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Impact of Emotional Intelligence (EI) on Learning English among EFL Students

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ABSTRACT

This research study investigated the interconnectedness and interdependence of emotions and English learning among EFL students. It also examined how specific components of emotional intelligence—namely self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills—affect learning outcomes, the strategies involved, and the implications and recommendations for educational practices to enhance English learning. The research was based on Daniel Goleman's Five Components Model of Emotional Intelligence (1998). A quantitative research method was employed, and an 80-student sample of English as a foreign language students was taken from diploma courses in business administration, banking, cybersecurity, disaster management, and health services to explore the strategic EI elements relevant to their academic and professional development. Hence, a five-point Likert scale questionnaire was administered to collect data for a quantitative descriptive study. The SPSS statistical analyses revealed that higher levels of self-awareness and self-regulation significantly associated with improved language proficiency and greater student engagement. The results also indicated that students with strong motivational EI skills were more inclined to participate in extracurricular activities related to English, further enhancing their language acquisition. The practical implications of this study provided valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers to integrate EI-enhancing strategies into their teaching techniques, strategies, and pedagogies, empowering EFL learners to engage in the classroom and navigate the complexities of language learning with greater emotional resilience and achieve higher levels of linguistic competence. Further research is recommended to explore the longitudinal effects of EI training and its integration into professional development programs for teachers.

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1. Introduction

Emotions and learning are closely connected and cannot be separated. Subject learning alone is not enough for an EFL student to be successful. The language learner also needs to possess emotional intelligence (EI) to make the most of situations and manage his/her relationships within the class-workplace, to facilitate smoother communication, enhance confidence, and fosters a more positive environment to achieve better English language competence and proficiency. EI (emotional quotient or EQ) allows EFL students to manage stress, empathize with others, communicate effectively, resolve conflicts, solve problems^[1-4], and enhance relationships and learning skills dynamics^[5-7]. While English proficiency is an individual ability involving understanding language structures and sentence formation, both intellectual and emotional intelligence significantly improve one's capacity to acquire these skills more effectively and efficiently^[8-14]. Being affluent and skilled in a subject is not enough to be successful; they also need to have the EI to make the most of situations and manage effective class-workplace relationships, a skill of utmost significance, to achieve the learning outcomes^[12,15]. While EI enhances critical thinking about language nuances^[3,7,16-18] boosts learner motivation, and improves communication skills, resulting in a more effective and enriching learning experience^[19,20]. Therefore, high emotional intelligence is essential for EFL students to foster better relationships, facilitate smoother conversations, enhance confidence, and create a happier environment conducive to achieving better critical thinking and English language proficiency.

EI, as defined^[5], encompasses the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and regulate emotions in oneself and others. It consists of several key components, including self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and motivation. These components are essential in language learning as they influence learners' motivation, willingness to communicate, and overall language proficiency. EI has a significant relationship with English language learning (ELL) and students' learning outcomes. Emotional regulation, an essential com-

ponent of EI, plays a key role in language learning performance. Learners with higher EI are better able to manage their emotions, such as meeting homework and assignment deadlines and handling exam pressure. Well-developed EI, particularly during challenging learning situations like presentations, viva-voce exams, and public speaking, leads to improved performance and progress. Moreover, empathy, another component of EI, enhances language proficiency by promoting understanding and effective communication with others. Finally, motivation, closely tied to EI, has a substantial impact on language learning outcomes, as highly motivated learners tend to exhibit enhanced language proficiency and engagement.

On the other hand, emotions and learning are intrinsically connected and inseparable. Understanding the role of emotions in learning is a compelling area of study, particularly for enhancing language skills that are psychologically affected by cultural and first language influences. This understanding can illuminate how to optimize the learning process. Emotions, depending on their nature, can either facilitate or impede learning. Furthermore, emotions can be contagious; strong positive or negative emotional states within a learning environment can influence others, highlighting the importance of EI in managing these effects. Learning anxiety and negative emotions adversely affect EFL learners' attitudes, motivation, learning strategies, autonomy, and self-esteem, thereby hindering their progress in acquiring English as a foreign language.

Saudi EFL learners^[2] face both academic challenges and negative emotions stemming from perceived shortcomings and low confidence in specific English skills. Fear of peer judgment further hinders their concentration. This emotional struggle significantly impacts their language learning. The study emphasizes understanding cultural and environmental factors affecting Saudi EFL learners in English Intensive Programs. These factors, alongside difficulties in listening, reading, speaking, writing, grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and native language interference, contribute to their challenges. In contexts with limited practical English use, a holistic approach addressing these factors is necessary

to transform intensified learning challenges into effective solutions.

