What Motivates Saudi EFL Learners To Learn English?

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This study explores L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS). It further provides insights into the source of the self-guides that learners imagine, as well as how these self-guides develop over time. 21 male EFL learners at a Saudi University were interviewed for this investigation. The outcomes indicate that career-related goals and the desire to communicate with native speakers were reported by Saudi EFL learners as prominent reasons for learning English. The results confirmed that the imagination played a significant role in L2 learning. It also contributes to shaping the future identities of learners. The source of the imaginations reported by the EFL learners in the current study was related to having role models whether in the EFL learners' lives, e.g. competent English-speaking teachers or family members, or distant admired figures and characters in books and movies whom the learners admire and wish to be like in the future. **Keywords:** L2 Motivational Self System, Motivation, Saudi EFL, possible selves, ought-to selves.

Introduction:

The theory of L2MSS by Dörnyei emerged from many longitudinal studies including (Dörnyei, Csizér, & Nemeth, 2006). It included getting data related to L2 motivation. The data was collected from a large number of Hungarian school students that reached 13000 students. The findings showed a focus on the dynamic processes of motivation and identity evolution. This provoked Dörnyei to find a new interpretation for the integrative variable's role concerning learners' motivation (MacIntyre, MacKinnon, & Clément, 2009). Dörnyei postulated integrative motivation as an integral part of what Dörnyei later called the "ideal self". This new theory of self was laid down by another theory known as "possible selves" which was developed by Marcus and Nurius (1986). In his new theory, Dörnyei (2009) proposes the possibility of two selves which he refers to as the 'ideal L2self' and the 'ought-to L2 self.'

The previously conducted research on L2MSS mainly focused on testing the L2MSS components' capacity to predict the intended efforts of the L2 learners. These were assumed to predict the L2 learners' achievement (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). Other research efforts in this regard attempted to reveal the relationship between visual learning style and L2MSS (Al-Sheri, 2009) as well as the relationship that links imagery with what is termed as possible selves (Dörnyei& Chan, 2013). Another list of research investigated the role of gender differences in forming future selves. Such research reflected a significant role played by gender differences in developing the possible selves (Henry, 2010a). On the other hand, the current study aims to investigate the self-guides that motivate Saudi university students to study English and provides insights into the source of these proposed self-guides and the way they develop over time.

Literature Review:

The existing literature on learners' motivation has not neglected the area of English as a foreign language (EFL). For example, Purmama et al. (2019) investigated the factors that increase English learners' motivation. Participants were eighth-grade students at MTs Mthla'ul Anwar SUkaguna. They used a descriptive qualitative method and employed a questionnaire on students' motivation.

The outcomes of the study showed that the teacher's creativity in using media in teaching and learning activities improved the students' motivation level.

Nguyen (2019) investigated the type and level of motivation while learning English. This study employed a descriptive approach using tools borrowed from Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery, with 371 participants who were (1st and 2nd) year students from Vietnam National University. The outcome of the study indicated that the school year and parental English proficiency were significantly influencing factors in the participants' motivation in English language learning. Furthermore, Liu and Chiang (2019) explored the impact of family background and teacher-student interaction on motivating student learning. The results revealed that both factors play crucial roles in shaping students' motivation.

However, the motivation of learners for EFL may be rooted in their aspiration to achieve proficiency in the target language. To explore this, Hedge (2000) conducted a study involving 20 EFL Japanese students, employing the descriptive approach. The results revealed that participants studied English primarily for communication, job opportunities, accessing international information, and understanding Western cultures. The relationship between language proficiency and motivation was also investigated by Siriluck and Sirithip (2004). Using the descriptive approach, the results showed that high English proficiency students exhibit greater motivation compared to those with low English proficiency. Moreover, the motivation of EFL learners can be intrinsic as shown in Hussain et al. (2020) study. They posited that some learners are inherently motivated. This study, encompassing both EFL and ESL (English as a second language) learners, revealed that participants from both groups were intrinsically motivated to learn English.

