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Investigating Undergraduates' Attitudes, Motivation, and Writing Ability at the Faculty of Education-Ataq, Shabwah University

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Abstract

This study was conducted to investigate students' attitudes, motivation, and writing ability at the Faculty of Education-Ataq, Shabwah University. The sample consisted of 43 students from all four academic levels in the English Department. A quantitative approach was employed, utilizing a questionnaire and a writing test to collect the required data. The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings indicated that the participants held generally positive cognitive, behavioural, and affective attitudes. In terms of motivation, students demonstrated a high level of instrumental motivation, while integrative motivation was also present but to a lesser extent. With regard to writing ability, the results revealed that most participants performed poorly in all five aspects of writing, placing their overall writing proficiency below an adequate level. Based on these findings, the study presents a number of pedagogical implications and practical recommendations aimed at fostering positive attitudes and motivation among students and enhancing their writing skills.

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Introduction

Attitudes and motivation are essential factors in a person's life, particularly in education, because they play a major role in the learning process and students' performance. Karahan (2007, p. 84) argued that positive language attitudes let learners have a positive orientation towards learning English. For Anjomshoa and Sadighi (2015), motivation is one of the important aspects of second language acquisition (p. 135). In the same vein, Gardner (2006) explained that if one is motivated, he has a reason (motivation) for engaging in the relevant activities, expends effort, persists in the activities, attends to the tasks, shows desire to achieve the goal, and enjoys the activities (p. 243). It is evident from the aforementioned arguments that while negative attitudes and lack of motivation contribute to pupils performing poorly in their English language studies, good attitudes and motivation promote success and achievement in the language classroom. This study aims to investigate the students' attitudes, motivation, and writing abilities towards learning English in the college of education, Ataq, Shabwah University. More obviously, the study has three key aims. Firstly, the study tries to investigate the students' attitudes in terms of their behavioral, cognitive, and affective (emotional) aspects towards learning English. Secondly, it identifies the instrumental and integrative types of motivation that students hold for learning English. Third, it investigates the students' ability and proficiency in writing in terms of content, vocabulary, grammar, organization, and mechanics.

By conducting this study, the researcher may be able to ascertain how learners' levels and proficiencies in the language, as well as their abilities in relation to the skill of writing, can be influenced by both positive and negative attitudes, as well as different types of motivation that students hold towards learning English. This study may offer one of the first comprehensive

analyses of the students' attitudes, motivation, and writing skills in Shabwah. As a result, the researcher hopes that this study will assist students and teachers in making wise decisions, positively encourage them to learn and use English, point out all of the mistakes and errors that students may commit in their writing, and provide solutions to help students improve their writing.

Literature Review

Attitude

The Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching (2002) defines attitudes as follows: "the attitudes that speakers of different languages or language varieties have towards each other's languages or to their own language" (p. 297). According to Ajzan (1988), attitude is "a disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to an object, person, institution, or event" (p. 4). Oskamp and Schultz (2005) defined attitude as "a predisposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given attitude object" (p. 9). Additionally, Baker (1992) stated that attitude is "a hypothetical construct used to explain the direction of human behavior" (p. 10).

Motivation

The idea of motivation has been defined and viewed differently by different scholars. According to Harmer (2001), motivation is a kind of internal drive that pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something (p. 51). Further, other scholars consider motivation a complex phenomenon that is made up of some aspects and affected by many other factors. Gardner (2006) considered motivation as a very complicated phenomenon containing numerous facts. This phenomenon is evaluated by different schools of thought. For example, the cognitive school views motivation as a decision-making process related to learning. In contrast, the behaviorist school sees motivation as merely the expectation of a reward (p. 242). In the academic context, authors describe motivation as an incentive key in the process of learning in order to achieve specific goals. Crookes and Schmidt defined motivation as the learner's orientation regarding the goal of learning a second language (cited in Alizadeh, 2016, p. 12). Bomia (1997) also added that, in relation to education, motivation refers to a student's willingness, need, desire, and compulsion to participate and be successful in the learning process. Learning and motivation have the same importance in order to achieve something. Learning helps students gain new knowledge and skills, and motivation pushes them or encourages them to go through the learning process (cited in Nguyen, 2019, p. 51).

Attitudes and motivation towards Foreign Language Learning

On the one hand, a student's language attitude has been considered an essential factor influencing FLL and an important element in language performance and achievement. Many scholars hold the view that success in language learning is considerably related to the student's attitudes towards that language. For instance, Fakeye (2010) stated that "students' attitude towards the language is one of the personal variables that affect the learning of the English language" (p. 206). Similarly, Karahan (2007) claimed that "positive language attitudes let learners have a positive orientation towards learning English" (p. 84). Additionally, in the field of second language acquisition (SLA), in their study (2020), Zin and Yonus explained that students' positive attitude maximizes their favorable outcome towards acquiring the language (p. 720). On the other hand, Ellis (2008) considered that no single individual differences factor in language learning has received as much attention as motivation (p. 677). Moreover, Dornyei (2005) emphasized that motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate second language learning and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process; indeed, all the other factors involved in second language acquisition presuppose motivation to

some extent (p. 65). Furthermore, Lifrieri (2005) shared the same opinions: when asked about the factors that influence individual levels of success in any activity, such as language learning, most people would certainly mention motivation among them (p. 4).

