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Motivation, Learning Styles and Strategies in English Language among First-Year College Students in Public HEI's in Sulu

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ABSTRACT

English, as the most frequently spoken second language, and sometimes referred to as the global lingua franca, acts as a bridge for communication across cultures and nations. Learning English is a strong tool that allows people to fully participate in the global society by encouraging understanding, collaboration, and personal growth. This descriptive-comparative paper analyzed the motivation, learning styles, and learning strategies of first year college students from public higher education institutions (HEIs) in Sulu, Philippines. Participants were purposively sampled (n = 200) to participate in the study. Findings indicated that first year college students in the province were integratively motivated to learn the English language. They particularly engaged in psychological and sociological learning styles through speaking to fluent English speakers, understanding emotional cues, reflection, and self-assessment. They engage in metacognitive (planning, organizing thoughts) and cognitive (assessment, analysis) to learn and understand English. Educators should adopt a holistic approach to teaching English, one that motivates students, respects their individual learning styles, and equips them with effective learning strategies. Such an approach could likely lead to more effective and meaningful language learning experiences, which could improve students' proficiency and confidence in using English.

Keywords: Learning Strategies; Learning Styles; Motivation; English as Secondary Language

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1. Introduction

The internationalization of higher education has led to a significant increase in the use of English as the primary medium of instruction over the past decade [1, 2]. Having English language skills is crucial for the development of a learner's linguistic capabilities, cultural awareness, and civic engagement [3]. In the context of the internationalization of higher education, the implementation of English medium instruction (EMI) is frequently initiated through policies influenced by globalizing forces and a progressive agenda [4]. At the individual level, it has been observed that there is a growing trend among students to choose English as a medium of instruction to enhance their English language proficiency and expand their prospects for employment [5].

In the Philippines, it has been reported that the current 10-year basic education curriculum continues to be congested, resulting in limited time for students to acquire and master the required knowledge and skills upon completion of high school, at which time students are not legally eligible to enter contracts for employment and entrepreneurship [6, 7]. There is a noticeable lack in both maturity and competencies among students across various subject areas upon their completion of high school [6, 8, 9]. It is evident that the performance of basic education students in the Philippines, as measured by the national achievement tests (NATs), consistently falls significantly below the desired target of 75% set by the Department of Education [10].

Several factors impact effective learning in the English language. For example, learners' motivation is strongly influenced by their surroundings, including their transition from high school to college, the learning environment, and anxiety-inducing components [2, 11, 12]. Motivation is widely recognized as the primary catalyst for acquiring proficiency in a foreign language, as it is closely linked to an individual's subjective experiences, which are shaped by their internal desires [13]. Other studies pointed out that learning styles could also play a role in learning a language. In one study [14], findings showed a significant correlation between the adoption of an effective learning style and the attainment of favorable language learning outcomes in students. It is important to consider that various factors, including the learners' native language background and their personal traits, can influence their individual learning style.

There is a growing emphasis on understanding motivation [11, 15], learning styles [16, 17], and learning strategies [2, 18] of students. In line with this, researchers also call for in-depth implementation of student-centered teaching strategies to ensure that learning processes take place. The implementation of a student-centered learning approach was found to greatly impact training and development opportunities for educators, the size of the class, the amount of time dedicated to learning activities, student population diversity, the assessment of instructional gains, and the efficient administration of resources [19]. Among Filipino campus journalists, trainings and mentorship programs have been found to significantly contribute to develop their writing competencies, linguistic knowledge, and literary skills [20]. Understanding motivation, learning styles, and learning strategies could help in determining effective teaching processes and approaches for students' needs.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Learning Motivation

In the past few decades, several researchers and educators have undertaken studies aimed at examining the influence of motivation on students learning English as a Secondary Language (ESL) [21]. In the United Arab Emirates, a significant number of students encounter challenges when learning English as a second language, due to various factors such as a lack of motivation because of perceived complexity of academic tasks [22]. The significant role of motivation in the development of students' capacity building and language skills is widely associated with learning objectives, efforts, vitality, involvement, and perseverance [23, 24]. The level of motivation does not vary among different intelligence groups. In fact, persons with lower intelligence but high motivation have the potential to achieve more success in comparison to highly intellectual people who lack motivation [25]. A student with strong motivation is more likely to have a sense of purpose and dedication towards certain aims or goals [26].

Motivation in learning a foreign language is not solely a personal matter, but is influenced by the social attitudes in the student's environment towards the language of the target group [27]. Motivation can be instrumental and integrative [28–30]. Instrumental motivation pertains to the student's predisposition to learn a language for practical goals, such as work or travel. On the other hand, integrative motiva-

tion relates to the aspiration to learn a language to effectively adapt into the environment of the target language [31].

Instrumental motivation is highly valued in educational environments [32], whereas the most effective language learners are those who have a positive connection with people who communicate the language, hold admiration for the culture, and possess a strong desire to become familiar with or even integrate into the society where the language is spoken [33]. Researchers in second language learning suggest that understanding the motivational factors of learners is crucial in determining how they apply language strategies [31, 34–36]. Although the large extent of studies was established about instrumental-integrative motivation, inconsistencies in study findings were prominent across language learning processes. Instrumental motivation, which emphasizes practical benefits such as career advancement, is more prevalent among learners in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) [37, 38]. However, integrative motivation as a significant driving force, where learners are motivated by a desire to integrate into the culture of the language they are learning [39]. This inconsistency points to a research gap in understanding the varying degrees of instrumental and integrative motivation across different contexts.

2.2. Learning Styles

Learning is subjective and distinct to everyone, resulting in behavioral patterns that differ from others [40]. Research on learning styles seeks to learn how students process new information, considering the emotional, cognitive, and physical aspects of learning [41]. Researchers have found that individuals have different preferences and approaches to learning, which can impact their ability to acquire and retain information effectively [42]. Previous research has documented the impact of individual variations on the process of learning and emphasized the importance of adapting instruction to the needs of students [43]. It has been acknowledged that identifying the specific individual traits of students poses a challenge when determining the most effective pedagogical strategies [44–46].

Learning style is the manner in which a student starts to focus on, process, integrate, and remember new and difficult material [47]. They define learning styles as a stimulus where "a person concentrates on, processes, internalizes, and remembers new and difficult academic information or skills" [48]. Each individual experiences a unique interaction between these elements [49]. To improve long-term memory and retention, it is essential to identify what triggers student's concentration, maintain it, and adapt to their natural processing style [50].

