



# Exploring the Motivation for English Reading among Cambodian Undergraduates: A Cross-Sectional Study

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**Abstract:** The world widely uses English as the primary medium for many academic discussions. According to observations, there has been a discernible trend in the educational community in Cambodia over the past several years that points to a higher tendency among postsecondary educators to prioritize the teaching of English as a foreign language. The main focus of this study is to clarify the underlying factors that drive this kind of motivation in students about English reading and then to explore possible approaches for increasing English reading motivation. Using an online questionnaire for collecting the data, the study involved 507 first- to fourth-year students from 31 institutions spread across 19 provinces and the nation's capital city. The results highlight their propensity for outside incentives and offer several suggested tactics for teachers to increase their students' English reading motivation. Additionally, an independent-sample t-test gender-based analysis showed that male students were more likely than female students to find motivation in English reading. Thus, by supporting a thorough investigation of the particular classroom exercises selected by students to increase their desire for English reading, this study advances our knowledge of the dynamics underlying English reading motivation.

**Keywords:** reading motivation, teaching techniques, undergraduates, foreign language, second language

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## Introduction

English is generally accepted as an international language and is widely used to communicate across borders. As a result, Rao (2019) noted that communicating effectively in English has become crucial in an increasingly linked world, particularly in the higher education sector. Similarly, Ngel (2022) pointed out that as Cambodia embraces globalization, the country's need for students to use English has grown dramatically. In this regard, students' motivation to read in English plays a vital role in their overall language acquisition process, making it an essential aspect to consider in education (Robinson et al., 2012). Furthermore, a well-designed curriculum is fundamental in shaping individuals' learning experiences across various aspects of their lives, ensuring

comprehensive education (Esteban-Guitart, 2019). Given its global status, many countries, including Cambodia, have integrated English into their educational programs (Keo et al., 2022). In the Cambodian context, the process of learning English aligns with the experience of acquiring either a foreign language (FL) or a second language (L2) (Houn & Em, 2022). Also, how well students learn a second language depends a lot on how motivated they are, which is one of the most important factors that determines how well they learn (Zheng et al., 2018).

Building on this discussion, several studies have been conducted in many countries on the motivation of students to learn English (Nguyen, 2019). However, there are not many studies on English language motivation conducted in Cambodia (e.g., Bon et al., 2022; Em et al., 2022; Sor et al., 2022, etc.).

### *Understanding the Role of Motivation in First and Second Language Reading Development*

Generally, reading motivation refers to an individual's objectives, beliefs, and ideas about reading subjects, strategies, and results, and, specifically, when students enjoy what they are reading, they may read for extended periods (Vaknin-Nusbaum & Tuckwiller, 2023). Additionally, Vaknin-Nusbaum and Tuckwiller (2023) noted that while some students read freely because they like it, others, by contrast, read to raise their reading proficiency. Reading can happen for a variety of reasons; on the one hand, self-satisfaction is one source, while on the other hand, external forces instilled by others also play a role. Moreover, reading motivation, according to Alhabahba et al. (2020) and Tarchi (2020), is another internal factor that encourages readers to begin and continue reading.

Building on this idea, studies by Kazemi et al. (2020), Li and Chu (2021), and Liman-Kaban and Karadeniz (2021) showed that increasing children's involvement and interest in literacy activities significantly enhances both their performance on standardized reading comprehension exams and their intrinsic drive to read. Similarly, Dale et al. (2020), Duke and Cartwright (2021), and Higgins et al. (2022) observed that the processes of cognition and motivation occur simultaneously, rather than independently. Furthermore, McGeown et al. (2020) asserted that the frequency and consistency of children's reading influence the multifaceted phenomenon of their desire to read. In the same vein, Toste et al. (2020) proposed that reading may be the sole individual factor responsible for the development of certain qualities associated with reading motivation.