Writing Ability

According to Bram (1995), writing means to try to produce or reproduce a written message; it should have something meaningful to convey (p. 7). Widdowson (2020) defined writing as the act of producing correct sentences and transmitting them into words on paper (cited in Sharhan, Al-Abedi, & Al-Hilu, 2020, p. 116). This definition views writing as a talent that allows one to express his thoughts and feelings in a concrete way while utilizing proper language. Moreover, some perspectives describe the process of writing as not only putting letters together and making words but also an organization procedure that contains a lot of steps. For Byrne (1988), writing is the process of organizing the sentences into a text into a coherent whole that is as explicit as possible and complete in its contents and is able to communicate successfully with the readers through the medium of writing (p. 2). He also added that we utilize visual symbols (letters or groups of letters) that correspond to the sounds we produce when we speak instead of words when we write. Therefore, writing may be viewed as the process of creating these symbols by leaving indentations on a flat surface of some type. But just as speaking is more than simply the production of sounds, writing is unquestionably much more than the creation of graphic symbols. Although we may once again say that we are writing if we are only producing lists of words, as in inventories of subjects like grocery lists, we can still say that writing occurs when symbols are ordered in a given way to make words and words are structured in a certain way to produce sentences (p. 2). Ransdell and Levy (1996) pointed out that writing is described as a process that requires extensive self-regulation and attentional control; writers must change ideas into text, repair organization and mechanics, and monitor their success, all while trying to formulate a coherent message (p. 93).

Previous Studies

In the field of attitudes and motivation, several studies have documented a range of attitudes from positive to negative among university students in different contexts. For instance, Noursi (2013) conducted a study to evaluate the attitudes of university students towards learning English as a second language, focusing on three attitudinal components: emotional, behavioral, and cognitive factors. The study sampled 158 students from various departments—including Fine Arts, Design, and Architecture—at the University of Gujrat. Using a questionnaire to collect data, Noursi found that the students generally held negative attitudes towards learning English. These findings underscore the complexity of learners' attitudes and highlight the challenges faced in fostering positive orientations towards English language learning. This study is relevant to the current research, which also investigates students' attitudes, but within the context of Yemeni university learners and their writing ability in English.

In contrast, Ibrahim (2017) investigated the motivations and attitudes of second-year university students towards learning English as a foreign language at the University of Nyala, specifically within the Faculty of Education's English Language Department. Utilizing a questionnaire for data collection and analyzing responses with SPSS, the study revealed that students demonstrated a strong awareness of the importance and purposes of learning English. Moreover, they exhibited high levels of motivation and positive attitudes towards English learning. The findings also highlighted the influence of both internal (intrinsic) and external (extrinsic) factors driving their commitment to acquiring the language. These results provide important context for the current study, which similarly explores how motivational and attitudinal factors relate to students' English writing ability in a university setting.

Al-Tamimi and Shuib (2009) examined Yemeni university students' motivation and attitudes towards learning English, focusing on three motivational constructs: instrumental, integrative, and personal motivation. The participants were 81 petroleum engineering students from Hadhramout University of Science and Technology. Using, both questionnaires and interviews, the researchers found that students were primarily motivated by instrumental reasons, such as academic success and job opportunities. Personal motivation also emerged as a significant factor, while integrative motivation—especially interest in integrating with the culture of English-speaking communities—had the least influence. Despite this, students generally expressed positive attitudes towards English language, its use in Yemen's education and society, and even towards aspects of the culture associated with English. The findings of this study are especially relevant to the present research, as they reflect patterns of attitudinal and motivational factors among Yemeni learners, similar to those explored in the current investigation into the relationship between students' attitudes, motivation, and writing ability.

Additionally, Ali (2017) explored the motivation and attitudes of technical English students at Continuing Training University towards learning English. The study utilized a self-report questionnaire adapted from Gardner's (2004) Attitude and Motivation Test Battery. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, frequency analysis, and correlation through SPSS. Interestingly, the results indicated that the students exhibited very high positive attitudes towards learning English and were highly motivated, with integrative motivation prevailing over instrumental motivation. These findings contrast with many studies in Arab contexts where instrumental motivation tends to dominate, providing a valuable point of comparison for the current study, which examines motivational orientations and attitudes among Yemeni university students and their impact on writing ability.

Further, Faizah (2022) conducted a survey to assess various factors influencing students' writing behavior among 84 undergraduate students from diverse fields at a public university. Using a 43-item questionnaire distributed via Google Forms, the study applied descriptive analysis for each factor and employed Pearson's correlation to examine relationships between these factors and students' writing behavior. The findings showed that confidence and attitude significantly correlate with students' writing behavior, highlighting the crucial role that positive attitudes play in facilitating writing mastery. This insight reinforces the importance of affective factors in writing development, which is central to the present study's investigation of how attitudes and motivation impact English writing ability among university learners.

Research Methodology

In this study, the researcher used quantitative approaches in order to investigate the students' attitudes, motivation, and writing ability. The participants in this study were recruited from the first-year, second-year, third-year, and the fourth-year English department students at Shabwah University's Faculty of Education-Ataq during the first semester of the academic year 2023-2024. Of the initial cohort of 43 students, 33 were females and 10 were males. Moreover, all of those participants were aged between 16 and 35 at the beginning of the study. As a result, all the bachelor's program English majors were specifically chosen to take part in the study due to the tiny population of pupils.

Two instruments (questionnaire and writing test) were utilized to collect the data from the participants of the study. These instruments were administered to the students by the researcher himself in the first semester of the academic year 2023-2024. These two instruments will be explained as follows:

Students' Questionnaire

In order to investigate the students' attitudes and motivation towards learning English, a 20 question questionnaire was performed. The questionnaire is a frequently used method in applied linguistics to collect data in support of the researcher's objectives (Griffie, 2012, p. 135). It is also defined by Kabir (2016) as "a research instrument consisting of a series of questions and other prompts for the purpose of gathering information from respondents" (2016, p. 208). Additionally, Sugiyono (2008) clarified that a questionnaire is a method of gathering data through the presentation of certain research-related statements (2008, p. 142).

In this study, the questionnaire was split into four sections; the first section attempted to acquire demographic information about the participants, such as age, gender, and academic year. Prior to a clear understanding, the participants also received an explanation of the questions and how to answer them.