Based on the Dunn and Dunn model, learning styles can be environmental, emotional, sociological, physiological, and psychological [49, 51]. Environmental variables include sound, temperature, lighting, and appearance. The emotional variable includes motivation, persistence, responsibilities, and structure. The sociological variables are self, partner, colleagues, group, and adulthood. The physiological variable includes perception, intake, time, and movement. The psychological variable comprises impulsive-reflective, global-analytic processors, and hemisphericity [49, 52–54]. The Dunn and Dunn model has gained popularity due to its foundation in educational settings, which contributes to its ecological validity [55].

Several studies have been conducted applying the concept of Dunn and Dunn learning style model. For instance, soft lighting, tactual and kinesthetic instructional tools was employed [56], with small group teaching methods. The study found that better exam scores were associated with a more positive attitude and motivation to learn. How participants' learning styles impacted their evaluations of learning and memory performance was examined [57]. Receiving material in a person's preferred learning style did not affect recall performance, but did increase immediate evaluations of learning (like participants perceived better retention when provided in their preferred style).

2.3. Learning Strategies

Learning strategies can be described as specific patterns of information processing activities that individuals employ to effectively prepare for an upcoming memory exam [58]. Alternatively, they can also be seen as the abilities that students utilize to learn new knowledge or complete tasks in a more efficient manner [59]. From a theoretical standpoint, the application of strategies is essential not only for carrying out uncomplicated tasks that demand minimal exertion, but also for addressing exceedingly complicated tasks that necessitate high concentration and attention [60].

Considerable academic research emphasizes the significance of learning strategies in improving the learning of a

second language[61–63]. In language learning, these strategies act as "a resource that learners can turn to in solving language learning tasks"[64]. Learning strategies can be cognitive[65–67], metacognitive[65, 67, 68], memory[69], and affective[70, 71] methods.

The role of learning strategies in college success is crucial as they have been found to enhance academic performance[72] and increase motivation and confidence[73]. However, although studies were made to analyze and determine the preference of learning strategies, inconsistencies were prominent on several study findings. Students who performed better in college introductory science courses exhibited a higher frequency of utilizing specific cognitive and metacognitive strategies compared to their peers who achieved lower grades[74]. A total of 12 studies were examined to investigate the relationship between various strategies and academic outcomes[75]. Their findings revealed a positive correlation between strategies such as managing time, metacognition, effort, and analytical thinking and academic performance. Identifying learning processes that are distinctive to different subjects can enhance pedagogical understanding and offer beneficial observations for improving educational methods that are designed to meet the needs of various academic disciplines[76].

2.4. Problem Statement

This paper analyzed the motivation, learning styles and strategies in learning English language among first-year college students in Sulu, Philippines. Quantitative analysis was conducted to describe the motivation levels (instrumental and integrative) and preferred learning styles (environmental, emotional, sociological, and psychological) of college students. Different language learning strategies (memory, metacognitive, cognitive, and affective) were also identified and characterized. Below are the specific questions to be answered in this paper.

(a) What is the level of motivation among first-year college students in Sulu, Philippines?
(b) How engaged are first-year college students in their preferred learning styles for learning the English language?
(c) How well do students perform using various language learning strategies?
(d) Is there a significant difference in college students' motivation based on demographic factors?
(e) Is there a significant difference in college students' engagement with learning styles based on demographic factors?
(f) Is there a significant difference in college students' use of language learning strategies based on demographic factors?
(g) Is there a significant correlation between motivation, engagement with learning styles, and the use of language learning strategies?

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Research Design

This paper was a descriptive-comparative study on the motivation, learning styles, and strategies of first year college students in ESL among public HEIs in Sulu, Philippines. Descriptive design intends to characterize people, things, or circumstances by observing them in their natural setting[77, 78]. In descriptive studies, characteristics of a population, issues within a unit, an organization, and differences in traits or behaviors between institutions are examined[79–81]. Studies that are descriptive may be descriptively oriented or descriptively comparative[81].

Quantitative descriptions were developed to understand the motivation, learning styles, and learning strategies of first year college students in Sulu, Philippines. Their motivation (i.e., integrative and instrumental motivation), learning styles (i.e., environment, emotional, sociological, and psychological), and learning strategies (i.e., memory, cognitive, and metacognitive) were descriptively analyzed. These characteristics were then compared based on their demographic profiles (i.e., sex, monthly family income, and course).

3.2. Population and Sampling

First year college students from Sulu, Philippines participated in the study. They were purposively sampled to be the study participants. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method where researchers select participants using criteria such as expertise in the research topic or intention of respondents to participate[82, 83]. Purposive selection involves selecting groups of units to achieve a similar average or percentage to the totality based on statistically known

characteristics [84]. In essence, the researcher determines the necessary knowledge and actively seeks individuals who possess the information through their expertise or experience [79, 85–87].

Several key characteristics were considered when sampling the participants. An initial survey was conducted to seek participation from college students enrolled in public HEIs. This initial survey identified potential participants. A criterion was established, which included participants who were currently enrolled in at least one semester in college, first year college students, have units in English or communication subjects, and regularly attended English classes. Participants were selected from Sulu State College (SSC), Mindanao State University-Sulu (MSU), and Lapak Agricultural College Siasi (LAC).

3.3. Research Instrument

This study developed a questionnaire that elicited the responses from participants. Questionnaires provide an objective method of gathering data about individuals' knowledge, opinions, attitudes, and behavior [88, 89]. Questions should be sequentially numbered and organized in a manner that is coherent to the respondent, typically employing the 'funneling' strategy. This technique involves starting with uncomplicated questions to make respondents comfortable, and then gradually narrowing down to more specialized questions [90]. When creating a questionnaire, items or questions are produced that necessitate the respondent to answer a sequence of statements or questions. After collecting participant responses, they are transformed into numerical forms and subjected to statistical analysis [91].

In designing the questionnaire, the concept of motivation [92], learning styles [93], and language learning strategies [94] was identified. Likert scales were designed based on the understanding of these concepts. Questionnaires should use basic, common and clear language [95]. To prevent complicated questions, researchers should avoid 'double barrel' questions or questions that ask two ideas at a time. Reducing grammatical difficulties like using active voice, repeating nouns instead of pronouns, and avoiding possessive forms [96–98]. This reduces cognitive demands on respondents, allowing them to focus on their response [99].