While the principles of reading motivation in a mother tongue (L1) provide valuable insights, an L2 reading motivation presents additional complexities due to linguistic and cognitive challenges. Noticeably, Kim and Pae (2021) pointed out that factors such as language proficiency, exposure, and cultural context influence how learners engage with reading in an L2. Thus, understanding the interplay between motivation and reading in an L2 setting is essential for developing effective language learning strategies and fostering long-term engagement with reading in a foreign or second language.

Accordingly, by extending these insights to L2 learning, Locher et al. (2019) emphasized that reading for pleasure is generally more motivating than reading for school, highlighting the importance of engagement in fostering reading habits. However, the authors also noted that reading great literature does not necessarily predict the desire to read in a specific environment, suggesting that context plays a crucial role in reading motivation. Moreover, when schools assign more challenging reading tasks, students may feel less motivated to read at home, which has implications for L2 reading motivation. Similarly, Shutaleva et al. (2023) found that intrinsic and habitual reading urges are closely linked to an individual's book-reading experience. In the case of L2 learners, these factors become even more complex, as motivation is influenced not only by personal interest but also by language proficiency, exposure, and instructional strategies. Thus, understanding L2 reading

motivation is essential for developing effective approaches to support learners in acquiring and sustaining their reading skills.

Given these advantages, motivation plays a crucial role in determining how effectively learners engage with L2 reading and benefit from it. While exposure to written materials helps expand vocabulary, enhance language structure, and improve comprehension (Raudszus et al., 2021; Tavakoli et al., 2019), the extent to which students take advantage of these opportunities depends on their motivation to read. Moreover, as Mullyadi et al. (2020) highlighted, L2 reading fosters social awareness and broadens perspectives, yet learners must be sufficiently motivated to engage with diverse texts. Similarly, Britton and Leonard (2020) emphasized that immersion in authentic language use facilitates gradual familiarity with the dialect, but without strong motivation, learners may struggle to sustain consistent reading habits. Thus, exploring the factors that drive L2 reading motivation is essential for understanding how to encourage learners to actively engage with texts and develop their language skills.

Building on these perspectives, understanding L2 reading motivation requires examining the diverse factors that drive learners to engage with texts in a second language. While L2 reading offers access to new knowledge and personal growth, making it a rewarding experience (Zhang & Webb, 2019), the degree of motivation can vary depending on the language and the nature of reading tasks (Toste et al., 2020). In addition, Kavani and Amjadiparvar (2018) emphasized that reading motivation stems from a combination of ideas, values, and goals, aligning with theories of task value and expectancy. More specifically, Namaziandost et al. (2023) identified four key sub-components shaping English reading motivation: the hope for success, intrinsic value, satisfaction value, and external utility value. Thus, exploring these multidimensional aspects of L2 reading motivation is essential for understanding how to foster sustained engagement and improve reading outcomes in a second language.

Finally, to encourage efficient literacy growth across languages, one must thus grasp both L1 and L2 reading motivation. Although enjoyment and self-satisfaction are fundamental elements that inspire readers in both environments, motivation is much influenced by external elements such as social setting, reading assignments, and linguistic competency even if intrinsic elements are crucial. Further influencing motivation in L2 reading are linguistic difficulty and exposure. Teachers can provide encouraging learning environments that promote involvement and consistent reading practices by tackling these several elements, therefore enhancing students' literacy and language competency.

### *Factors Affecting Reading Motivation*

A variety of factors, including internal and external motivators, influence students' commitment to reading (McGeown et al., 2020). Specifically, McGeown et al. (2016) suggested that intrinsic motives, such as a desire to learn new things, a personal interest in the subject matter, and the enjoyment of reading, drive students' engagement with reading materials. In contrast, extrinsic factors, which can also affect students' motivation to read, refer to benefits or recognition from outside sources, such as teacher or peer acclaim (Salikin et al., 2017). Moreover, various factors, such as individual differences in reading aptitude, past reading experiences, and socioeconomic and cultural issues, can impact students' motivation levels (Chen et al., 2018). Therefore, educators must address these complex issues to create effective therapies promoting lifelong reading and reading motivation (Barber & Klauda, 2020).