The next two sections contained 19 Likert-scale items related to the students' attitudes and motivation towards learning English. These items had been modified from earlier researches—Pineda, 2011; Alkaabi, 2016; Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2009; and Pariwat, 2020—and had therefore been verified. A 5-point scale from strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree was used to rate each item. To be more specific, the first eight items were in the second section, which were designed to measure the students' attitudes towards learning English regarding the three aspects: cognitive attitudes (item 1), affective attitudes (items 3, 4, and 5), and behavioral attitudes (item 2, 6, 7, and 8). The remaining eleven items were provided in the third section in order to determine the students' types of motivation, namely instrumental motivation (items 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14) and integrative motivation (items 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19).

In the final section, the writing portion of the questionnaire was the only one provided to the participants at the end in order to gather data on question 3: To what extent do students' attitudes and motivation affect their writing ability? The students were invited to share their thoughts about English writing assignments they take both within and outside of the classroom.

Students' Writing Test

In this study, a writing test was employed to collect data addressing the third research question, which aimed to assess the students' writing ability across five components: content, vocabulary, grammar, organization, and writing mechanics. According to Seliger and Shohamy (1989), tests are commonly used to gather information regarding a subject's competence and knowledge in second language learning, including areas such as reading, vocabulary, grammar, metalinguistic awareness, and overall proficiency (1989, p. 176).

For this writing test, participants were given 45 minutes to compose an essay of at least 150 words on the topic: "Students of English can use the smartphone in their study for many purposes." Additionally, the test included a set of guiding instructions intended to help students organize their ideas and write more effectively.

Validity and Reliability of Instruments

Validity

According to Seliger and Shohamy (1989), validity is the degree to which the method used for gathering data measures the objectives for which it was designed (p. 188). In a similar manner, validity was defined by Heale and Twycros (2015) as the extent to which a notion is precisely quantified in a quantitative investigation (p. 66).

To guarantee the validity of the research tools employed in this investigation, the first draft of the questionnaire and writing test were presented by the researcher to a group of TEFL experts, professors, and then supervisors; all of them have extensive experience in the field of EFL. They offered their feedback after assessing the study tools' content validity. The feedback was taken into account.

Reliability

According to Seliger and Shohamy (1989), reliability tells us whether the instrument is reliably and consistently gathering data (p. 185). Furthermore, Gobran (2019) made the following observation: "A result is deemed reliable if it is consistent and stable under similar but distinct conditions; accordingly, a researcher's findings are considered reliable" (p. 40).

To verify the students' test reliability, another English writing instructor from the college of education, Aden, was given the task of correcting the test using rubric methods for grading writing assignments. The researcher's correction was then compared to the teacher's correction. A significant amount of agreement (about 98%) exists between the researcher's correction and his.

Findings and Discussion

The data collected through the questionnaire were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software program (SPSS). As for the students' writing test, it was analyzed in two main steps: (1) all students' papers were corrected and evaluated by the researcher in collaboration with another faculty member from the Faculty of Education–Aden. (2) The scoring process focused on five fundamental components: content (30 points), vocabulary (20 points), language use/grammar (20 points), organization (20 points), and mechanics (10 points). For each component, students' performance was categorized into four proficiency levels: Exemplary, Above Average, Adequate, and Inadequate. Each level was defined according to specific criteria outlined in the adapted rubric.

Analysis of the students' questionnaire

The questionnaire was answered by 43 participants from the English department at the faculty of education, Shabwah University. To address the first research question, the questionnaire included eight closed-ended items, each rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" (5) to "strongly disagree" (1). These items were designed to provide insights into the students' cognitive, behavioral, and affective attitudes towards learning English. The data were statistically analyzed using means and standard deviations to summarize students' responses.

Students' cognitive attitudes towards learning English

Table 1: *Descriptive statistics of students' cognitive attitude*

N o.	Items		1	2	3	4	5	Me an	Std. D	Agr ee deg ree
1	Knowing English is an	F r e	0	0	1	14	28	4.63	0.53 6	Stro ngl y

	important goal in my life.	per	0 %	0 %	2.3 %	32.6 %	65.1 %			agree
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For Item 1, 65.1% of the participants agreed with the statement “Knowing English is an important goal in my life” ($M = 4.63$, $SD = 0.54$), indicating that students in the English Department at the Faculty of Education–Ataq, Shabwah University hold highly favorable cognitive attitudes towards learning English, perceiving it as an important and valuable life goal.

Students' behavioral attitudes towards learning English

This part focuses on the data in relation to questions 2, 6, 7, and 8 in the questionnaire, which concern the students' behavioral attitudes towards learning English. The results are reported in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of students' behavioral attitudes

No.	Items		1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. D	Agree degree
2	I plan to learn English as much as possible.	Free	1	0	1	20	21	4.40	0.76	Strongly agree
		per	2.3 %	0 %	2.3 %	46.5 %	48.8 %			
6	I put off my English homework as much as possible.	Free	2	3	6	20	10	4.05	1.43	Agree
		per	4.6 %	6.9 %	13.9 %	46.5 %	23.2 %			
7	I do not feel enthusiastic to come to class when English is being taught.	Free	2	9	12	11	9	3.35	1.152	Agree
		per	4.6 %	20.9 %	27.9 %	25.5 %	20.9 %			
8	Speaking English anywhere makes me feel worried.	Free	9	17	3	7	7	2.77	1.428	Neutral
		per	20.9 %	39.5 %	6.9 %	16.2 %	16.2 %			

Table 2 above shows the students' responses on the items which relate to their behavioral attitudes. For Item 2, 48.8% of the participants indicated that they plan to learn English as

much as possible ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 0.76$), suggesting that students hold a highly favorable attitude towards actively pursuing opportunities to learn English. For Item 6, only 4.6% of the participants agreed with the statement ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 1.43$), indicating that most students generally maintain a positive and reasonable attitude towards completing their English homework on time. For Item 7, only 20.9% of the participants reported feeling enthusiastic about attending English classes, while the majority indicated a lack of enthusiasm ($M = 3.35$, $SD = 1.15$), suggesting that despite generally positive attitudes towards learning English, many students showed low enthusiasm in class. For Item 8, 39.5% of the participants disagreed with the statement ($M = 2.77$, $SD = 1.43$), indicating that nearly 60% of students held favorable behavioral attitudes towards speaking English and did not experience significant anxiety when using the language in different settings.