However, social anxiety disorder and weak EI have been observed profoundly in EFL students, which are characterized by an intense fear of social situations and the possibility of being judged or scrutinized by others. This disorder can significantly impact various aspects of an individual's life, including thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and social interactions. EFL students with social anxiety often have persistent fears of negative evaluation, leading to self-critical thoughts such as "They will think I'm stupid" or "I will embarrass myself." They may imagine worst-case scenarios in social settings, like thinking, "If I say something wrong, everyone will laugh at me." This mindset can lead to "mind reading," where they assume others view them negatively without solid evidence, such as thinking, "They must think I'm boring." These students frequently face harsh self-judgment, with critical thoughts like "I'm not good enough" or "I always mess things up."

Despite their anxieties, EFL students with social anxiety often avoid social situations altogether, such as by not attending parties, shying away from public speaking, or skipping meetings with individuals highly proficient in affective and active English communication skills. The added pressure of communicating in a non-native language can exacerbate their anxiety. However, it is important to recognize and appreciate these students' immense courage in their daily lives. They may seek to cope with their anxiety by engaging in behaviors like rehearsing conversations, avoiding eye contact, or staying close to trusted individuals, but they still struggle significantly. Under pressure, these students with weak EI may experience physical symptoms, including sweating, trembling, blushing, or nausea. Their anxiety limits their social interactions, often restricting them to a small circle of close friends, family members, and those with similar backgrounds. Besides, many tend to procrastinate, delaying or avoiding social interaction tasks, such as making phone calls or responding to emails in English.

The emotional impacts of social anxiety on EFL learners can manifest in several ways, including intense anxiety, characterized by extreme nervousness or fear experienced before or during social situations. They may also suffer from acute feelings of embarrassment or shame that often exceed the context of the situation. Persistent feelings of inadequacy

and low self-worth are common, and chronic social anxiety can contribute to sadness, hopelessness, and even depression. Furthermore, these learners often experience feelings of isolation and loneliness as a direct consequence of avoiding social interactions. Beyond these direct emotional effects, social anxiety can trigger other impacts. Physically, individuals might experience an increased heart rate, a sensation of their heart racing or pounding, difficulty and shortness of breath or a feeling of suffocation, tightness or tension in their muscles (particularly in the neck, shoulders, and back), as well as dizziness, lightheadedness, or fainting in social settings, and various gastrointestinal issues such as stomachaches, nausea, and diarrhea.

Cognitively, social anxiety can lead to hypervigilance, where individuals are overly alert to social cues and potential threats, constantly scanning their environment. They may also suffer from memory impairment, finding it difficult to concentrate or recall details during or after social interactions due to high anxiety levels. A negative bias in interpreting neutral or ambiguous social cues as negative or threatening is another common cognitive impact. Emotionally, individuals with social anxiety might exhibit irritability, becoming easily frustrated, especially when facing social situations. They could also experience emotional numbing, feeling detached as a coping mechanism for overwhelming anxiety, and mood swings that often correlate with social interactions or their anticipation.

Finally, social and occupational aspects of life are also affected. Impaired relationships can arise due to the fear of social interactions, making it hard to form and maintain connections. Academically, students may struggle with class participation, group projects, or presentations, potentially leading to lower performance. Career paths might be limited as individuals avoid advancement opportunities involving public speaking, networking, or team collaboration. Ultimately, social withdrawal, a gradual retreat from social circles, can result in fewer social connections and support networks.

Hence, EI involves the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions and the emotions of others. Strategic factors of EI, such as motivation, empathy, emotional regulation, and social skills, can all be tailored to enhance the language learning experience. For EFL students, who often face unique challenges such as a lack of proficiency in the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and

writing), a lack of confidence while writing and speaking, and experience language barriers, cultural differences, and communication apprehension, possessing strong EI can significantly boost their confidence and resilience. For instance, students with higher emotional awareness might navigate and steer classroom dynamics more effectively, encouraging better relationships with peers and instructors. Additionally, managing stress and anxiety can lead to improved performance during language tasks, such as speaking or writing. Overall, understanding the interplay between EI and ELL can offer educators valuable insights into developing EFL teaching pedagogies and strategies that cultivate EI, thereby enhancing EFL students' engagement, motivation, and ultimately their critical thinking, linguistic competence, and communication proficiency in English.