Several studies underscored the significance of technology as a tool to enhance learners' motivation. In this regard, Honarzard and Rassaei (2019) explored the possible connection between technology-based language learning activities and autonomy, motivation, and self-efficacy among EFL Iranian learners. The results confirm the hypothesis that technology-based language learning activities positively increased the motivation levels of EFL learners in general and Iranians in particular.

Questions:
This research is an endeavor to answer the next essential question:
- What are the motivations of Saudi EFL learners for learning English?

The following sub-questions emerge:
1.   Do Saudi EFL learners' religious background have an influence on their decision to study English?
2.   Do Saudi EFL learners' self-interest have an influence on their decision to study English?
3.   Do Saudi EFL learners' family members have an influence on their decision to study English?
4.   Do Saudi EFL learners' teachers have an influence on their decision to study English?
5.   Do Saudi EFL learners' friends have an influence on their decision to study English?

Objectives:
This research is an endeavor to achieve the following main objective:
- To explore of Saudi EFL learners' motivation for learning English.

The following sub-questions emerge:
1. To know the extent to which the religious background of Saudi EFL learners influence their decision to study English.
2. To know the extent to which the self-interest of Saudi EFL learners influence their decision to study English.
3. To know the extent to which the family members of Saudi EFL learners influence their decision to study English.
4. To know the extent to which the teachers of Saudi EFL learners influence their decision to study English.
5. To know the extent to which the friends of Saudi EFL learners influence their decision to study English.

Methodology:
The researcher employed a descriptive-analytical approach to examine and interpret the study's data. This is because it is the most appropriate method for conducting this type of research. This method does not only describe the phenomenon but also analyses interprets, and discusses the results. The research was divided into a theoretical framework that included several previous studies on the topic and a practical part which included an interpretation of the collected data. to achieve the study's objectives, the researcher conducted interviews with the study sample which included 21 Saudi EFL students. The sample was randomly selected from EFL learners at Saudi universities. It covered both genders whose ages ranged between 20-25 years. Each participant was interviewed for 30 minutes. Their responses were recorded after asking their permission to do so. The next step was to analyze the responses. The outcomes of the research were included in the conclusion part.

Participants

The participants in this investigation are 21 male EFL students at a Saudi university. Due to cultural restrictions, the participants were male students. That is, Saudi universities pay attention to gender differences and they have special campuses for female students. This made it impossible for the male researchers to directly access the female campus. The researchers visited several EFL classes and students were given information about the interviews and were encouraged to participate. A number of 21 students were ready to take part in the study. Later, two groups were formed as per the level of speaking proficiency, namely, 9 upper-proficiency participants and 12 lower-proficiency participants. Moreover, the interviewers adopted descriptors provided by IELTS so as to evaluate the level of speaking proficiency of each interviewer. The participants were interviewed one at a time for 30 minutes each. The questions were related to different L2MSS components. The researcher started by introducing the focus of the research, the nature of the interview, and the procedure, as well as asking the participants' permission to record their voices to be recorded as quotes in the research.

Instrument

This study relied on an interview for the collection of data. The interview's questions were dependent on Ryan's (2008) which investigated the notion of the ideal self. Ryan's investigation was consistent with Dörnyei et al. (2006). However, the current study is not concerned with comparing the ideas of Gardner and Dörnyei. Rather, it only benefits from the questions related to the L2MSS theory.

Some additional questions were added based on Dörnyei's (2009) notion of self-guides. Dörnyei stated some conditions the most important of which is that the learners must have good, comprehensive, and clear images of their future selves. Thus, additional questions regarding the formation of the learners' ideal selves were incorporated into the interview portion of this study.

Analysis and Results
1. The Learners' Goals, Orientations, and Self-guides
1.1 Career vs. Communication

It is noted that all the participants realize the importance of English and its role in today's world. Most of the participants viewed the language of English as the language of the modern world as it is used by millions worldwide. Many others believe that there is a connection between learning English and getting a job in the future.