Students' affective attitudes towards learning English

This part focuses on the data in relation to questions 3, 4, and 5 in the questionnaire, which concern the students' affective attitudes towards learning English. The results are reported in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of students' affective attitudes

No.	Items		1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. D	Agree Degree
3	Studying foreign languages like English is enjoyable.	Free	1	0	3	21	17	4.26	0.79	Strongly agree
		Percent	2.3%	0%	6.9%	48.8%	39.5%			
4	I am really interested in studying English.	Free	0	1	3	16	20	4.40	0.728	Strongly agree
		Percent	0%	2.3%	6.9%	37.2%	46.5%			
5	Studying English makes me feel more confident.	Free	1	0	2	18	22	4.42	0.794	Strongly agree
		Percent	2.3%	0%	4.6%	41.8%	51.1%			

Table 3 above shows the students' responses on the items which relate to their affective attitudes. For Item 3, only 2.3% of the participants strongly disagreed with the statement, while 48.8% agreed ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 0.79$), indicating that participants' attitudes towards this item were highly positive. For Item 4, 65.5% of the participants strongly agreed with the statement ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 0.73$), suggesting that participants demonstrated a very positive attitude towards learning English, as reflected in their strong interest. For Item 5, the majority of participants agreed with the statement, while only 6.9% disagreed ($M = 4.42$, $SD = 0.79$), indicating overwhelmingly positive attitudes and reflecting the confidence students associate

with studying English. The following table shows the overall descriptive statistics of the students' attitudes.

Table 4: *Overall Descriptive statistics of students' attitudes*

Aspects of Attitude	Mean	Std. Deviation	Agree Degree
Cognitive, Behavioral, and Affective	4.035	0.952	Agree

The findings in Table 4 directly address the first research question, which investigate the attitudes of English Department students at the Faculty of Education-Ataq, Shabwah University towards learning English. With a mean score of 4.035 and a standard deviation of 0.925, the data indicate that the sampled students hold positive attitudes towards learning English. These attitudes span the cognitive, behavioral, and affective dimensions, suggesting that the participants not only recognize the importance of English but also show a willingness to engage with it and express favorable feelings towards the language. This result also fulfills the first objective of the study, which was to explore students' attitudes in these three key domains. The findings imply that the English Department students at this faculty are generally prepared to invest effort in learning English, which may play a supportive role in improving their overall language skills, including writing. Furthermore, these findings align with the results of Ming et al. (2011), who observed that secondary school students in Malaysia also held positive attitudes towards learning English. Ming et al. suggested that this positive attitude may have stemmed from students' awareness of the importance of English as part of their school curriculum, which increased their interest in learning the language. Similarly, the positive attitudes reported by the English Department students at the Faculty of Education-Ataq, Shabwah University, can be considered an expected and normal outcome of their high motivation towards learning English.

Students' types of motivation towards learning English

This section aims to address the second research question of the study, which focuses on students' motivation towards learning English: "What are the students' types of motivation towards learning English as a foreign language?" To answer this question, the questionnaire included eleven closed-ended items, each rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5). The information gathered from these items pertains to the two main types of motivation: integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. The collected data were analyzed using means and standard deviations to provide a descriptive statistical summary of the students' motivational tendencies

Students' instrumental motivation towards learning English

This part explains the data in relation to questions 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 in the questionnaire, which concern the students' instrumental motivation towards learning English. The completed findings of the SPSS analysis are presented in Table 5, which is located below.

Table 5: *Descriptive Statistics of the students' instrumental motivation*

No.	Items	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. D	Agree Degree
9	I study English because	1	1	2	16	23	4.4	0.877	Strongly agree

	it will be useful in getting a good job.	P e r	2 . 3 %	2. 3 %	4. 6 %	37 .2 %	53 .4 %			
10	I study English because it will help me when I travel abroad.	F r e	0	1	0	9	33	4.72	0.591	Strongl y agree
		P e r	0 %	2. 3 %	0 %	20 .9 %	76 .7 %			
11	I study English because it will help me to achieve my study tasks in the university.	F r e	0	1	5	16	21	4.33	0.778	Strongl y agree
		P e r	0 %	2. 3 %	11 .6 %	37 .2 %	48 .8 %			
12	I study English because it will help me to go further in my studies.	F r e	0	1	6	18	18	4.23	0.782	Strongl y agree
		P e r	0 %	2. 3 %	13 .9 %	41 .9 %	41 .9 %			
13	I diligently study English because I want to get a university degree.	F r e	1	7	6	11	18	3.93	1.163	Agree
		P e r	2 . 3 %	16 .2 %	13 .9 %	25 .6 %	41 .9 %			
14	I study English because it will make me a more knowledgeable person.	F r e	0	2	1	19	21	4.37	0.57	Strongl y agree
		P e r	0 %	4. 6 %	2. 3 %	44 .1 %	48 .8 %			

Table 5 above shows the students' responses on the items which relate to their instrumental motivation. For Item 9, 90.6% of the participants agreed with the statement ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 0.87$), indicating that most students study English to improve their future employment opportunities. For Item 10, 97.6% of the participants agreed with the statement ($M = 4.72$, $SD = 0.59$), suggesting that nearly all students believe learning English will benefit them during international travel. For Item 11, 86% of the participants agreed with the statement ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 0.78$), indicating that most students consider English essential for

successfully completing their academic coursework at the university. For Item 12, 83.8% of the participants agreed with the statement ($M = 4.23$, $SD = 0.78$), showing that most students believe learning English will support their future academic advancement. For Item 13, 41.6% of the participants strongly agreed with the statement ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 1.16$), suggesting a moderate level of consensus due to greater variation in responses. For Item 14, only 4.6% of the participants disagreed with the statement ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 0.76$), while 92.9% believed that learning English would enhance their knowledge and make them more informed individuals.