English language proficiency is increasingly essential in every field of life for academic success and professional development, particularly in industries such as business administration paradigms and platforms. The ability to communicate in English shapes and shares the connections and mutual understanding between people across the world. Therefore, after completing intensive English programs (IEP) at the tertiary or graduation level, an EFL learner should have full professional fluency and proficiency in English, which is the ability to speak, write, read, and comprehend the English language effectively, involving a mastery of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, colloquial contexts, and communication skills. Achieving fluency in English opens doors to enhanced academic, professional, and personal growth opportunities. In Saudi Arabia, where the education system is rapidly evolving, universities offer intensive English language programs^[21–25] to the EFL adult learners enrolled in business administration, banking, cybersecurity, disaster management, and health services diploma courses. These programs aim to equip Saudi female students with the necessary language skills for academic and professional success. However, the success of these language learning programs does not solely rely on teaching methodologies and resources; learners' EI plays a vital role in the ELL process. Thus, understanding the impact of strategic factors of EI on learning English is a key-essential requirement for designing effective language learning interventions.

However, Intensive English Programs (IEPs) are being implemented to equip female students in various diploma

courses at the university with essential language skills through prescribed general English courses for young adults at beginner to intermediate levels (CEFR A1 to B1+). These student-centered programs cover all language skills and emphasize the most effective methods for rapid progress. Drawing on insights from the Cambridge Life Competencies Framework and the Cambridge Learner Corpus, which aims to enhance students' English proficiency, fostering critical and creative writing, reading, thinking, and communication skills. As a result, students are motivated to speak and share ideas, improving their listening comprehension and speaking clarity in a continuous cycle where insights shape content and drive tangible results. Ultimately, the effectiveness of these programs depends not only on teaching methodologies and resources but also on learners' emotional intelligence (EI). Therefore, understanding the strategic factors of EI in the context of Saudi and other Arabic mother tongue female students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is a key-essential for designing targeted language learning interventions. The necessity of English language proficiency for academic and professional development has been widely recognized across the globe. With its growing economy and increasing international interactions in Saudi Arabia, the demand for individuals' proficiency in English is particularly significant. As a result, universities, including King Khalid University, introduced IEPs in their evening classes (2023–2024) specifically designed for female students pursuing various diploma courses. These programs aim at equipping female students with the language skills necessary for their professional growth and future career prospects.

1.1. Research Aim and Objectives

This research examines the impact of strategic factors of EI on English language learning (ELL) among EFL students enrolled in evening session diploma courses (2023–2024) at King Khalid University. The specific objectives of this study are to investigate the relationship between EI and ELL among EFL female students registered in the diploma courses, and to identify the critical components of EI that influence ELL outcomes for these students. Moreover, it explores the most effective and frequently used strategies that female students employ to leverage their high EI while learning English skills. In addition, this research provides recommendations and practical implications for

educational practices and language learning interventions aimed at promoting the effective acquisition of the English language among EFL students studying business administration courses.

This study holds significant value for English language instructors and those supporting female students' career advancement. It examines the strategic factors of EI in learning English as a foreign language, aiming to expand current knowledge, address research gaps, and provide useful information for educators, policymakers, and program designers. The study's findings can inform the creation of personalized IEPs that will help EFL students in business administration, banking, cybersecurity, disaster management, and health services enhance their English language competence and proficiency, thereby improving their professional growth and job prospects.

1.2. Research Problem Statement

English language proficiency is still essential for the academic and professional success of EFL female students^[26–37]. To address this, IEPs have been implemented in evening programs at two applied colleges in Al Mahala (Khamis), specifically catering to the needs of EFL students. However, the effective acquisition of the English language goes beyond teaching pedagogies, methodologies, and resources; EI plays a significant role in language learning outcomes. Strategic EI factors in learning English among EFL female students attending evening classes at applied colleges remain relatively unexplored. Understanding these strategic factors and their influence on English learning can help educators and policymakers design more effective language learning interventions to enhance proficiency among EFL female students. By filling this research gap, this study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge and provide practical implications for educators, policymakers, and language program designers to support EFL female students' academic and professional growth.