Oyserman et al. (2006) believed that the idealized self and the ought-to self are not opposite. In a sense, learners who have the two types of selves can ultimately generate a combined effect. Also, the study by Yashima (2009, p. 146) stated that "It is not realistic to talk about integrativeness as an attitude toward learning English without being influenced by its utilitarian value."

The interview results showed that 50% of the participants considered communication and career as equally important connected goals. This finding aligns with MacIntyre et al. (2009a, pp. 58-59) argument about the interconnection between interactive and utilitarian aspects of L2 learning in their study. Additionally, Oyserman and James (2011, p. 124) suggested that young adults often envision possible selves revolving around career or family-related aspirations, such as marriage and parenthood, etc....

This indicates that the samples of study have more dynamic goals than static EL goals, i.e., future selves. This appeared to agree with Giddens (2000) related to the idea that learners may have multiple identities. Giddens strongly argued that adults have to create and then recreate their identities (Giddens, 2000, p. 65). This point is also similar to what was suggested by Marcia (1980) who argued that identity formation has four stages. She believed that individuals ultimately experience dissimilar identities without being fully committed to deciding the most rational, appropriate, and improved identity to assume. In this respect, Kim (2009) found that a learner had an inconsistency and indecisiveness regarding his future career. Contrastingly, another learner was characterized by having a clear goal that represented a source of motivation to learn English. Furthermore, their dream to be able to communicate in English was another source of motivation. The participants in the current study expressed that being able to communicate with L2 speakers is not only a dream but an ultimate goal that they strive to achieve. The last group in the list of participants made it clear that they decided to learn English not because it was their goal but a necessity to get a job. In this respect, three participants out of the total sample had an obvious ought-to self-tendency. That is, they decided to learn English as a part of their strong career focus. However, they lacked a clear vision of their plans, means, and goals.

It is generally assumed within the L2MSS framework that those who enjoy high levels of ideal self-tendencies ultimately have clear and well-planned future dreams. In this regard, Dörnyei (2009, p. 27) emphasizes that "the motivational dimension's equation has traditionally been viewed as 'integrative motivation' with the Ideal L2 Self." Thus, it is argued that those who have high levels of ideal selves would ultimately emphasize communication in English. Lamb (2012, p. 1000) emphasized that "The cosmopolitanism, associated with English, merges integrative and instrumental motives, thus making it difficult to maintain the traditional distinction between these two constructs."

It is believed that humans are social beings. Truly, this point compels humans to abide by social stereotypes and norms social norms (Dörnyei, 2009). In this respect, Noels (2009) theorized that what are called ought-to selves can ultimately be absorbed into ideal selves. Another view was proposed by Kim (2009b, p. 63) who emphasized that "L2 learners' desired second language self can become the ideal second language self when learners personalize and internalize the external motivations for learning English as a second language.

While being interviewed, many participants expressed that they reached the point of being worried about communicating in English, and their focus was on writing and reading skills. In this regard, Oyserman and James rightly viewed 'difficulty and certainty's interpretation' as a necessary condition required to impact behavior as per the ideas included in the theory of identity-based motivation. Besides, they strongly emphasize that "a person's experience of difficulty and ease in thinking about a future self may be interpreted as implying no action is needed at the moment" (Oyserman& James, 2011, p. 118).

1.2 Religious and Societal Obligations

Based on the commonly accepted view that "language, faith, and identity are often closely intertwined" (Lepp-Kaethler & Dörnyei, 2013, p. 173) and the argument that religion significantly and effectively contributes to a person's possible and ideal future selves (Maehr, 2005), religion was believed to effectively play a significant role in shaping the members' realization about learning English in KSA, as Islam is the center of every individual's life. Shafi (1983, p. 35) states that English "plays a significant role in achieving the ultimate goal of Muslim education". (Al-Haq & Smadi, 1996, p. 307).