Students' integrative motivation towards learning English

This part explains the data in relation to questions 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 in the questionnaire, which concern the students' integrative motivation towards learning English. The findings of the SPSS analysis are presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of the students' integrative motivation

N o .	Items		1	2	3	4	5	Mea n	Std . D	Agre e Degr ee
15	I study English because it will enable me to understand the cultures and traditions of the English speaking countries members.	F r e	1	5	8	10	18	3.95	1.154	Agre e
		P e r	24%	11.9%	19%	23.8%	42.8%			
16	I study English because it will enable me to understand stories, novels, and literature written in English.	F r e	0	2	5	14	22	4.35	0.783	Stron gly agree
		P e r	0%	4.6%	11.6%	32.5%	51.1%			
17	I study English because it will help me to communicate with its native speakers.	F r e	0	1	3	14	25	4.44	0.734	Stron gly agree
		P e r	0%	2.3%	7%	32.5%	58.1%			

18	I study English because I really enjoy learning English and following English movies.	F r e	0	0	3	16	24	4.47	0.631	Strongly agree
		P e r	0%	0%	7%	37.2%	55.8%			
19	I study English because I enjoy meeting people who speak English.	F r e	1	0	7	10	25	4.33	0.919	Strongly agree
		P e r	23%	0%	16.2%	23.2%	58.1%			

Table 6 above shows the students' responses on the items which relate to their integrative motivation. For Item 15, 66.6% of the participants agreed, while 11.9% disagreed ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 1.15$), indicating that most students believe learning English helps them better understand the customs and cultures of English-speaking societies. For Item 16, 51.1% strongly agreed, 32.5% agreed, 11.6% were neutral, and 4.6% disagreed ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 0.78$), suggesting that 83.6% of students believe learning English enhances their ability to comprehend English-language books, stories, and literature. For Item 17, only 2.3% of participants disagreed ($M = 4.44$, $SD = 0.73$), while 90.6% believed that learning English improves their ability to converse with native speakers. For Item 18, 93% agreed with the statement ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 0.63$), indicating that the majority genuinely enjoy learning and using English, especially in contexts related to entertainment and media. For Item 19, 58.1% strongly agreed, 23.2% agreed, 16.2% were neutral, and 2.3% strongly disagreed ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 0.92$), suggesting that 81.3% of students enjoy communicating with English-speaking individuals. The following table displays the overall descriptive statistics of the students' instrumental and integrative motivation.

Table 7: Overall descriptive statistics of the students' instrumental and integrative motivation

Types of Motivation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Agree Degree
Instrumental motivation	4.33	0.825	Strongly agree
Integrative motivation	4.31	0.844	Strongly agree

The results of the students' questionnaire, as shown in Table 7, indicate that the English Department students at the Faculty of Education–Ataq, Shabwah University were slightly more motivated instrumentally than integratively, ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 4.31$), respectively. This finding addresses the second research question and concerns the second objective of the study, which sought to explore the nature and degree of students' motivation towards learning English. The dominance of instrumental motivation among the participants reflects a focus on practical outcomes, such as academic achievement, future career opportunities, and the benefits of English for travel and global engagement. This result is consistent with findings from other EFL contexts (e.g., Sarjit Kaur, 1993; Al-Quyadi, 2000; Qashoa, 2006; Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2009; Dadi, 2018), which similarly reported that instrumental

motivation often outweighs integrative motivation. Such alignment reinforces the view that in many non-native English contexts, learners tend to prioritize the utilitarian and career-related functions of English, especially in university environments.

Students' attitudes towards English writing

This section aims to answer the third research question of the study, which focuses on the students' writing ability: "To what extent do students' attitudes and motivation affect their writing ability?" An open-ended question included in the final section of the students' questionnaire was designed to explore their attitudes and motivation towards English writing. The specific question was: "How do you feel about the English writing assignments?" The responses to this item were analyzed and are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Overall frequencies and percentages of the students' attitudes towards English writing

Item 20		Positive Feeling	Negative Feeling	Neutral
How do you feel about the English writing assignments?	Fre	32	8	3
	Per	74.4%	18.6%	7%

For Item number 20, "How do you feel about the English writing assignments?" the data in Table 8 showed that 74.4% of the participants expressed favorable attitudes and thoughts towards English writing. As a result, these students reported completing their writing tasks effectively. However, 18.6% of the participants held unfavorable opinions and feelings towards writing assignments, while 7% expressed no opinion.

Analysis of the students' writing test

The students' writing test was designed to address the study's final research question: To what extent do students' attitudes and motivation affect their writing ability? To obtain a meaningful answer, thirty participants were asked to write an essay on the topic: "Students of English can use the smartphone in their study for many purposes." The students' writing was evaluated across five key components: content, vocabulary, grammar, organization, and mechanics. Finally, the results of the writing test were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), with frequencies and percentages reported as will be shown below.

1. Content

For the category of content, the findings showed that there are differences between students. Some of them are adept at some writing sides, but not other writing sides. Based on the research data, the results in Figure 1 and Table 8 are obtained.

