see Table 4.7). These findings indicate that students' use of English learning strategies did not reach a high level but remained at an average level.

Table 4.7: One-Sample t-test of students' strategy use and the accepted mean

	Test Value=3.5					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Strategy use	-11.287	69	.000	-.33411	-.3932	-.2751

To investigate the types of strategies students reported using in their learning, a Descriptive Statistics test was conducted. The results revealed that participants employed various types of learning strategies, with cognitive strategies being the most frequently used (M = 3.31), while social strategies were the least frequently employed (M = 3.01). The other strategy types were also utilized, with the following mean scores: affective strategies (M = 3.27), memory strategies (M = 3.20), metacognitive strategies (M = 3.05), and compensation strategies (M = 3.03) (see Table 4.8).

Table 4.8: Descriptive statistics of students' use of each strategy type

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Memory	70	2.33	3.89	3.2032	.34828
Cognitive	70	2.38	4.23	3.3088	.35925
Compensation	70	1.83	4.00	3.0333	.49685
Metacognitive	70	2.11	4.22	3.0492	.42242
Affective	70	2.00	4.17	3.2667	.41934
Social	70	2.00	4.17	3.0071	.45704
Valid N (listwise)	70				

Table 4.8 presents the Descriptive Statistics of students' use of each strategy type. The table includes data for six strategy types: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social, based on responses from 70 participants. The mean scores ranged from 3.00 to 3.31, with cognitive strategies having the highest mean (M = 3.31) and social strategies the lowest (M = 3.01). Standard deviations ranged from 0.35 to 0.50, indicating moderate variability in strategy use. The minimum and maximum values show a spread of responses, reflecting the diversity in the student's approach to learning strategies.

4.3 The Correlation Between Students' Motivation and Strategy Use
4.3.1 The Correlation Between Students' Overall Motivation and Strategy Use
A Pearson's Correlation test was conducted to examine the relationship between students' motivation and their use of learning strategies. The results revealed a Pearson correlation coefficient of r = 0.824 (p = 0.000), indicating a strong positive relationship between students' overall motivation and their use of strategies. This suggests that as

students' motivation increases, so does their use of learning strategies. In other words, higher motivation is associated with more frequent use of strategies in learning (see Table 4.9).

Table 4.9: Pearson's correlations test of students' motivation and strategy use

		Strategy use	Motivation
Strategy use	Pearson Correlation	1	.824**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	70	70
Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.824**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	70	70
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Table 4.9 presents the results of Pearson's Correlation test between students' motivation and strategy use. The Pearson correlation coefficient between strategy use and motivation was $r = 0.824$, indicating a strong positive relationship. This suggests that higher motivation was strongly associated with more frequent use of learning strategies among students. The significance value of $p = 0.000$ confirmed that the correlation was statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Both variables were assessed with 70 participants, and the significant relationship highlighted that motivation played a crucial role in determining the use of learning strategies.

4.3.2 The Correlation Between Students' Types of Motivation and Strategy Use

Two additional Pearson's Correlation tests were conducted to examine the relationship between students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and their use of learning strategies. The results revealed positive correlations for both types of motivation. Specifically, the correlation for intrinsic motivation was $r = 0.814$ ($p = 0.000$), while for extrinsic motivation, it was $r = 0.793$ ($p = 0.000$). These findings suggest that students with higher levels of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation tend to use learning strategies more frequently.