### *Gender Differences in Reading Motivation*

Studies show that male and female students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivators are different (D'Lima et al., 2014; Kærsgaard et al., 2021). Consequently, this indicates that reading motivation varies between men and women in a variety of situations (McGeown & Warhurst, 2020). Specifically, when it comes to extrinsic motivation, males are more likely to be driven by competitiveness and recognition, whereas females are more likely to be driven by intrinsic curiosity and enjoyment, even though reading interests across the sexes may occasionally be identical (see McGeown et al., 2012; Miyamoto et al., 2020). As a result, these differences could affect one's habits, tastes, and level of involvement with the literature (Stutz et al., 2016).

Nonetheless, Em et al. (2024) discovered that there was no discernible variation in students' levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation based on their gender. However, it is important to note that due to the limited participant count, this study remains not final. Therefore, Soraya (2020) demonstrated that educators must recognize and understand these gender differences to modify instructional strategies to meet the unique needs and preferences of male and female students, ultimately providing a supportive learning environment that encourages reading motivation for all.

### *Effective Strategies to Enhance Reading Motivation*

Adapting extrinsic and intrinsic techniques to students' varied needs and preferences is one way to boost reading motivation (Kanonire et al., 2022; Orkin et al., 2018). For instance, allowing students to read anything they choose may encourage intrinsic motivation since it enables them to explore subjects they are interested in (Garn & Jolly, 2014). In addition, interactive activities such as group discussions, peer sharing, and practical applications of reading abilities can enhance students' feelings of connection and engagement (Hew, 2016). Furthermore, providing extrinsic rewards or recognition—like praise from educators or awards for meeting reading objectives—can serve as an external motivator and encourage positive reading habits (Gao, 2023). By incorporating these techniques, teachers may foster a vibrant and encouraging learning atmosphere that inspires students to read for the rest of their lives (Wilhelm, 2016).

Besides, there is an urgent need to comprehend and address students in Cambodia's growing embrace of globalization and the ensuing need for English language competency among its students (Lor, 2021). Despite the inclusion of English courses in the national curriculum, there has been little study on the motivation of English reading among university students in Cambodia (Em, 2022; Chhom & Kep, 2022). While there are studies on the motivation of English language learners in Cambodia (e.g., Bon et al., 2022; Keo et al., 2022; Seng, 2023, etc.), the authors primarily address more general language learning and teaching issues. Consequently, this leaves a significant knowledge gap regarding the specific motivation guiding learners' use of English reading materials (Seng, 2023).

Therefore, this study is a substantial and original contribution to the field of English education in Cambodia and the broader contexts. Moreover, it shapes new perspectives for Cambodian education policymakers, enabling them to develop better English curricula—particularly in higher education—that align with students' motivation.

### *Research Objectives*

There are three objectives of this study which aim:

1. To examine if the students were more intrinsically or extrinsically motivated about English reading.

2. To examine if there was a statistically significant difference between male and female students' perceptions of English reading motivation.
3. To examine the levels of effective techniques that teachers should use to help improve students' English reading motivation as perceived by the students.

### **Methodology**

#### *Research Design*

This study employed a quantitative design using a cross-sectional survey (Wangenstein et al., 2011) to explore the motivation that Cambodian undergraduates had toward English reading. In addition, it aimed to investigate the levels of certain teaching strategies that teachers should use to support students' reading motivation based on students' perspectives.

#### *Population and Sampling Techniques*

The study's participants came from 31 institutions in 19 provinces, as well as Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia. Notably, they had enrolled in additional online English classes as a foreign language at a renowned private institution in Phnom Penh. In total, there were around 850 students, and they were divided into group telegrams based on their courses and academic backgrounds. Specifically, some of them were pursuing English majors, while others were studying various subjects. To select samples, simple random sampling techniques were employed as recommended by Sharma (2017). As a result, 507 students volunteered to participate in the survey.