Figure 1: Percentages of the Students' Results of the Content component

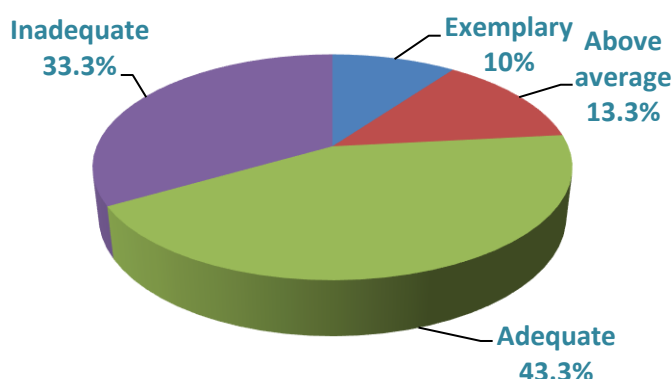


Table 8: Details of the students' level in the content component

Score	Category	Frequency	Percentage %
30-25	Exemplary	3	10 %
24-17	Above average	4	13.3 %
16-8	Adequate	13	43.3 %
7-1	Inadequate	10	33.3 %

Based on the data in Figure 1 and Table 8, the students' level of proficiency in the content component was divided into four categories: exemplary, above average, adequate, and inadequate. Specifically, three students (10%) were rated at the exemplary level, four students (13.3%) at the above average level, 13 students (43.3%) at the adequate level, and 10 students (33.3%) at the inadequate level. The majority of students were classified at the adequate level, as evidenced by 43.3% of the participants scoring within the range of 16 to 8 points in the content component. These results are directly related to the third research question, which aimed to investigate the level of writing proficiency in terms of content among the English Department students at the Faculty of Education – Ataq, Shabwah University. Correspondingly, they also align with the third objective of the study, which was to evaluate the students' proficiency in writing English content. The data suggest that the majority of students demonstrated only basic or below-average performance in developing meaningful and well-supported content in their writing. The relatively low number of students achieving high-level content performance indicates a significant challenge in generating, organizing, and elaborating ideas effectively in English. This reflects a persistent weakness in content development skills, which may be influenced by limited vocabulary, insufficient exposure to effective writing models, or lack of guided writing practice.

2. Organization

In terms of the organization component, the students' abilities varied across different levels. Based on the research data, the results in Figure 2 and Table 9 illustrate the distribution of students' performance in this component.

Figure 2: Percentages of the Students' Results of the Organization component

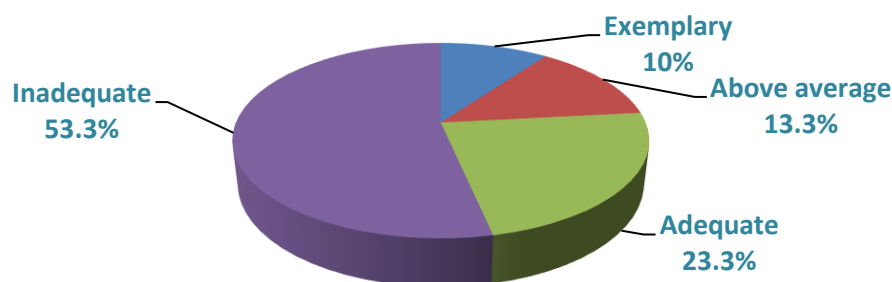


Table 9: Details of the students' level in the organization component

Score	Category	Frequency	Percentage %
20-17	Exemplary	3	6.7 %
16-12	Above average	4	20 %
11-6	Adequate	7	46.6 %
5-1	Inadequate	16	26.7 %

Figure 2 and Table 9 present the evaluation of the students' proficiency in the organization component of writing. The results indicate that only three students were rated at the exemplary level, four at the above-average level, seven at the adequate level, and a significant majority—sixteen students—at the inadequate level. These findings suggest that more than half of the sample demonstrated weak organizational skills in their written compositions. This result also addresses the third research question, which is "To what extent do students' attitudes and motivation affect their writing ability?", and aligns with the third objective of the study. The participants in this study were English Department students at the Faculty of Education–Ataq, Shabwah University, who are expected to have achieved a foundational competence in academic writing. However, the data indicate that many of these students struggled with essential elements of writing organization, such as coherence, unity, and logical flow. This difficulty was further complicated by common issues like repetition of ideas and influence from Arabic syntactic structures, which affected clarity and cohesion in English writing. Supporting this finding, the analysis shows that 53.3% of the students received scores ranging from 5 to 1 in the organization component, placing them in the lower proficiency range. These results are consistent with those of previous studies (e.g., Asadifard & Koosha, 2013; Ceylan, 2019; Miftah, 2015; Nugraheni & Basya, 2018), which similarly reported that organizing ideas effectively in English writing remains a persistent challenge for EFL learners. Furthermore, Bulqiyah, Mahbub, and Nugraheni (2021, p. 69) emphasized that poor organization is one of the most common issues encountered in EFL writing.

3. Vocabulary

According to findings, Figure 3 and Table 10 represent the students' performance in the vocabulary component.

Figure 3: Percentages of Students' Results of the Vocabulary component

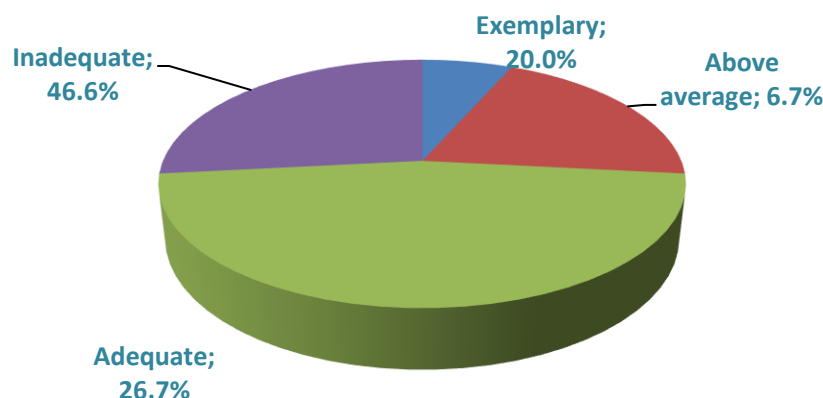


Table 10: Details of the students' level in the vocabulary component

Score	Category	Frequency	Percentage %
20-17	Exemplary	2	6.7 %
16-12	Above average	6	20 %
11-6	Adequate	14	46.6 %
5-1	Inadequate	8	26.7 %