Validation and reliability tests were conducted to assess the accuracy and consistency of the questionnaire. The validity of a questionnaire can be assessed by a panel of experts who examine the underlying theoretical structure. This sort of validity relies on the extent to which a theoretical notion is accurately reflected in an operational measure indicated in the questionnaire [100]. Specifically, content validity, the extent to which the instrument accurately and comprehensively evaluates or measures the intended concept [101–103], was conducted in assessing the questionnaire. A panel from Sulu State University was designated to assess the quality of the questionnaire developed. Reliability, on the other hand, pertains to the extent to which the outcomes achieved through a measurement and technique may be replicated [104, 105]. Reliability issues can occur when there is a discrepancy between observers or measuring instruments, such as a questionnaire, or when the property being tested is unstable [106]. One reliability test is internal consistency (or homogeneity) of the questionnaire, which refers to the degree that the items of an instrument assess the same construct. The advantage of using an internal consistency index of dependability is that it may be determined after a single test administration, consequently eliminating the issues that arise from conducting tests over various time periods [107]. Cronbach's alpha, a commonly used reliability test for internal consistency [100], yielded motivation, learning styles, and learning strategies scales an acceptable alpha level of 0.737, 0.725, 0.723, respectively.

3.4. Data Gathering Procedure

To gather data, permission to distribute the questionnaire was first obtained from the Sulu State College Dean of Graduate Studies. Subsequently, school administrators, including the College President, Chancellor, and Deans of public HEIs, were consulted. Once an approval was received, a face-to-face survey was conducted within the premises of the HEIs. To facilitate this, a dedicated booth was set up in a central location accessible to the participants, such as a common area or lobby. This booth was equipped with all necessary materials, including questionnaires, pens, and informational brochures to explain the purpose of the survey and ensure participants understood the process. Trained staff were present at the booth to assist with any questions, guide participants through the survey, and ensure that the process was smooth and efficient. They handed out a folder, which included a letter of participation, guidelines, terms for confidentiality, and the questionnaire. When the participants had

filled out the document, they needed to turn it over to the staff positioned in the booth. This process took two weeks to complete.

3.5. Data Analysis

JASP (Jeffreys's Amazing Statistics Program) version 0.18.2, an open-access statistics program, was used to analyze the participants' responses. In social sciences, researchers frequently generate multiple Likert-type items, which are subsequently organized into a 'survey scale' where a total score or mean score is computed for the scale items[108]. Frequently, this approach is advised, especially when researchers are trying to quantify abstract variables like trainee motivation, patient happiness, and physician confidence, where in such cases, using a single survey question is unlikely to comprehensively capture the idea under evaluation[109].

In descriptive analysis, the scale was interpreted using descriptors based on the calculated composite mean. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the characteristics (like level of motivation) of the samples. Descriptive analysis provided understanding of the data, allowing researchers to present a clear picture of the data characteristics before moving on to inferential analyses, herein, a comparative analysis.

Comparative analysis was conducted to analyze the differences in motivation, learning styles, and learning strategies of first year college students using parametric tests. Student's t-test and one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze the differences between motivation learning styles and learning strategies. In this study, a p-value of less than 0.05 was deemed statistically significant; hence, rejecting the null hypothesis.

4. Results

4.1. Demographic Profile of the Students

This paper analyzed the demographic profile of the students who participated in the survey. Findings in **Table 1** indicated that half of the students who participated were male, and the other half were female. Most students had a family income of >Php17,001 (38%). There were students whose parents earn <Php7,000 (28%), while others earn Php7,001–Php12,000 (28%). Small number of participants had monthly family income Php12,001–Php17,000 (13%). The survey collected responses from students enrolled in education courses (43%), non-bachelor courses (21.5%), agriculture (13%), nursing (12%), and business administration (10.5%).

Table 1. Demographic profile of the 200 participants.

		N	Percent
Gender	Male	100	50%
	Female	100	50%
Monthly Income	7,000 & below	56	28%
	7,001 to 12,000	26	13%
	12,001 to 17,000	42	21%
	17,001 & above	76	38%
Course	Education	86	43%
	AB (Liberal Arts)	43	21.5%
	BSBA	21	10.5%
	Agriculture	26	13%
	Nursing	24	12%

4.2. Students' Motivation

Findings in **Table 2** indicated that first year college students from Sulu, Philippines were highly motivated to learn the English language. Students had high instrumental motivation ($\bar{x}$ = 2.9645; S.D. = 0.4947) and high integrative motivation ($\bar{x}$ = 3.034; S.D. = 0.5165) in learning the English language.

In instrumental motivation, students believed that *"it is essential to learn English if you want to go overseas"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.26; S.D. = 0.724), *"speaking and writing English well may help you succeed and accomplish more in life"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.195; S.D. = 0.615), *"it's crucial to learn English since it will help you get a decent career"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.19; S.D. = 0.785), and *"acquiring information in English is crucial to my development as a well-rounded and proficient individual"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.14; S.D. = 0.709).

In integrative motivation, students believed that *"[they] can enjoy English art and literature"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.16; S.D. = 0.596), *"[they] can talk with a natural accent, use English idioms, and communicate with tone"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.105; S.D. = 0.613), *"[their] ability to openly engage in academic, social, and professional activities, as well as other cultural groups, is enhanced by [their] study of English"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.07; S.D. = 0.691), and *"[their] ability to study English allows [them] to reach [their] full potential"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.065; S.D. = 0.593).

Table 2. Students' Language Learning Motivation.

Motivation Scale		Mean ($\bar{x}$)	S.D.	Rating
Instrumental Motivation				
1	My primary emphasis is on utilizing English for homework and tests in class.	2.74	0.828	High
2	I talk or write in class, but all I do is repeat the textbooks without actually expressing myself.	2.61	0.843	Low
3	I don't want to read other English literature, such as newspapers or magazines; I only want to read English textbooks for my university coursework.	2.45	0.975	Low
4	It's crucial to learn English since it will help you get a decent career.	3.19	0.785	High
5	Acquiring more in my higher education is more important to me than really acquiring the English language.	2.965	0.690	High
6	It is essential to learn English if you want to go overseas.	3.26	0.724	High
7	I need to learn English in order to become a better educated person.	3.14	0.709	High
8	Acquiring information in English is crucial to my development as a well-rounded and proficient individual.	3.16	0.653	High
9	Speaking and writing English well may help you succeed and accomplish more in life.	3.195	0.615	High
10	People appreciate me more when I speak English well.	2.935	0.673	High
	Composite Mean	*2.9645*	*0.4947*	*High*
Integrative Motivation				
1	I can comprehend English-language literature, novels, films, and other media because I study the language.	3.015	0.786	High
2	My understanding and appreciation of native speakers' ways of living have improved as a result of my study of English.	2.91	0.731	High
3	Having studied English, I am able to maintain communication with friends who live abroad.	2.95	0.774	High
4	I can have fascinating conversations in English with individuals from other countries because I study English.	2.955	0.765	High
5	I may impart my knowledge to others by studying English, such as by providing instructions to a visitor.	3.085	0.692	High
6	My ability to openly engage in academic, social, and professional activities, as well as other cultural groups, is enhanced by my study of English.	3.07	0.691	High
7	I can talk with a natural accent, use English idioms, and communicate with tone thanks to my English studies.	3.105	0.613	High
8	I can enjoy English art and literature since I study English.	3.16	0.596	High
9	My ability to be friendly and open-minded is a result of my study of English.	3.030	0.641	High
10	My ability to study English allows me to reach my full potential.	3.065	0.593	High
	Composite Mean	*3.034*	*0.5165*	*High*

Legend: 3.50–5.00 (Very High); 2.50–3.49 (High); 1.50–2.49 (Low); 1.00–1.49 (Very Low).