#### *Research Tools and Data Collection Methods*

The study used an online survey questionnaire as the sole method for data collection. Specifically, the online questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale. In the first part, dedicated to demographic data, the respondents were asked to provide their gender, age, place of residence, academic year, and place of study. Following this, the second part aimed to ascertain the students' innate desire for reading in English. To achieve this, the authors modified 16 indicators from Middleton's (2011) tools.

Similarly, in the third segment, the authors adapted another set of 16 items from Middleton (2011) to assess students' extrinsic motivation for English reading. Meanwhile, the fourth part focused on exploring how teachers can motivate students to read in English. For this section, six questions were modified from Ismail et al. (2012).

Importantly, before the questions were incorporated into the Google form, three experts in the field were consulted to validate the questionnaire. Following this, a small pilot study involving 30 participants was conducted to test the instrument's reliability, yielding Cronbach's alpha values above 0.7 for all variables. According to Taber (2018), Cronbach's alpha values of 0.7 or higher indicate acceptable internal consistency for the items of the variables.

Last but not least, upon completing all the sections, students were required to confirm their consent, indicating that they allowed the researchers to use their responses for the study. Finally, they had to submit their completed forms.

**Table 1***Participants' Profile*

Demographic	Value	No. of Sample	Percentage
Gender	Male	277	54.60
	Female	230	45.40
Age Range	23-28	507	100
Living Place	Province	485	95.70
	Capital City	22	4.30
Year of Study	Year 1	104	20.50
	Year 2	136	26.80
	Year 3	103	20.30
	Year 4	164	32.30

Table 1 displays the demographic characteristics of the study's samples. This survey was completed by 507 volunteer EFL students. They came from 19 provinces, 31 universities, and one capital city in Cambodia. 230 females (45.40%) and 277 males (54.60%) were present. All of the participants ranged in age from 23 to 28. Just 4.30 percent of the students came from the capital city; the remaining 95.70 percent came from the provinces. First-year students make up 20.50% of the participants, followed by second-year students (26.70%), third-year students (20.30%), and fourth-year students (32.30%).

*Data Analysis*

After entering the data into SPSS, cleaning, transforming, and checking the normality of data, the authors performed the descriptive statistics of all indicators according to their variables, focusing on the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD). The authors also evaluated reliability using Cronbach's coefficient to confirm the pilot study. The authors then also utilized the independent-sample t-test to examine any variations in the average motivation ratings based on gender. The researchers used SPSS version 26.0 as the data analysis tool.

**Results***Descriptive Statistics of Students' Reading Motivation***Table 2***Descriptive Statistics of Students' Reading Motivation*

Variables/Items		M	SD
Item	Intrinsic Reading Motivation Items	3.73	0.48
1.	I enjoy reading in English because it allows me to discover new things about individuals or topics that interest me.	3.87	0.73
2.	When I read anything interesting in English, it makes me pleased.	3.97	0.77
3.	In English, I enjoy reading new things.	3.96	0.87
4.	I might read more about anything interesting that my instructor or friends tell me about.	3.72	0.83
5.	I like reading in English to keep up with current events in my nation or the world.	3.90	0.80
6.	In English, I like reading a variety of interesting topics.	3.95	0.83
7.	Reading about something I like in English is entertaining for me.	3.92	0.79
8.	When the topic is interesting, I find it difficult to stop reading.	3.52	0.72
9.	I enjoy reading good or lengthy English tales.	3.60	0.85
10.	When I am reading in English about a fascinating topic, I sometimes lose track of time.	3.50	0.89
11.	I am prepared to read difficult English texts when the topic is fascinating.	3.66	0.84
12.	When I am learning complicated topics from English materials, I like reading.	3.47	0.80
13.	When the topic of an English reading makes me think a bit harder, I like it.	3.58	0.93