Figure 3 and Table 10 represent the assessment of the English Department students at the Faculty of Education–Ataq, Shabwah University, in terms of their vocabulary proficiency in writing, categorized into four levels: exemplary, above average, adequate, and inadequate. The results show that two students (6.7%) were rated at the exemplary level, six students (20%) at the above-average level, fourteen students (46.6%) at the adequate level, and eight students (26.7%) at the inadequate level. The data indicate that while nearly half of the students performed at an adequate level, a considerable portion—more than one-quarter—still demonstrated significant vocabulary deficiencies. The analysis of their written samples showed frequent issues, including the misuse of word forms, improper word order, and ambiguous expressions, which often obscured meaning and reduced the clarity of their writing. This is corroborated by the fact that 46.6% of students received scores ranging between 11 and 6 points, reflecting only moderate command of vocabulary usage. These findings are in line with prior research (Ceylan, 2019; Meslissorgou & Frantzi, 2015; Nugraheni & Basya, 2018; Toba et al., 2019; Zhan, 2015), which consistently reported that limited lexical knowledge, misinterpretation of word meaning, and spelling errors are persistent issues among EFL learners. As noted by Bulqiyah, Mahbub, and Nugraheni (2021, p. 69), vocabulary-related problems remain a central challenge in improving writing performance among non-native English speakers.

4. Language Use (Grammar)

According to the findings, Figure 4 and Table 11 represent the students' performance in the grammar component.

Figure 4: Percentages of Students' Results of the Grammar component

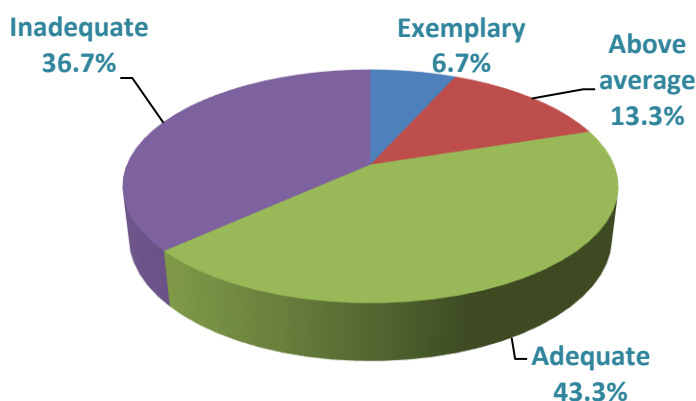


Table 11: Details of the students' level in the grammar component

Score	Category	Frequency	Percentage %
20-17	Exemplary	2	6.7 %
16-12	Above average	4	13.3 %
11-6	Adequate	13	43.3 %
5-1	Inadequate	11	36.7 %

Figure 4 and Table 11 represent the proficiency levels of the English Department students at the Faculty of Education–Ataq, Shabwah University in the grammar component of writing. The data show that only two students (6.7%) achieved an exemplary level, while four students (13.3%) were rated as above average. A larger group of thirteen students (43.3%) fell within the adequate level, and eleven students (36.7%) were assessed as inadequate. These findings directly address the third research question and correspond with the third objective of the study. Although the highest percentage of students performed at the adequate level, the results suggest that many participants struggled with grammar-related errors, particularly in word classes, subject-verb agreement, singular and plural forms, and sentence structure. The fact that 43.3% of students scored between 11 to 6 points in this component further supports the conclusion that grammatical challenges are widespread. These difficulties are consistent with the findings of numerous prior studies (Arivanti & Fitriana, 2017; Hajeid, 2018; Hasan & Marzuki, 2017; Meslissorgou & Frantzi, 2015; Nugraheni & Basya, 2018; Toba et al., 2019), which emphasize grammar as one of the most persistent issues in EFL students' writing. Additionally, Bulqiyah, Mahbub, and Nugraheni (2021, pp. 69–70), highlighted that grammatical inaccuracy remains a significant obstacle for EFL learners, often hindering overall writing quality.

5. Mechanics

According to the findings, Figure 5 and Table 12 represent the students' performance in the mechanics component.

Figure 5: Percentages of Students' Results of the Mechanics component

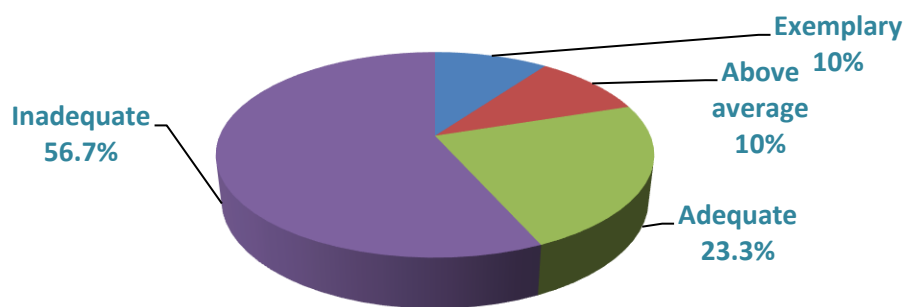


Table 12: Details of the students' level in the mechanics component

Score	Category	Frequency	Percentage %
10-8	Exemplary	3	10 %
7-6	Above average	3	10 %
5-4	Adequate	7	23.3 %
3-1	Inadequate	17	56.7 %

Figure 5 and Table 12 present the proficiency levels of the English Department students at the Faculty of Education–Ataq, Shabwah University in the mechanics component of writing. The data show that three students (10%) were rated at the exemplary level, three students (10%) at the above-average level, seven students (23.3%) at the adequate level, and seventeen students (56.7%) were classified as inadequate. These results address the third research question, which investigates students' writing ability in terms of mechanics, and relate directly to the third objective, which aims to assess students' accuracy in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and other mechanical conventions of English writing. The findings indicate that the majority of students fall within the inadequate level regarding their mastery of writing mechanics. This suggests that many participants committed numerous errors in spelling and punctuation, including frequent mistakes in capitalization, comma usage, and apostrophe placement. The fact that 56.7% of students received scores within the 1–3 range in this component highlights the prevalence of these mechanical difficulties. These results are consistent with previous research indicating that mechanical errors are common among EFL learners and significantly affect the clarity and professionalism of written texts.