4.3. Students' Learning Styles

Findings of the study in **Table 3** indicated that the first-year college students from Sulu, Philippines were highly engaged in environmental ($\bar{x}$ = 3.024; S.D. = 0.427), emotional ($\bar{x}$ = 3.071; S.D. = 0.3962), sociological ($\bar{x}$ = 3.215; S.D. = 0.446), and psychological ($\bar{x}$ = 3.2625; S.D. = 0.4489) learning styles. Descriptively, it appeared that college students were more likely engaged in psychological and sociological aspects of learning the English language.

Table 3. Students' Learning Styles in English.

Learning Style Scale		Mean ($\bar{x}$)	S.D.	Rating
Environmental				
1	I can focus whether I'm hungry or not.	3.035	0.644	High
2	I go to a peaceful spot to study and learn English.	3.035	0.629	High
3	I have enough light in the room where I study and learn English.	3.02	0.633	High
4	I study in a cozy place where I am learning English.	2.91	0.666	High
5	I study and pick up English in a well-ventilated, learning-friendly space.	3.065	0.521	High
6	In a loud place, I am able to do things.	3.18	0.714	High
7	When I adjust the surroundings to suit my preferred learning approaches, I study and acquire English skills.	3.095	0.563	High
8	Even with simple, inconspicuous classroom décor, I am still able to focus on the information being taught.	2.89	0.714	High
9	When the desks are set up in conventional straight lines, I learn more quickly and effectively.	3.01	0.637	High
10	In a classroom setting that is coherent, I learn more quickly and effectively.	3.175	0.543	High
	Composite Mean	*3.0420*	*0.427*	*High*
Emotional				
1	If I'm motivated, I can learn English.	3.07	0.638	High
2	I'm very persistent while learning English.	3.09	0.559	High
3	I take great responsibility while I study English.	3.075	0.539	High
4	I study English when I'm feeling upbeat.	3.115	0.619	High
5	When I'm studying English, I become tense.	2.945	0.586	High
6	Studying one lesson at a time helps me learn English.	3.04	0.538	High
7	Without instruction or reminders, I easily learn English.	3.055	0.559	High
8	Every time I attempt to speak English, I can quickly gauge how other people will respond.	3.155	0.492	High
9	Even when the professors talk too loudly, I'm not disturbed.	2.94	0.669	High
10	Every time the instructor employs a new technique, I am inspired to learn.	3.225	0.605	High
	Composite Mean	*3.071*	*0.3962*	*High*
Sociological				
1	I would rather study and acquire English on my own time.	3.205	0.667	High
2	I like to study English with other people.	3.19	0.613	High
3	If someone can demonstrate to me how to use various linguistic ideas in various contexts, I will learn more effectively.	3.21	0.676	High
4	I like to study and acquire English in a few different methods.	3.28	0.559	High
5	It is my preference to study and acquire English in the company of fluent English speakers.	3.255	0.539	High
6	Talking about something new and challenging helps me remember it better than reading about it.	3.22	0.619	High
7	I would rather study and acquire English on my own.	3.19	0.570	High
8	I like to study and learn English with other students.	3.225	0.596	High

Table 3. *Cont.*

Learning Style Scale		Mean ($\bar{x}$)	S.D.	Rating
Sociological				
9	I make diagrams or images to better grasp the subject.	3.165	0.685	High
10	If the instructor is teaching the material in both languages, I can grasp it effortlessly.	3.21	0.606	High
	Composite Mean	*3.2150*	*0.4460*	*High*
Psychological				
1	My favorite method for solving new or challenging problems is to make a schematic and use drawings to guide me through the process.	3.08	0.725	High
2	I like it when English lecturers provide more detailed answers.	3.29	0.661	High
3	I want to read about challenging subjects to understand more about them.	3.28	0.619	High
4	When I can't comprehend, I switch up my approach.	3.28	0.585	High
5	If I'm interested in the subject, I can understand it readily.	3.295	0.574	High
6	Usually, I find that I can agree or disagree with an author's point of view at different times.	3.25	0.590	High
7	When I am engaged in a subject, I can grasp what I read with ease.	3.325	0.539	High
8	I take a moment to reflect when I come across crucial material in the course.	3.365	0.568	High
9	I constantly consider in silence whether or not I know anything about the subject at hand.	3.295	0.528	High
10	I learn better audibly than visually.	3.165	0.647	High
	Composite Mean	*3.2625*	*0.4489*	*High*

Legend: 3.50–5.00 (Very High); 2.50–3.49 (High); 1.50–2.49 (Low); 1.00–1.49 (Very Low).

In psychological learning, college students were *"[taking] a moment to reflect when I come across crucial material in the course"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.365; S.D. = 0.568), *"engaged in a subject, [they] can grasp what I read with ease"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.325; S.D. = 0.539), *"constantly consider in silence whether or not I know anything about the subject"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.295; S.D. = 0.528), *"interested in the subject, [they] can understand it readily"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.295; S.D. = 0.574), and *"[liking] it when English lecturers provide more detailed answers"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.29; S.D. = 0.661).

In sociological learning, college students *"like to study and acquire English in a few different methods"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.28; S.D. = 0.559), *"[prefer] to study and acquire English in the company of fluent English speakers"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.255; S.D. = 0.539), *"like to study and learn English with other students"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.255; S.D. = 0.596). They thought that *"talking about something new and challenging helps me remember it better than reading about it"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.22; S.D. = 0.619) and *"if someone can demonstrate to [them] how to use various linguistic ideas in various contexts, [they] will learn more effectively"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.21; S.D. = 0.676).