Therefore, it was believed that educating learners religiously in the Saudi situation would ultimately place a strong obligation on the learners to utilize English to promote Islam. In this context, Saudi Arabia follows a very religious bringing-up system in its institutions. It was assumed that this type of religious upbringing would instill most of these teachings in the minds and hearts of learners, gradually integrating them into their identities and sense of self.

Some participants strongly emphasized the significance of learning foreign languages mainly to spread Islam. They made it clear that Islam encourages individuals to learn languages to be able to communicate with non-Arabic speakers. However, the majority of the participants did not speak much English for religious purposes. In a sense, they strongly emphasized that LE is necessary for everyone as it is a medium of global communication.

Many participants emphasized the importance of English to Saudis not only for religious purposes but also for cultural reasons. They feel the importance of showing the Saudi culture to others through English. Another reason is represented in their desire to cope with scientific advancement.

...English now is the world's language... It is a form of communication. Therefore, everybody should study two things: computers and English.

Another one added:

... it's a must to speak English because it[has] become an international dominant, and global language.

Thus, it is rightly judged that the religious backgrounds of the participants did not affect their views on learning English. Rather, they believed in the importance of English as a global necessity. This view supports Yashima (2002, 2009) who stressed the idea of international posture as "interest in foreign, willingness to go overseas to stay or work, readiness to interact with intercultural partners, and . . . openness or a non-ethnocentric attitude toward different cultures" Yashima, (2002, p. 57).

In this respect, Lamb (2004, p. 16) emphasized that:

...English is significant to this 'world citizen' identity. This is because it is a means of becoming one by granting access to, social, financial, and cultural resources.

This understanding of English correspondingly agrees with Crystal's (2003) view on how English has been perceived as the only international language. In this respect, Canagarajah (1999) assumes that in diverse parts of the world, English is the only lingua franca. (Canagarajah, 1999; Kim, 2009). Even though some participants believed in the importance of English as an Islamic necessity, the majority of the study sample members suggested additional reasons. Most of them viewed English as essential to develop scientifically. Other participants regarded this language as a universal communication means to people with diverse backgrounds despite of their religion or race.

It is imperative to note that the Saudi perception of the international stance does not completely align with the ideas of Yashima, Dörnyei, and their colleagues. Despite the Saudi EFL learners realizing the global importance of English, they are still predominantly associated with specific language communities, namely the British and American people rather than a mere means of communication between international citizens.

1.3 Obligations vs. Encouragement

After knowing the participants' perceptions with regard to the importance of English, there was a need to investigate their reasons and motives behind learning English whether such motives are internal or external. In this respect, Hofstede (1980) classified the world's cultures and identified Saudi Arabia as a collectivist society. People living in collectivist societies greatly value family relations, collaboration, interdependence, and other types of group membership. However, such people experience suffer from individualism (Jones & Alony, 2007). In this regard, previous studies proved that people who come from Asian and Middle Eastern cultures are truly "more vulnerable to the impact of significant others (Lamb, 2012, p, 1002).

Thus, it was previously anticipated that most of the participants would be highly influenced by their families in their decision to learn English. However, this anticipation was untrue to a great extent in the sense

that just a minor number of them expressed a direct effect from others in this regard. This point is similar to Martin's (2007, p. 86) idea that living in a collectivist community "does not indicate that selfhood is ultimately viewed as a communal achievement rather than a predominately individual one". In this study, only two participants, whose proficiency level is low, expressed that their reason for studying English is part of their parents' suggestion.

The effect of others on one's decision to learn English is also noticed beyond the family frame. In this respect, a few participants talked about the influence of their important others on their decision to learn English. They also made it clear that their dream to learn English was fueled by their friends and family members who speak English, and they wanted to be like them.

…My older brother is a lecturer at Tabook University and the other one is an English teacher [in a public school] and so are my sisters. They all, at least, have a BA in English.
Another one mentioned:
My father studied English at an American university, which is why he supports my decision to study the same subject.