Conclusion

The current study aimed to investigate the attitudes, motivation, and writing ability of undergraduate students at the Faculty of Education-Ataq, Shabwah University. Through the data collected by the research instruments, the following major conclusions were drawn:

1. Regarding the first research question, "What are the students' attitudes towards learning English?" the results revealed that the English Department students at the Faculty of Education-Ataq, Shabwah University, exhibit positive cognitive, behavioral, and affective attitudes towards learning English.
2. Concerning the second research question, "What are the students' types of motivation towards learning English as a foreign language?" the findings indicated that the students demonstrated a high level of motivation. The questionnaire results further showed that instrumental motivation was slightly higher than integrative motivation, suggesting that the students were more instrumentally motivated than integratively motivated. These findings

confirm that the first and second research objectives—investigating students' attitudes and motivation—were successfully accomplished.

3. For the third research question, "To what extent do students' attitudes and motivation affect their writing ability?", which aligns with a primary objective of this study, the results indicated that although the students showed positive attitudes and motivation towards learning English; however, their writing abilities were generally weak. Specifically, students demonstrated insufficient proficiency across the five writing components assessed: content, vocabulary, grammar, organization, and mechanics.

One of the main limitations was the sample size of participants who completed the writing test. Although the study achieved a high response rate for the questionnaire, the number of students who participated in the writing test was relatively small. This limitation was primarily due to the low overall number of students enrolled in the English Department at the Faculty of Education-Ataq, Shabwah University. As a result, students from all four academic levels were included in the sample to ensure adequate participation. Another important limitation concerns the scope of the questionnaire. While the questionnaire effectively measured students' attitudes and motivation towards learning English in general, it did not directly investigate students' attitudes towards writing specifically, nor how such attitudes relate to their actual writing performance. Therefore, the study does not provide information on whether students with more positive attitudes towards writing achieved higher writing performance compared to those with negative attitudes. Furthermore, the study did not examine the relationship between students' attitudes towards writing and their writing performance across different levels of English proficiency. This gap suggests that future research should consider exploring the direct impact of writing-specific attitudes on writing achievement among students with varying levels of language proficiency.

Based on these findings, several pedagogical implications can be drawn such as creating a supportive learning environment, incorporating motivational teaching strategies, addressing instrumental motivation, encouraging writing practice through varied activities, focused instruction on writing elements, and promoting regular writing practice. These pedagogical implications highlight the need for targeted instructional interventions and motivational strategies to help improve students' writing ability and overall English language proficiency.

For further research, It is recommended that future studies adopt well-established motivational theories and frameworks (e.g., Gardner's Socio-Educational Model, Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory) to provide a more in-depth analysis and theoretical grounding of students' motivation towards learning English, it is also recommended that future research explore students' attitudes and motivation in relation to other English language skills such as listening, speaking, and reading to provide a more holistic understanding of language learning challenges. Additionally, the current study could be replicated with modifications such as applying it to different subject areas, targeting larger or more diverse student populations, extending the data collection period, focusing on different English language skills, redesigning the writing assessment tool, or conducting comparative studies between male and female students' performances.

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استقصاء توجهات ودوافع ومهارات الكتابة لدى الطلاب الجامعيين بكلية التربية – عتق، جامعة شبوة

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الملخص

أُجريت هذه الدراسة للتحقق من اتجاهات الطلاب، ودوافعهم، ومستوى قدرتهم الكتابية في كلية التربية – عتق، جامعة شبوة. وهدفت الدراسة بشكل خاص إلى استكشاف اتجاهات الطلاب ودوافعهم نحو تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية. علاوة على ذلك، قُيِّمت الدراسة القدرة الكتابية للطلاب من خلال تحليل خمسة مكونات أساسية: المحتوى، والتنظيم، والمفردات، والقواعد النحوية، والآليات الكتابية. تكونت عينة الدراسة من 43 طالباً وطالبة من مختلف المستويات الدراسية في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية. وقد تم استخدام الاستبانة والاختبار الكتابي لجمع البيانات، وتم تحليل البيانات باستخدام برنامج الحزمة الإحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية (SPSS). أظهرت النتائج أن المشاركين أبدوا اتجاهات إيجابية معرفية وسلوكية وعاطفية نحو تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية. كما أظهرت النتائج أن الطلاب يمتلكون دافعية آلية مرتفعة، في حين أن الدافعية الاندماجية كانت حاضرة ولكن بدرجة أقل. أما فيما يتعلق بالقدرة الكتابية، فقد كشفت النتائج أن معظم الطلاب أظهروا ضعفاً في الجوانب الخمسة للكتابة، مما وضع مستواهم الكتابي العام دون المستوى المقبول. وبناءً على هذه النتائج، قدمت الدراسة عدداً من الدلالات التربوية والتوصيات العملية التي تهدف إلى تعزيز اتجاهات الطلاب ودوافعهم وتحسين مهاراتهم الكتابية في اللغة الإنجليزية.

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الكلمات المفتاحية

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