In emotional learning, college students felt that *"every time the instructor employs a new technique, [it] inspired [them] to learn"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.225; S.D. = 0.605) and *"every time [they] attempt to speak English, [they] can quickly gauge how other people will respond"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.155; S.D. = 0.492). They *"study English when [they are] feeling upbeat"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.155; S.D. = 0.619), *"[are] very persistent while learning English"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.09; S.D. = 0.559) and *"take great responsibility while [they] study English"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.075; S.D. = 0.539).

In environmental learning, college students believed that *"[when] in loud place, [they are] able to do things"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.18; S.D. = 0.714), *"[when] in a classroom setting that is coherent, [they] learn more quickly and effectively"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.175; S.D. = 0.543), and *"when [they] adjust the surroundings to suit [their] preferred learning approaches, [they can] study and acquire English skills"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.095; S.D. = 0.563). They *"study and pick up English in a well-ventilated, learning-friendly space"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.065; S.D. = 0.521), *"go to a peaceful spot to study and learn English"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.035; S.D. = 0.629), and *"can focus whether I'm hungry or not"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.035; S.D. = 0.644).

4.4. Students' Learning Strategies

The findings in **Table 4** indicate that college students were highly engaged in metacognitive ($\bar{x}$ = 3.184; S.D. = 0.4251), cognitive ($\bar{x}$ = 3.155; S.D. = 0.3722), memory ($\bar{x}$ = 3.0655; S.D. = 0.417), and affective ($\bar{x}$ = 3.017; S.D. = 0.3725) learning strategies. Descriptive analysis showed that the students were highly engaged on metacognition and cognition, compared to memory and affective learning state.

Table 4. Students' Learning Strategies in English.

	Learning Strategies Scale	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	S.D.	Rating
Memory				
1	I consider the connections between the new information I acquire in English and what I already know.	3.085	0.508	High
2	I try to recall important English terms by using them in phrases.	3.14	0.549	High
3	To assist me recall new English words, I link their sound to an image or visual.	3.075	0.592	High
4	When I learn a new term in English, I try to visualize a scenario or setting in which it may be utilized.	3.08	0.543	High
5	I learn new words in English by using rhymes.	3.02	0.601	High
6	I use flash cards to help me retain new English words.	3.015	0.588	High
7	I physically enact English vocabulary.	3.045	0.560	High
8	I go over my English classes a lot.	3.115	0.541	High
9	I use visual aids like pages, boards, or street signs to help me recall new words and phrases in English.	3.04	0.591	High
10	I like reading in English.	3.04	0.547	High
	Composite Mean	*3.0655*	*0.417*	*High*
Cognitive				
1	I repeatedly utter and write new words.	3.10	0.470	High
2	I attempt to speak with a natural accent.	3.165	0.537	High
3	I work on my English word sounds.	3.22	0.492	High
4	I utilize the terms I know in English in a variety of ways.	3.235	0.459	High
5	I strike up discussions in English.	3.095	0.563	High
6	I attend English-language movies or watch English-language TV.	3.185	0.521	High
7	I use English when I write reports, notes, messages, or letters.	3.175	0.485	High
8	I search for terms in my native tongue that have English equivalents.	3.13	0.551	High
9	I look for study techniques that help me do better in English.	3.205	0.578	High
10	I take part in a professional group chat to increase my English language proficiency.	3.04	0.591	High
	Composite Mean	*3.155*	*0.372*	*High*
Metacognitive				
1	I make an effort to utilize my English in as many contexts as possible.	3.125	0.557	High
2	I am aware of my errors in English, and I utilize that knowledge to help me perform better.	3.17	0.602	High
3	I listen when someone speaks in English.	3.22	0.559	High
4	I'm looking for ways to improve my English language skills.	3.245	0.580	High
5	I make sure to include time for studying English in my routine.	3.105	0.570	High

Table 4. *Cont.*

Learning Strategies Scale		Mean ($\bar{x}$)	S.D.	Rating
Metacognitive				
6	I search for English-speaking persons to converse with.	3.14	0.567	High
7	I try to find as many chances as I can to read in English.	3.225	0.525	High
8	I'm really motivated to read as much English as I can.	3.225	0.505	High
9	I am considering strategies to enhance my English language study.	3.17	0.521	High
10	Whenever I feel nervous speaking in English, I attempt to calm myself.	3.22	0.550	High
	Composite Mean	*3.184*	*0.425*	*High*
Affective				
1	Despite my fear of making a mistake, I push myself to talk in English.	3.095	0.432	High
2	When I do well in English, I treat myself to a gift or reward.	3.025	0.605	High
3	I journal my own emotions in a language learning notebook.	3.05	0.582	High
4	When I am studying English, I chat to someone else about how I'm feeling.	3.075	0.575	High
5	I study English when I'm feeling upbeat.	3.115	0.550	High
6	Due to my little vocabulary, I am not comfortable speaking or writing in English.	2.795	0.689	High
7	I always push myself to communicate in English, even if my grammar is terrible.	3.01	0.649	High
8	Every time I am asked a question or given an answer in English, particularly in front of the class, I always respond favorably.	3.03	0.557	High
9	If no one else offers to report first, that's when I always offer to.	2.87	0.711	High
10	When others recognize my attempts to learn English, I'm thrilled.	3.105	0.613	High
	Composite Mean	*3.017*	*0.372*	*High*

Legend: 3.50–5.00 (Very High); 2.50–3.49 (High); 1.50–2.49 (Low); 1.00–1.49 (Very Low).

In engaging with metacognitive learning, college students *"try to find as many chances as [they] can to read in English"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.225; S.D. = 0.525), *"[are] motivated to read as much English as I can"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.225; S.D. = 0.505), *"looking for ways to improve [their] English language skills"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.245; S.D. = 0.580), *"listen when someone speaks in English"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.22; S.D. = 0.559), and *"whenever [they] feel nervous speaking in English, [they] attempt to calm [themselves]"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.22; S.D. = 0.550).

In cognitive learning, college students *"utilize the terms [they] know in English in a variety of ways"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.235; S.D. = 0.459), *"work on [their] English word sounds"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.22; S.D. = 0.492), *"look for study techniques that help [them] do better in English"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.205; S.D. = 0.578), *"attend English-language movies or watch English-language TV"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.185; S.D. = 0.521), and *"use English when [they] write reports, notes, messages, or letters"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.175; S.D. = 0.485).

In memory learning, they *"try to recall important English terms by using them in phrases"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.14; S.D. = 0.549), *"go over my English classes a lot"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.115; S.D. = 0.541), *"consider the connections between the new information [they] acquire in English and what [they] already know"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.085; S.D. = 0.508), *"link their sound to an image or visual to assist [them] recall new English words"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.075; S.D. = 0.592), and *"physically enact English vocabulary"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.045; S.D. = 0.560).