A third one commented:
The majority of my friends are enrolled in the English department, and I have 3 brothers who speak English…

But it is urging to comment that the participants majority felt no outside pressure to learn English. That is, they were driven by their strong desire to learn English. Some of them expressed their fascination with English as the only reason behind their choice to study it. They added that their strong interest in reading English magazines and books as well as their love for English music and movies shaped their motivation to study English.
…what ultimately motivated me to study EL is in fact my fascination with the Western culture in general.
Another one mentioned:
I have felt compelled to learn English not from society but due to its prevalence in various aspects of modern life, such as movies, the Internet, forums, and chat rooms.
In this context, further participants felt that they were greatly affected by their teachers who greatly provoked them to LE:
I chose to learn English during my final year of high school due to the good English teacher who was instructing us at that time.
Another one remarked:
… but one of my teachers, he's dead now, was the first person who planted the love of English teaching into me and I just wanted to be a teacher since that time or something related to English.

Despite the fact that many students made it clear that they felt no family or social compression to LE, all the participants confessed that they were greatly encouraged by their families. This encouragement was represented either in the form of advice or actual support like paying the fees, buying them English learning materials, and in some instances offering to pay for these members to travel to an English-speaking country to enhance their communication skills. This type of support can rightly be classified as indirect pressure. It can be explicated by following Gardner's socio-educational approach that emphasizes the significant role of the milieu in shaping and influencing the learners' motives. Gardner believed that the milieu does not only denote the community where the language is learned, but to the smaller community which is represented in the learners' family (Gardner, Masgoret, & Tremblay, 1999, p. 422).
This study's earlier belief was that the Saudi community's collectivist nature would naturally provoke an ought-to self rather than an ideal self-orientation among the applicants. It was believed that the participants would be socially obliged to learn English. This point applied to a few cases as some participants felt proud that they followed their families' advice to study English. Nevertheless, the participants' majority opposed the idea of socio-familial influence in this regard. They revealed a sense of internal motivation represented in their strong desire to English communicate, consider pursuing a career that involves utilizing English proficiency, or opting to study another major in an English-speaking country. Moreover, some participants highlighted their fascination with other people's ability to use English. None of them felt any sort of direct pressure from others to learn English. In fact, they all acknowledged the unlimited encouragement they received from their family and society.

2. Future Selves and Imagination
Dörnyei (2009) strongly emphasized the significant role played by imagination in his theory. In this respect, Markus and Ruvolo (1989) suggested that "viewing one's actions through the formation of possible selves may thus directly help in the translation of goals into intentions and instrumental actions" (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 16). Furthermore, Boyatzis and Akrivou (2006, p. 632) argued that "the image of a desired future makes the ideal self's content". The participants' majority in this study confessed that they always imagined themselves using English in future situations even though a few of them denied experiencing such imagination. In this respect, only two participants reported not experiencing such kinds of thoughts.

The other participants said that they frequently imagined themselves speaking English in some situations. Most of them clarified that such situations involve talking with native speakers. They further commented that the everyday language is used in such situations as they imagined themselves talking about daily needs and activities. One of them said:

Of course, I dream of traveling abroad and getting to know other cultures. So, I imagine talking with British people in English.

Another one commented:

In fact, I have these imaginations. They come to me naturally. I try to sleep early and sometimes I can't. So, you just close your eyes and start dreaming about stuff that you cannot control, and then you find yourself having dreams in English and you don't even know how it's possible. . .

A third one said:

Yes, definitely I have an imagination. This may be due to the fact that I watch many English movies...

This point is very close to other studies' outcomes. A good example is Ushioda's (2001) findings, according to which the participants had imaginations of visiting France and expressed their dreams of living with French people and talking with them. This study also agrees with previous research in terms of the participants' view of this language as a worldwide language. Therefore, they were not only motivated to LE for its global significance (e.g. Lamb, 2004; Yashima, 2000), but also helped in building clear future images of these learners in their minds (Csizér & Kormos, 2009). Lamb (2004, p. 3) comments:

According to the learners, English may not be associated with particular geographical or cultural communities but with a spreading international culture incorporating (inter alia) business, technological innovation, etc.