Variables/Items		M	SD
14.	While reading in English, I enjoy putting myself to the challenge.	3.83	0.87
15.	I like challenging English reading passages.	3.53	0.93
16.	When an assignment is interesting, I find it easier to read difficult English materials.	3.78	0.89
<b>Extrinsic Reading Motivation Items</b>		<b>4.05</b>	<b>0.49</b>
1.	I am willing to put in the effort to read English more fluently than my classmates.	4.07	0.79
2.	I enjoy being the only student who understands what I have read in English.	3.95	0.75
3.	When I finish English reading assignments for class, I try to get more answers correct than other classmates do.	4.05	0.78
4.	I like to finish my reading assignments before the other students when I read in English.	3.88	0.75
5.	I want to be the best English reader in my class.	4.27	0.75
6.	When some classmates read English better than I do, I want to read more English materials.	4.10	0.81
7.	When I read in English, I frequently consider how well I read in comparison to others.	3.95	0.82
8.	I practice reading in English because I want to outperform my friends or classmates on reading examinations such as the TOEFL or IELTS.	3.97	0.79
9.	I enjoy it when my teacher says that I read well in English.	4.24	0.84
10.	I like it when my friends tell me that I am a good English reader.	4.02	0.88
11.	When my teacher asks me to read English aloud in class, I enjoy it.	4.09	0.78
12.	I enjoy hearing compliments on my English reading.	4.05	0.81
13.	I practice reading in English because it makes me feel good when I successfully answer the teacher's questions in class.	4.19	0.83
14.	When my friends come to me for help with their English reading assignments, I am overjoyed.	3.92	0.87
15.	To boost my academics, I wish to read in English.	4.01	0.81
16.	I must get a good grade in my English reading class.	4.04	0.77
<b>Overall (Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation)</b>		<b>3.89</b>	<b>0.45</b>

Note: Mean score of 1.00-1.80 = Lowest, 1.81-2.60 = Low, 2.61-3.40 = Moderate, 3.41-4.20 = High, and 4.21-5.00 = Highest

The total score and descriptive data for both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for reading in English are shown in Table 2.

*Intrinsic Reading Motivation Items:* The mean ( $M$ ) intrinsic motivation score across all items is 3.73 ( $SD = 0.48$ ), indicating that, on average, respondents reported high levels of intrinsic motivation for reading in English. The minimum score on these items is 3.47 (item 12), while the maximum is 3.97 (item 2), reflecting a high level of intrinsic motivation. The individual items within this category reveal specific aspects of intrinsic motivation. For instance, Cambodian students tend to enjoy reading in English when it allows them to discover new things (item 1:  $M = 3.87$ ), and they find it difficult to stop reading when the topic is interesting (item 8:  $M = 3.52$ ).

*Extrinsic Reading Motivation Items:* The mean extrinsic motivation score across all items is 4.05 ( $SD = 0.49$ ). This suggests that, on average, respondents demonstrate a high level of extrinsic motivation for reading in English. The items range from a minimum of 3.88 (item 4) to a maximum of 4.27 (item 5), indicating a range from high to highest levels of extrinsic motivation. Specific items within this category illustrate that respondents are willing to put effort into reading English to outperform their classmates (item 1:  $M = 4.07$ ), and they enjoy it when their teacher or friends acknowledge their English reading skills (item 9:  $M = 4.24$ ).

*Overall (Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation):* The overall mean motivation score is 3.89 ( $SD = 0.45$ ). This suggests that, on average, respondents exhibit high levels of motivation for reading in English, considering both intrinsic and extrinsic aspects.