Affective learning yielded the lowest mean among the learning strategies in English. College students *"study English when [they are] feeling upbeat"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.115; S.D. = 0.550), *"[feel] thrilled when others recognize [their] attempts to learn English"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.105; S.D. = 0.613), *"push [themselves] to talk in English despite [their] fear of making a mistake* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.095; S.D. = 0.432), and *"chat to someone else about how [they are] feeling when [they are] studying English"* ($\bar{x}$ = 3.075; S.D. = 0.575).

4.5. Comparative Analysis on Motivation Based on Students' Demographics

The comparative analysis presented in **Table 5** indicates that no significant difference on the instrumental motivation ($t = 0.157$; $p = 0.876$) and integrative motivation ($t = 0.314$; $p = 0.754$) of first year college students based on their sex. Essentially, the college students manifested equal level of motivation in learning the English language.

The findings in **Table 6** indicate no significant differences on the instrumental motivation ($F = 1.376$; $p = 0.251$) and integrative motivation ($F = 2.546$; $p = 0.057$) of college students based on their monthly family income. This possibly mean that the socioeconomic status of students does not solely influence their motivation in learning the English language.

In **Table 7**, significant differences can be observed on the instrumental motivation ($F = 4.402$; $p = 0.002$) and integrative motivation ($F = 3.389$; $p = 0.010$) of college students based on their course. Post-hoc analysis indicated that education (S.E. = 0.1071; p = 0.003) and nursing (S.E. = 0.1355; p = 0.004) students had significantly higher level of instrumental motivation compared to agriculture students. Similarly, education (S.E. = 0.1129; p = 0.023) and nursing (S.E. = 0.1428; p = 0.008) students had higher level of integrative motivation compared to agriculture students.

Table 5. Comparative analysis on motivation based on sex.

		Mean ($\bar{x}$)	S.D.	Mean Difference	t	Sig.
Instrumental Motivation	Male	2.9700	0.5107	0.011	0.157	0.876
	Female	2.9590	0.4807			
Integrative Motivation	Male	3.0460	0.4906	0.023	0.314	0.754
	Female	3.0230	0.5434			

* *Significant at alpha level 0.05*.

Table 6. Comparative analysis on motivation based on monthly family income.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Instrumental Motivation	Between	1.005	3	0.335	1.376	0.251
	Within	47.713	196	0.243		
	Total	48.718	199			
Integrative Motivation	Between	1.991	3	0.664	2.546	0.057
	Within	51.100	196	0.261		
	Total	53.092	199			

* *Significant at alpha level 0.05*.

Table 7. Comparative analysis on motivation based on course.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Instrumental Motivation	Between	4.034	4	1.009	4.402	0.002*
	Within	44.683	195	0.229		
	Total	48.718	199			
Integrative Motivation	Between	3.451	4	0.863	3.389	0.010*
	Within	49.641	195	0.255		
	Total	53.092	199			

* *Significant at alpha level 0.05*.

4.6. Comparative Analysis on Learning Styles Based on Students' Demographics

Table 8 presents the results comparing the learning styles of first year college students based on their sex. Findings indicated that no significant differences were observed on environmental ($t = -0.926$; $p = 0.355$), emotional ($t = -01.794$; $p = 0.074$), and psychological ($t = -0.613$; $p = 0.540$) learning styles. However, difference was observed on sociological learning strategy ($t = -2.439$; $p = 0.016$) where

female students were most likely engaged in this learning strategy. Because sociological learning often involves interacting with other people, it is possible that female students had easier time engaging in this learning style.

Findings in **Table 9** presents the analysis on learning styles according to their monthly family income. This study determined that there was no significant difference on the environmental (F = 2.617; p = 0.052) and sociological (F = 1.658; p = 0.177 learning style of college students. However, difference was observed on emotional (F = 3.321; p = 0.021) and psychological (F = 5.057; p = 0.002) learning styles. Post-hoc analysis revealed that students having parents who earn >Php17,001 were more engaged in emotional (S.E. = 0.0885; p = 0.043) and psychological (S.E. = 0.0767; p = 0.001) learning styles. Consequently, it is possible to infer that students living in high income household have positive emotional and psychological engagement when learning English.

Table 8. Comparative analysis on learning styles based on sex.

		Mean ($\bar{x}$)	S.D.	Mean Difference	t	Sig.
Environmental	Male	3.014	0.412	−0.056	−0.926	0.355
	Female	3.070	0.442			
Emotional	Male	3.021	0.374	−0.100	−1.794	0.074
	Female	3.121	0.412			
Sociological	Male	3.139	0.445	−0.152	−2.439	0.016*
	Female	3.291	0.435			
Psychological	Male	3.243	0.443	−0.039	−0.613	0.540
	Female	3.282	0.456			

** Significant at alpha level 0.05.*

Table 9. Comparative analysis on learning styles based on monthly family income.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Environmental	Between	1.400	3	0.467		
	Within	34.948	196	0.178	2.617	0.052
	Total	36.347	199			
Emotional	Between	1.512	3	0.504		
	Within	29.740	196	0.152	3.321	0.021*
	Total	31.252	199			
Sociological	Between	0.980	3	0.327		
	Within	38.615	196	0.197	1.658	0.177
	Total	39.595	199			
Psychological	Between	2.882	3	0.961		
	Within	37.227	196	0.190	5.057	0.002*
	Total	40.109	199			

** Significant at alpha level 0.05.*

Table 10 presents the analysis of learning styles according to the course of the college students. Findings indicated that no significant difference was observed on environmental (F = 0.727; p = 0.574), emotional (F = 1.840; p = 0.1231), sociological (F = 1.080; p = 0.368), and psychological (F = 1.854; p = 0.120) learning styles being attributed to learning English language. Possibly, student's learning styles were prevalently adapted across different educational disciplines.

4.7. Comparative Analysis of Learning Strategies Based on Students' Demographics

Table 11 presents the comparative analysis for learning strategies based on students' gender. No significant difference was observed on students' memory (t = −0.966; p = 0.335), cognitive (t = −0.911; p = 0.363), metacognitive (t = −1.892; p = 0.60), and affective (t = −0.911; p = 0.364) learning strategies. It can be inferred that male and female students were equally engaged on adapting their learning strategies.

Table 10. Comparative analysis on learning styles based on course.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Environmental	Between	0.534	4	0.134	0.727	0.574
	Within	35.813	195	0.184		
	Total	36.347	199			
Emotional	Between	1.136	4	0.284	1.840	0.123
	Within	30.115	195	0.154		
	Total	31.252	199			
Sociological	Between	0.858	4	0.215	1.080	0.368
	Within	38.737	195	0.199		
	Total	39.595	199			
Psychological	Between	1.469	4	0.367	1.854	0.120
	Within	38.639	195	0.198		
	Total	40.109	199			

** Significant at alpha level 0.05.*

Table 11. Comparative analysis on learning strategies based on sex.