Interestingly, it was noted that unlike the claims of Dörnyei (2005) and Yashima (2002) that view globalization as a cause of an 'international posture', the respondents' majority in this study always linked the language with either Britain or the USA. Truly, the learners' majority imagined their future as taking place in the USA or Britain. This clearly reflects that in spite of the fact that Saudi people lack direct exposure to English spoken by natural speakers, the group of TL remains salient to L2 Saudi English learners. Besides, Saudi learners still view English as a phenomenon that is linked to specific people and cultures (Alrahaili, 2014).

Many participants expressed their willingness to go abroad for education. They confessed that they never stop thinking and imagining the type and style of life abroad. Besides, they never stop imagining the situations they will find themselves in as well as the conversations that they will take place:

Yes, I do imagine myself using English just like native speakers. I always see myself talking to English fluent speakers. . .

Other participants expressed their possession of a clear image regarding what their future job will be like. In this respect, one of them expressed his dream to be an interpreter and work in the UN. Furthermore, he talked about the way he views himself doing the imagined job and translating the speeches of world leaders. Another participant expressed having imagination related to an office job in a big firm that requires English:

I definitely see myself working abroad. So, I'll be using English with my managers and colleagues during my time there.

In this context, Boyatzis and Akrivou (2006) argued that humans, since antiquity, have ultimately been following their imagination as well as their ability to imagine their desired future selves. People of different jobs and professions like poets, composers, artists, and athletes have ultimately been inspired, stayed inspired, and inspired others. In short, even though a few members denied having any imaginary situations or conditions where they would use English with fluent speakers, most of them expressed that they always imagined themselves speaking English in imaginary situations.

Source of Imaginations

Dörnyei strongly emphasized that the imagined selves can be associated with the influence of role models on L2 learners. Alternatively, the learners can ultimately develop certain images related to their future selves as per the way they are viewed by their parents (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 33).

It is noted that all the participants rejected the idea that the imaginary situations they see themselves in are ultimately socially imposed obligations. In a sense, they emphasized that these situations are internally fueled. Nearly half the sample (n= 10) expressed that the origin of the imagined situations is strongly linked to role models they admired. Eight participants out of the total sample were from the lower-proficiency group. They made it clear that people in their immediate environments represent their role models. These role models are either members of their family or teachers of English. Most participants were interested in pursuing a career in teaching English. Moreover, they emphasized that they imagined furthering their education in an English-speaking country.

One person expressed:

I aspire to become a university lecturer like Dr. X, whom they admire for being proficient in English and teaching.

Thus, the data collected on this group helps in enhancing our consideration of the significant role played by English teachers in forming and shaping the learners' future selves. Obviously, this is consistent with another finding presented by Lyons (2009, p. 266) which implied that "the learner's attitudes toward integration would be most likely related to this group – even though its members are not native speakers".

Besides, Yashima (2009) proposed that since becoming a native-like fluent speaker was regarded as difficult to achieve by the majority of L2 learners, many of them find it easier to picture their teachers as their role models. This point supports Dörnyei (2009, p. 19) who discusses the importance of setting 'plausible' goals and expected ends as a significant feature that can influence the L2 learners' ideal and ought-to selves, either positively or negatively. That is, the L2 learners always attempt to decrease the gap between their ability to use L2 and the proficiency of their teachers who are non-native speakers of L2.

Another group of these low-proficiency members viewed other members of the family as their role models for learning English. The role models according to these participants were family members whose good English enabled them to get good jobs in big oil companies in KSA, for instance. This is evident in the speech of one participant:

Two of my brothers, some cousins, and a neighbor are proficient in English and work at ARAMCO and SABIC. I aspire to be like them.

On the contrary, individuals with advanced proficiency levels indicated that their role models were not from their social immediate circles. Instead, they expressed admiration for renowned figures whom they had never personally encountered. For instance, one participant cited the late Prince Saud Al Faisal who is Saudi minister of foreign affairs, as a significant source of inspiration. He admired the prince's eloquence in other languages and expressed his aspiration to speak English as fluently as the prince does in the future. Another participant shared that he has always wanted to be like the well-known rapper Eminem and displayed an interest in music and rapping. He writes poetry and performs it for his pals since he often imagines himself as a well-known rapper like Eminem.