### *Comparing Mean Differences*

**Table 3.**  
*Mean Differences in Reading Motivation*

Variables	Male (n =277)		Females (n = 230)		Independent t-Test			
	M	SD	M	SD	t-test	df	p-value	Std. Error
Intrinsic	3.78	0.54	3.67	0.40	2.373	505	0.018	0.4310
Extrinsic	4.09	0.49	3.99	0.48	2.275	505	0.023	0.4196
Overall	3.93	0.48	3.83	0.40	2.517	505	0.012	0.4013

Note: P-value is significantly different at  $< 0.05$

Table 3 presents that there was a statistically significant difference in the reported levels between male and female students, according to their perceptions of intrinsic reading motivation,  $t(505) = 3.373$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.018$ . Thus, male and female students had different perceptions. Male students ( $M = 3.78$ ,  $SD = 0.54$ ) had higher intrinsic motivation than female students ( $M = 3.67$ ,  $SD = 0.40$ ).

There was also a statistically significant difference in the reported extrinsic reading motivation,  $t(505) = 2.275$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.023$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.023$ . Thus, the result means male and female students had different perceptions of extrinsic reading motivation, and according to the mean scores reported, male students ( $M = 4.09$ ,  $SD = 0.49$ ) had a higher perception of intrinsic motivation than female students ( $M = 3.99$ ,  $SD = 0.48$ ).

Overall, there was also a statistically significant difference in the reported levels between male and female students' perceptions of combined reading motivation,  $t(505) = 2.517$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.012$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.012$ . Thus, the result means they had different perceptions of combined reading motivation, and according to the mean scores reported, male students ( $M = 3.93$ ,  $SD = 0.48$ ) had higher intrinsic motivation than female students respectively ( $M = 3.83$ ,  $SD = 0.40$ ).

### *Activities to Improve Students' Reading Motivation*

**Table 4**  
*Activities to Improve Students' Reading Motivation*

Activities		M	SD
1.	Teachers should let students explain to others what they have understood from the text.	4.36	0.71
2.	Teachers should ask students about the main idea in the text.	4.28	0.75
3.	Teachers should get students to rewrite the main idea of the texts they read.	4.19	0.77
4.	Teachers should help students with unfamiliar vocabulary or idioms.	4.15	0.90
5.	Teachers should shape what students have explained to others to match the writer's message or messages.	4.08	0.80
6.	Teachers should let students predict the writer's message or messages in the text.	3.92	0.86

Table 4 illustrates the results of the study regarding activities that teachers should do to improve students' reading motivation perceived by student participants. It provides insight into how students rate these activities in terms of what teachers should do. All the activities were categorized



from the high mean scores to the highest mean scores (the mean is between 3.92 and 4.36). The reports represent different techniques or approaches that teachers can employ to enhance students' reading motivation. These techniques include allowing students to explain their understanding of the text to others, asking about the main idea, encouraging students to rewrite the main idea, assisting them with unfamiliar vocabulary, shaping students' explanations to align with the writer's messages, and fostering predictions about the writer's messages. These techniques vary in terms of their mean scores, indicating the level of agreement by the surveyed participants. The highest mean score ( $M = 4.36$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ) was observed for activity one: "teachers letting students explain to others what they have understood from the text," suggesting that this technique was highly valued by the respondents. In contrast, the lowest mean score ( $M = 3.92$ ,  $SD = 0.86$ ) was found for activity 6 "teachers should let students predict the writer's message (s) in the text," indicating relatively less agreement among participants regarding the importance of this particular technique.

### Discussion

The findings indicate that Cambodian students are motivated to read in English both internally and externally. Notably, male students exhibit higher motivation levels than female students. In particular, peer-required activities, such as debates and discussions, prove effective in boosting reading motivation. These results underscore the importance of interactive teaching methods and highlight the need to consider gender differences when designing instructional strategies and materials.

When compared to previous studies, these findings both align with and diverge from existing literature. On the one hand, they are consistent with the works of D'Lima et al. (2014), Kærsgaard et al. (2021), and McGeown and Warhurst (2020), who reported gender-based motivational differences—males often being motivated by competitiveness and females by curiosity. On the other hand, they contradict the findings of Em et al. (2024) who observed no significant gender differences. This discrepancy may stem from differences in sample size, research context, or measurement methods.