1.3. Research Questions

In order to achieve the aforementioned objectives, this research addresses the following research questions:

1. What is the role of emotional intelligence (EI) in language learning among EFL female students enrolled

in diploma courses?

2. What strategies do EFL female students employ to enhance their emotional intelligence in the process of learning English?
3. What are the implications and recommendations for educational practices to maintain the emotional intelligence in language learning among EFL female students enrolled in diploma courses?

2. Literature Review

2.1. EI Theoretical Concept

The rationale of the EI approach focuses on latent abilities assessed through performance presentation in the dimensions of adaptive emotional functioning. Human beings possess inherent, untapped abilities bestowed upon them, which require practice, development, and demonstration for effective performance. However, some of these abilities, such as EI, may not yet be active or may be discovered at a later stage. A few EFL students exhibit sufficient EI to manage, lead, and adapt to situations, while others are less confident and emotionally less equipped to follow instructions and may harbor negative feelings about learning. This highlights the varied development of EI among individuals^[38].

The EI scientific characterization has significantly been shaped by theorists such as Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer, Daniel Goleman, and Reuven Bar-On. These pioneers offered diverse scales, tests, models, concepts, perspectives, and practical applications, encouraging both ESL instructors and EFL learners to broaden their understanding and be receptive to new ideas. Their models provide a comprehensive approach to understanding EI.

For example, Salovey and Mayer's model defines EI as a cognitive ability encompassing the perception, understanding, management, and utilization of emotions. In contrast, Goleman's well-known model emphasizes EI as a collection of personal and social skills, including self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Bar-On's model, known as Emotional Social Intelligence (ESI) and measured by the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i), takes a broader approach. It encompasses a wider range of emotional and social competencies such as self-regard, assertiveness, and social behavior, while also considering the

impacts of age, gender, and ethnicity. This integration is a key feature of Bar-On's model, providing a comprehensive understanding of emotional and social intelligence.

EI comprises interconnected dimensions that significantly influence language learning processes^[1]. Research has demonstrated that self-awareness and motivation enhance learners' goal-setting and resilience, promoting self-efficacy and risk-taking in language practice^[27,39,40] associates self-efficacy with practical language learning by demonstrating that learners' belief in their own abilities directly affects their English learning, performance, and achievement. In English learning, higher self-efficacy leads to increased effort and diligence in completing tasks and exercises.

Self-awareness involves recognizing one's own emotions, while self-regulation, the ability to manage those emotions, supports anxiety management, which is significant in language learning contexts often marked by performance pressure. Social awareness involves understanding others' emotions, and relationship management focuses on building effective communication and peer interaction, both essential in collaborative language learning tasks. Ultimately, motivation drives goal pursuit to enhance self-efficacy, resulting in a positive learning cycle. These dimensions interact, significantly shaping emotional experiences and responses within the language learning journey.

2.2. EI and Language Acquisition

Within the Saudi context, research on EI in language acquisition (LA) is still developing, but it is beginning to shed light on the specific emotional landscape of Saudi EFL learners^[34]. Cultural values and beliefs significantly shape emotional expression and experience^[41–43]. Saudi Arabia, as a collectivistic culture, highly values social harmony and respect for authority^[25,44]. These cultural norms profoundly influence how Saudi learners experience and manage emotions in the language classroom. Studies have explored how cultural values, such as collectivism, can affect Saudi students' willingness to participate actively in class or take risks in speaking English^[35,36,45–48]. The emphasis on avoiding face-threatening acts might make some learners hesitant to speak up for fear of making mistakes or appearing inadequate. This cultural context can also influence how Saudi learners experience and regulate emotions related to language learning. The need to maintain social harmony, for exam-

ple, might lead some learners to suppress negative emotions, even when experiencing frustration or anxiety^[25].

In SLA studies, Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA), characterized by apprehension and fear related to language learning, consistently negatively impacts performance, particularly in speaking and listening skills^[39,49–51]. This finding is replicated across numerous cultural contexts^[52,53], underscoring the universal experience of anxiety in language learning, although its specific triggers and manifestations can vary. Beyond anxiety, researchers have explored a wider range of emotions influencing SLA^[54–56]. Motivation is identified as a key driver of language learning success. Intrinsic motivation, stemming from genuine interest and enjoyment, is often associated with greater engagement and persistence. Extrinsic motivation, driven by external rewards or pressures, can also be effective, but its long-term impact may be less sustainable^[57,58]. Furthermore, positive emotions, such as enjoyment, interest, and hope, have been consistently linked to enhanced learning outcomes^[27,48,59,60].