The second significant source in this context is closely linked to watching movies and new media platforms such as YouTube. This aligns with the findings of Arnett (2002) and Schlegel (2001), who highlighted that the younger generation are highly dedicated, informed, and creative users of various new media formats. One participant made it obvious that movies and English media sources are important motivators for them to LE. Several participants cited actors such as Eddie Murphy, Bruce Willis, Jackson, Samuel L., and Tom Cruise as their role models, along with other Hollywood stars.

I can say that Eddie Murphy and Bruce Willis were my teachers.

Another participant added:

Even sometimes when I face a certain situation in my life, I think about it and start talking to myself in English. I don't know why. I don't have control over this. It may be because I watch so many movies. I don't know.

In addition to having role models, the participants read novels and short stories, recreating and reliving the lives of the fictional characters. In this respect, one participant made it obvious that he has always been fascinated with the fictional character of Sherlock Holmes "Holmes is my inspiration. It's hard to become a fictional character, but it's not hard to become the creator of a fictional character as remarkable as the most sharp-witted detective of all time, Sherlock Holmes".

It may be more beneficial to engage with English-language media indirectly than direct contact with native speakers, leading to increased motivation and positive attitudes toward learning the language. (Csizér & Kormos (2008, p. 179)). Significantly, the outcome clearly shows that a significant number of participants imagined themselves in situations inspired by role models they greatly admired.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study demonstrated that two of the most effective reasons for Saudi learners to acquire English are communication skills and employment opportunities. Furthermore, they had a significant impact on how these students would develop into adults. Prior studies have observed that communication and employment-related objectives can coexist. (Kim, 2009). In addition, the impact of socio-familial and religious elements was also investigated in relation to the self-guides of the participants. Contrary to what was first claimed, neither Saudi Arabia's collectivist culture nor religious background had a significant impact on the participants' ideal or ought-to selves, even though some participants did say that these factors had an impact on their desire to learn English.

The majority of participants demonstrated an awareness of English's significance as a lingua franca for people irrespective of their religious or ethnic background. However, it is noteworthy that the Saudi learners' perspective on English as a unifying language for individuals from diverse linguistic backgrounds did not entirely align with Yashima's (2002, 2009) characterization of the international posture concept. Saudis typically associate English with major English-speaking countries such as America, Britain, and Australia, along with the residents of those countries. An unexpected discovery was that most participants denied their families, including their parents, directly influencing their decision to learn English. However, they did acknowledge their families' important role in motivating and supporting their English learning.

The findings also provided some insight into the characteristics of the individuals' envisioned future selves and the process by which these fantasies grow within their minds.

The majority of individuals admitted to having fantasies about their future selves. Some participants' fantasies were connected to their future ideal jobs, even though the majority of participants indicated utilizing English for communication in these made-up scenarios. The results of this study further support Dörnyei's (2009) theory regarding the critical role that role models and the opinions of important others play in helping students develop into their future selves.

Nearly half of the members linked their desired future selves to role models within their social of the immediate environment, primarily their competent teachers of English and competent English-speaking family members, even though all of the participants in the current study denied the idea that their future selves could have been a result of how friends and family viewed them. This is in line with earlier research that stressed the value of having capable role models in the learners' intimate social circles. It is more realistic for L2 learners to aim for a target proficiency level that is reasonable rather than aiming for native-like proficiency when these capable role models—who are most likely non-native speakers of the target language—are present in their immediate learning environment. (Lyons, 2009; Yashima, 2009). Distant role models were the second source for the future selves that the remaining participants—who spoke English more fluently—discussed. The participants' role models spanned from well-known English novelists and literary figures to politicians and actors they see in the media, which emphasizes the significance of L2 media in the learners' future self-development.

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