		Mean ($\bar{x}$)	S.D.	Mean Difference	t	Sig.
Memory	Male	3.037	0.393	−0.057	−0.966	0.335
	Female	3.094	0.439			
Cognitive	Male	3.131	0.380	−0.048	−0.911	0.363
	Female	3.179	0.364			
Metacognitive	Male	3.128	0.379	−0.113	−1.892	0.060
	Female	3.241	0.461			
Affective	Male	2.993	0.333	−0.048	−0.911	0.364
	Female	3.041	0.408			

** Significant at alpha level 0.05.*

Table 12 summarizes the comparative analysis on learning strategies according to students' monthly family income. The findings indicate that there was no significant difference on cognitive (F = 1.752; p = 0.158) and metacognitive (F = 2.201; p = 0.089) learning strategies. However, difference was observed on memory (F = 5.016; p = 0.002) and affective (F = 3.741; p = 0.012) learning strategies. Specifically, students with parents earning >Php17,001 (S.E. = 0.0713; p = 0.004) and Php12,000-Php17,000 (S.E. = 0.0826; p = 0.008) were highly engaged in memory-based learning strategies compared to students whose parents earn <Php7,000. On the other hand, students whose parents earn Php12,000-Php17,000 (S.E. = 0.0745; p = 0.038) were highly engaged in affective-based learning strategies compared to students whose parents earn <Php7,000. It is possible that students living in middle- to high-income households are more likely to be engaged in memory-based and affective learning strategies in English.

Table 13 presents the analysis on learning strategies based on students' course. The findings show that there was no significant difference on students' engagement in memory (F = 0.343; p = 0.849), cognitive (F = 0.637; p = 0.637), metacognitive (F = 0.873; p = 0.481), and affective (F = 1.920; p = 0.109) learning strategies. Essentially, when students were learning English, it was possible that different academic disciplines require them to be generally proficient in these teaching strategies to develop their skills effectively.

4.8. Correlation Analysis on Motivation to Learning Styles and Learning Strategies

The correlation analysis in **Table 14** indicated significant correlation of students' motivation in learning the English language to their learning styles (r = 0.380; p = 0.000) and learning strategies (r = 0.524; p = 0.000). It might be possible that students' motivation induced their engagement in learning styles and strategies they impose to learn the English language. Possibly, motivation could reflect students' willingness to engage into action because on how it has 'value' to them.

Table 12. Comparative analysis on learning strategies based on monthly family income.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Memory	Between	2.468	3	0.823	5.016	0.002*
	Within	32.144	196	0.164		
	Total	34.612	199			
Cognitive	Between	0.720	3	0.240	1.752	0.158
	Within	26.855	196	0.137		
	Total	27.575	199			
Metacognitive	Between	1.172	3	0.391	2.201	0.089
	Within	34.790	196	0.177		
	Total	35.962	199			
Affective	Between	1.496	3	0.499	3.741	0.012*
	Within	26.126	196	0.133		
	Total	27.622	199			

** Significant at alpha level 0.05*.

Table 13. Comparative analysis on learning strategies based on course.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Memory	Between	0.242	4	0.060	0.343	0.849
	Within	34.370	195	0.176		
	Total	34.612	199			
Cognitive	Between	0.356	4	0.089	0.637	0.637
	Within	27.219	195	0.140		
	Total	27.575	199			
Metacognitive	Between	0.632	4	0.158	0.873	0.481
	Within	35.329	195	0.181		
	Total	35.962	199			
Affective	Between	1.047	4	0.262	1.920	0.109
	Within	26.575	195	0.136		
	Total	27.622	199			

** Significant at alpha level 0.05*.

Table 14. Correlation analysis on motivation, learning styles, and learning strategies.

Variables				
Independent	**Dependent**	***r Value***	**Sig.**	**Description**
Learning Motivation	Learning Styles	0.380	0.000*	Moderate
	Learning Strategies	0.524	0.000*	High

5. Discussion

5.1. Motivation in Learning English

Learning and having English language skills is heavily reliant on motivation, and the two elements are strongly interconnected[110]. In a study[111], it was shown that students who possess desire and favorable attitudes towards the English language are more likely to have success in learning English as a second language. This study identified two forms of motivation—instrumental and integrative motivation. First year college students from Sulu, Philippines were highly motivated in learning the English language.

Research was conducted among college students in Bangladesh to investigate their motivation for learning English[112]. The study found that integrative motivation has become the primary driving force for students to learn English. In contrast, the majority of high school students[113] were instrumentally motivated, but those students who are 'integratively motivated' were outperforming them in English. In United Arab Emirates it was found out that integrative motivation exerted a greater impact on the outcomes of

ESL in comparison to instrumental motivation [21]. Similar finding was observed among first year college students in Sulu, Philippines. They were motivated integratively, which involved willingness to communicate with other people, use proper communication components (like tone and voice), be culturally sensitive, and appreciation to other people. They believed that this encouraged them to be proficient in learning the English language.

Instrumental motivation was also an essential component in learning the English language. For example, an individual with instrumental motivation perceives language as a tool for getting a reward [113]. Individuals are instrumentally motivated about their future career and language proficiency, as it enhances their qualifications as job seekers, and the desire to study abroad and the enjoyment derived from learning a new language contribute to their motivation [28]. Similar pattern of study findings was observed among first year college students in Sulu, Philippines. They believed that learning the English language helps them have a *decent* career, accomplish more in life, go overseas, and be proficient. Recently, some studies considered this language perception among Filipino students, or even their parents, as a phenomenon for language motivation [114–116]. This is because of the intensive English language learning education in the country that highlights its instrumental value in students' career [117–119]. However, amidst this effort to institutionalize instrumental motivation, most students were more likely to be integratively motivated with their willingness to engage in language use rather than focusing on its value. Hence, the learning process could be more inclined towards encouraging language use in classrooms.

5.2. Learning Styles in English

The Yale Graduate School of Arts and Sciences has a website that provides guidance for Yale professors, informing their visitors that "college students enter our classrooms with a wide variety of learning styles" [50]. Research in this field enhances the proficiency of individuals who aim at learning a second language by providing them with the adaptability necessary for optimizing their study habits and practices [52]. This adaptability is primarily provided by the focus on sensory preferences, which involve physical and perceptual learning pathways, resulting in an enjoyable classroom and learning environment [120]. This study identified key learning styles among Filipino college students in Sulu, Philippines. They manifested high levels of engagement in environmental, emotional, sociological, and psychological learning styles. Among these, they dominantly engage in psychological and sociological learning styles in English.