Table 4.10: Pearson's correlations test between
students' specific types of motivation and strategy use

		Strategy use	Intrinsic
Strategy use	Pearson Correlation	1	.814**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	70	70
Intrinsic	Pearson Correlation	.814**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	70	70
		Strategy use	**Extrinsic**
Strategy use	Pearson Correlation	1	.793**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	70	70
Extrinsic	Pearson Correlation	.793**	1

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	70	70
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Table 4.10 presents the results of Pearson's Correlation tests examining the relationships between students' specific types of motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic) and their use of learning strategies. The correlation between strategy use and intrinsic motivation was r = 0.814 (p = 0.000), indicating a strong positive relationship. Similarly, the correlation between strategy use and extrinsic motivation was r = 0.793 (p = 0.000), also showing a strong positive association. These results suggest that students with higher intrinsic or extrinsic motivation tend to use learning strategies more frequently, with both correlations being statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

5. Discussion

5.1 Students' Motivation in Learning English
The results from the Motivation questionnaire revealed that students at Long My CEC were highly motivated to learn English. The overall mean score was above average, reflecting a strong level of motivation among these EFL learners. Notably, these students showed high extrinsic motivation but only average intrinsic motivation toward learning English. Regarding the first hypothesis, the results confirmed its validity.

This finding aligns with similar studies (Chang, 2005; Yu, 2006; Nguyen, 2011). In the context of Vietnam, specifically in Hau Giang Province, where there are few native English speakers and limited exposure to English-speaking foreigners, it is notable that students at Long My CEC demonstrate such high motivation. Despite the lack of direct contact with native speakers, the students' motivation may stem from their attitudes, beliefs, and expectations, as well as from the broader sociopolitical context. Since Vietnam has strengthened diplomatic relations with various countries, English has become an essential skill, especially for young people. Mastery of English is increasingly seen as an advantage in future opportunities, serving as a strong motivation to learn.

Furthermore, the participants showed a higher level of extrinsic motivation compared to intrinsic motivation, a result consistent with Chang (2005) and Nguyen (2011), who found that students were more motivated by external factors. Many students indicated they were learning English to enhance their job prospects, meet personal goals, or satisfy the expectations of others. The pressure to acquire English for future employment opportunities played a significant role in their motivation. Additionally, students' efforts were often driven by the desire to meet the expectations of their parents or teachers or to maintain a positive self-image. This aligns with Chang's (2005) findings, where students' motivations were largely influenced by external rewards and expectations.

5.2 Students' Use of English Learning Strategies

The results from the SILL questionnaire administered to participants revealed that students employed all types of language learning strategies, though at an average level.

In general, there was little variation in the frequency of strategy use, with all strategies falling into a medium-use category. Cognitive strategies were the most frequently used, followed by affective, memory, metacognitive, compensation, and social strategies. This moderate use of strategies aligns with previous research by Chang (2005), Yu (2006), and Nguyen (2011), which also found medium-level strategy use among EFL learners. These results suggest that students do not frequently apply strategies in learning English as a foreign language. Factors such as the English education system, students' awareness of their learning process, and teachers' methods could influence strategy use (Lai, 2009).

One noteworthy finding of this study is the high use of cognitive strategies, which contrasts with some prior research. It appears that students are using strategies that best suit their learning needs. Memory strategies were also commonly employed, likely due to their perceived effectiveness and convenience. Additionally, students used effective strategies to manage emotions and relieve stress during the learning process, further supporting the findings of Schmidt & Watanabe (2001).

5.3 The Correlation Between Students' Motivation and Learning Strategy Use

The Pearson's Correlation tests revealed a strong relationship between students' motivation and their use of learning strategies in English. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were positively correlated with strategy use.

This finding suggests that more motivated L2 learners tend to use language learning strategies more frequently. Two possible explanations can be proposed. First, motivated learners may be more inclined to invest time and effort in using strategies, as these are effortful behaviors. Second, learners who recognize the effectiveness of strategies and face fewer challenges in employing them might become more motivated to learn the language. As MacIntyre & Noels (1996) suggest, "*high motivation leads to significant use of language learning strategies, and high strategy use probably leads to high motivation as well*" (p. 295).