From a theoretical perspective, Self-Determination Theory (SDT), Deci and Ryan (1985a, 1985b) provide a valuable framework for understanding these results. According to SDT, fulfilling the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness enhances intrinsic motivation. Students' enjoyment of peer interactions, which satisfy their needs for competence and relatedness, reflects this. In addition, Goal Orientation Theory as noted by Kaplan and Maehr (2007) helps explain the observed gender differences, suggesting that males tend to adopt performance-oriented goals, while females are more inclined toward mastery-oriented goals.

Given these theoretical insights along with the suggested activities observed in the current study, the pedagogical implications are significant. First, it is crucial for teachers to implement gender-responsive strategies that foster motivation in both male and female students. Selecting diverse and culturally relevant reading materials, offering choices to accommodate varied interests, and organizing interactive activities—such as structured discussions in gender-balanced groups—can promote inclusivity and engagement. Furthermore, integrating multimedia resources and providing positive reinforcement can further enhance motivation and sustain students' interest in English reading.

As compared and discussed; by addressing gender differences and emphasizing inclusive, student-centered approaches, this study offers practical recommendations for improving English reading motivation among Cambodian students. Ultimately, these strategies can contribute to better literacy outcomes and a more engaging learning environment for all learners.

## Conclusion

According to the study, which looked at Cambodian students' reading motivation, the students are highly motivated to read in English both internally and externally. In all categories, male students outperformed female students in terms of drive. It has also been discovered that techniques like discussing important topics and exchanging knowledge are useful in increasing reading motivation. Gender differences also brought attention to the need for specialized teaching strategies.

Finally, the study's findings offer several practical suggestions to enhance reading motivation among Cambodian students. To begin with, teachers should implement targeted interactive techniques, such as structured peer-led reading circles where students summarize and question each other about texts. In particular, organizing debate competitions can engage male students' performance-oriented motivations, whereas incorporating creative projects like book-related art or personal response journals may appeal to female students' mastery-oriented goals. Moreover, providing a variety of culturally relevant and gender-inclusive reading materials, including local stories and global texts with diverse perspectives, can further increase relevance and motivation. In addition, integrating digital platforms like interactive e-books and gamified reading apps accommodates different learning styles, thereby sustaining student engagement. Equally important, goal-oriented programs—such as reading milestone charts and recognition systems—can effectively reward both effort and achievement. To promote inclusivity, forming gender-balanced collaborative groups ensures that all students are encouraged to share their perspectives. Taken together, these strategies aim to not only improve reading motivation but also foster a lasting appreciation for English reading in the Cambodian educational setting.

## *Limitations and Future Studies*

This study offers significant insights regarding reading motivation in Cambodia; however, numerous limitations must be recognized. The study took place within a specific cultural and educational context, making it difficult to extrapolate the findings beyond Cambodia. Furthermore, the dependence on online self-reporting techniques may have introduced response biases, such as social desirability or recollection bias, thus compromising the accuracy of the reported motivation levels. Moreover, the study concentrated exclusively on the students' perceptions, neglecting other significant elements such as prior reading experiences, socioeconomic status, and family history.

Thus, future studies should utilize a more diverse and representative participant pool to address these challenges. Incorporating objective measurements of reading motivation and investigating a broader array of contextual variables is equally essential for a more comprehensive understanding. Additionally, employing a mixed-methods approach that integrates quantitative analysis with qualitative investigation may produce more comprehensive and nuanced results. Qualitative methods, even though they have smaller sample sizes and cannot be used in other situations, give us a full picture of what motivates students. Consequently, future researchers should incorporate interpretive qualitative designs in forthcoming studies. By doing so, they can acquire profound insights into students' motivation and significantly augment the field's comprehension of reading engagement within the Cambodian context.

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