The impact of sociological and psychological factors was investigated [121], specifically cultural/social capital and cognitive/metacognitive components, to the process of English language learning among 143 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. Their findings indicated that psychological and sociological elements both play a role in foreign language achievement. However, it has been determined that social and cultural capital has a greater impact on English language learning. They believed that if a student exhibits a sense of identification (sociological component) with another culture, their motivation (psychological component) to acquire the target language will be enhanced. Similar learning style patterns among first year college students in Sulu, Philippines were observed. For example, sociologically, they like to study with other people and speak with other students, especially with those fluent in the language. Psychologically, they do reflections, assessments, and identification of relevant ideas that might be helpful for them to understand and learn English. Learning is primarily a social process, emphasizing that sociological factors serve a purpose in providing the basis and framework for learning [122, 123]. This, in turn, teaches students how to manage, monitor, and plan (metacognition) as well as fostering their analytical thinking skills (intellect), particularly in the context of foreign language learning [121].

Other studies identified emotional states as relevant aspect of student learning process. Learning English as a second language requires the development of several social, cognitive, and emotional abilities [124]. Their study argued that certain students may experience uneasiness or tedium as second or third language learners when they are required to commit vocabulary to memory and see this task as challenging. Introducing students to vocabulary-learning practices that are associated with positive emotional responses, such as interest and pride, can assist them in overcoming challenges and enhancing their ability to learn a new language [124]. Emotions, such as sensations and feelings, are strongly connected to cognitive elements and behaviors [125]; hence, they are being given more importance in teaching and learning methods [126].

This paper observed that Filipino students were also employing emotional learning styles when learning English. They were feeling *persistent, positive, motivated,* and *inspired* to learn the English language. These key emotions guided them to encourage themselves to be engaged in learning processes within classrooms and on their own.

5.3. Learning Strategies in English

Learning strategies have emerged as crucial elements in facilitating students' effective learning of a second language[127]. Self-regulated second language learning strategies involve deliberate and planned attempts to govern and control the process of learning the language[128]. These techniques are comprehensive, instructive actions that learners select from several options and use for the purpose of learning a second language. Research was made about the language learning strategies of female Saudi EFL college students[129]. Findings indicated that the students exhibited a moderate to high level of strategy usage. The metacognitive approach was the most frequently used, whereas the affective and memory methods were the least frequently used. Similarly, this paper found out that Filipino college students from southern Philippines were more likely to engage in metacognitive and cognitive learning strategies, than memory and affective strategies.

Metacognition was the most prominent approach in learning the English language. Metacognition involves planning (attention), monitoring, and assessment (self-evaluation)[130]. The metacognitive writing methods employed by EFL college students in China was investigated[131]. This investigation was carried out using a survey and a writing test. The results indicate that teaching writing can improve students' understanding and capacity to develop metacognitive writing techniques, specifically in planning, monitoring, and evaluation. Metacognition is generally associated with the ability to regulate oneself since it equips individuals with information about a certain subject and the abilities needed to control their learning in that subject area[132]. This paper identified that most students in southern Philippines employed metacognition in learning English through developing ways in improving, listening, self-regulation, and self-awareness. Notably, metacognition can also be linked to cognitive abilities. Metacognition is crucial for learners to effectively manage and control their cognitive processes, ultimately leading to the development of independent thinking and learning skills[131, 133]. This could also explain why students perform both metacognitive and cognitive tasks when learning the English language. Essentially, these metacognitive components enable them in assessing material difficulty, detecting comprehension gaps, and deciding on reviews, which are closely linked to academic success and involve numerous cognitively demanding processes[134].

A study was conducted on language learning strategies used by accounting students found out that memory learning was the most applied learning strategy of students[135]. In contrast, this paper observed different results indicating memory learning was not widely used across different academic disciplines. The memory strategy involves a focused approach that incorporates methods such as grouping, utilizing imagery, and establishing mental connections or associations[136, 137]. This study identified students from southern Philippines to engage in memory learning through *recalling English words*, *making connections*, *enacting words*, and *visualizing ideas*. Learners utilize memory strategy as a mnemonic to establish cognitive associations that facilitate the assimilation, consolidation, and retrieval of new words for effective communication in long-term memory[138, 139].

Affective learning was also relevant in learning the English language. In affective learning, two crucial mechanisms are: (a) the emotional state of students throughout the learning process, and (b) the extent to which the learning experience is absorbed or perceived[140]. Receiving is the act of uncovering and demonstrating interest in a certain subject and actively participating in the process of learning; while failing to receive information might impede the advancement in the levels of affective learning[70]. This paper identified that students from southern Philippines do affective learning by feeling positive, upbeat, and engaged in communication, even with the fear of making a mistake. They consider their emotions, how comfortable are they in learning English, and how they modulate their feelings when facing language challenges. Response can take on different manifestations, such as displaying emotions, opinions, principles, interest, motivation, contentment, compliance, willingness, or acquiescence towards a certain scenario[141]. In language learning, some students reported that when facing challenges or difficulties in learning, they seek help from

other fluent speaker and interact with them. This is a clear manifestation of their response to affective learning they strategize in English language.

6. Conclusion

Analysis was conducted on motivation, learning styles, and learning strategies among first year college students in Sulu, Philippines. First-year college students demonstrated high levels of motivation, particularly integrative motivation, which involves a willingness to communicate, cultural sensitivity, and appreciation for other cultures. They mostly engaged in sociological and psychological learning styles. Sociological learning involves studying with others and engaging in conversations, while psychological learning focuses on reflection and self-assessment. First year college students were highly engaged in metacognitive (planning, monitoring, and self-evaluation) and cognitive learning strategies. These strategies enable students to regulate their cognitive processes, fostering independent thinking and learning skills. Although memory strategies, such as grouping and imagery, are not widely used across different academic disciplines, they play a role in recalling and connecting English words. Affective learning strategies, which focus on the emotional state of students and their engagement with the learning process, are also significant. Students consider their emotions, seek help when facing challenges, and modulate their feelings to remain positive and engaged in learning English.

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Institutional Review Board Statement

Ethical review and approval were waived for this study due to the minimal risk involved to participants and the nature of the data collected. The study did not involve sensitive personal information, vulnerable populations, or interventions that could potentially impact participants' well-being.

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement

Data will be available upon request.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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