This result is consistent with studies by Oxford & Nyikos (1989), Schmidt *et al.* (1996), and Schmidt & Watanabe (2001), who argue that learners who value mastering a second language (L2) are more likely to employ various strategies—cognitive, metacognitive, and study skills—to reach that goal.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore students' motivation and their use of learning strategies among 10th Grade students at Long My CEC in Hau Giang Province, in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam. A total of 70 students participated in the study. The participants

completed two questionnaires: one focused on language learning motivation, adapted from Schmidt *et al.* (1996), and the other on learning strategy use, adapted from Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). The collected data were analyzed and presented in tables, with the main findings summarized as follows:

Firstly, the 10th Grade students at Long My CEC exhibited high extrinsic motivation but average intrinsic motivation toward learning English. This pattern aligns with previous research, which consistently shows that students often report stronger extrinsic motivation than intrinsic motivation. Secondly, the students reported using a range of strategies at a moderate level, with cognitive strategies being the most frequently employed. In contrast, social strategies were used the least by participants. Finally, significant correlations were found between the students' motivation types and their use of learning strategies. The results indicated that students who were more motivated tended to use learning strategies more frequently compared to their less motivated peers.

Based on these findings, several implications were drawn for future language learning and teaching. It is recommended that teachers design activities that foster students' motivation and provide more opportunities for students to be exposed to strategy instruction and practice.

6.2 Pedagogical Implications

The major findings of this study offer several important implications for English language teaching and learning.

First, EFL teachers should focus on strengthening students' extrinsic motivation, as the results indicated that students at Long My CEC were primarily extrinsically motivated. To achieve this, the teachers can engage students by using varied teaching methods and setting reasonable yet slightly challenging goals that will foster greater external motivation and active participation.

In addition, the study showed a strong positive relationship between students' intrinsic motivation and their use of learning strategies. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to find ways to enhance students' intrinsic motivation. One approach is to design teaching activities that spark students' interest, allowing them to take ownership of their learning. By fostering positive attitudes toward their English learning, teachers can help students develop intrinsic motivation.

Furthermore, it is crucial for students to understand the importance of language learning strategies in their educational journey. Teachers should first assess students' strategy use by identifying the strategies they already employ, using this information to guide instruction. Communicating the benefits of these strategies early on is key— students need to understand how employing effective strategies can enhance their learning outcomes. Raising students' awareness about strategies helps them realize their potential value, making them more likely to incorporate them into their language learning.

As Oxford (1989) suggests, it is important to teach learners both why and how to use strategies, ensuring that they are applied in the appropriate contexts. Since students reported using strategies at moderate levels, it may be due to insufficient knowledge of available strategies. Teachers should introduce the concept of language learning strategies, familiarize students with them, and provide opportunities for practice. This will enable students to integrate these strategies into their learning process.

In conclusion, if teachers can enhance both intrinsic motivation and strategic use among learners, it is likely that students' language learning will become more effective, consistent, and sustainable.

6.3 Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research

While this study successfully achieved its objectives, there are several limitations that can guide future research directions.

First and foremost, the sample size of the study was limited to 70 students from the 10th Grade, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. To improve the applicability of the results, future studies should consider expanding the sample size to include students from different grades or educational settings. Moreover, the research primarily relied on questionnaires and interviews to assess students' motivation and learning strategy use. While these methods provide valuable insights, they may not capture other influencing factors such as learners' age, gender, learning background, or personal characteristics.

Future studies could incorporate a more diverse set of data collection tools, such as observations or longitudinal studies, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how these individual factors impact motivation and strategy use.

Another limitation of the study is its focus on students of similar proficiency levels. Given that motivation and the use of strategies can vary significantly across different levels of language proficiency, future research should explore these aspects among learners of various proficiency levels. This would help uncover whether motivation and strategy use differ between beginners, intermediate learners, and advanced students, providing a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between these variables.

In summary, expanding the sample size, incorporating additional factors such as learners' demographic details, and examining different proficiency levels would strengthen future research and provide more generalized and detailed findings on the interplay between motivation and language learning strategies.

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Conflict of Interest Statement
The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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