Anxiety is a recognized barrier to SLA, potentially limiting the exposure and practice opportunities necessary for fluency. Conversely, motivation and enjoyment are strongly linked to successful language acquisition, with intrinsic motivation fostering learner autonomy and reducing the impact of anxiety on performance^[14,27,61,62]. However, negative emotions such as fear, frustration, and shame can significantly hinder language learning^[34,59,63,64]. Specifically, fear of making mistakes, being judged, or failing to meet expectations can create affective filters that block input and impede acquisition^[26]. Frustration with learning difficulties often leads to demotivation and avoidance, while shame, tied to perceived inadequacy in language skills, can foster vulnerability and inhibit participation. The interplay of these emotions with other factors in SLA is complex and dynamic^[65]. Learner beliefs about language learning, self-perceptions of language ability, and the social context of learning^[48] all contribute to emotional experiences and learners' overall emotional well-being in the language learning journey^[31].

Researchers^[66,67] highlights EI role in enhancing learner autonomy and communication skills in language learning. Consistently, studies^[1,4,6,7,10,16] demonstrate that higher EI levels correlate with lower anxiety and improved overall language proficiency. This suggests that students with greater EI can more effectively manage their emotional states,

leading to better learning outcomes. Specifically, learners with higher EI exhibit increased autonomy, taking initiative and responsibility for their learning journey. EI also pointedly enhances communication through developing empathy, social awareness, and effective interpersonal interaction, which contributes to overall language proficiency encompassing fluency, accuracy, and communicative competence in SLA. These findings underscore and feature that EI empowers learners to navigate emotional challenges, build strong relationships, and achieve greater language proficiency.

Studies on EI in SLA by the researchers^[6,7,33,68–71] have highlighted the key-essential roles of emotional factors in language learning success. While universal emotional experiences exist, their manifestation and impact are shaped and by cultural values, beliefs, and specific learning contexts. Therefore, further research is needed to explore the complex interplay and interwoven of emotions, cultural factors, and individual learner differences within the Saudi EFL context. This exploration is essential for developing effective pedagogical strategies that support learners' emotional well-being and enhance their language learning outcomes. Despite its importance, research on EI in SLA within the Saudi context remains insufficient, with key questions yet to scientifically be addressed, debated, and discussed.

2.3. Cultural Aspects in EI

Cultural factors significantly influence how EI manifests and supports language learning among Saudi EFL students. Saudi Arabia's collectivist culture, emphasizing community and familial ties, positively shapes EI development by nurturing relationship management and social awareness^[33,37,47,72–75]. In this context, the ability to understand and respond to peers' emotions is critical for collaboration in language classrooms^[16,76]. Furthermore, strong EI enhances communication skills, which are vital for effective language learning^[33,37,44,48,51,73,74,77–81]. This aligns with Bond's (1993)^[82] argument, based on Hofstede's (1984)^[68] cultural dimension theory, that cultural values like individualism or collectivism influence emotional expression and valuation. Collectivist cultures, such as Saudi Arabia, emphasize social harmony and interdependence, directly impacting EI traits like empathy and social awareness. In this cultural setting, EI is attuned to maintaining social harmony and conforming to societal norms^[47,76], cultivating high levels of

prosocial feeling, self-regulation, awareness, and relationship management. These traits, in turn, facilitate teamwork and collaborative learning strategies, which are essential in language learning contexts.

Moreover, cultural norms significantly guide emotional expression, influencing students' willingness to take risks in language learning. Saudi students, for instance, may face tension between traditional cultural values that sometimes discourage assertiveness and the necessity of engaging in collaborative learning environments where peer input is vital^[83,84]. This emotional inhibition can lead to underperformance in speaking tasks, whereas greater emotional awareness can encourage and produce a supportive classroom atmosphere conducive to learning. Understanding how cultural beliefs regarding education influence attitudes towards emotional expression is important for explaining observed variances in student EI levels. In contexts emphasizing respect for authority and tradition, students may struggle to express emotions freely, hindering adaptive emotional management in the learning process. Consequently, the extent to which educators should consider these cultural nuances when integrating EI into teaching strategies remains underexplored.

2.4. EI and Language Learning Strategies (LLS)

Students with strong self-regulation skills, for instance, tend to prefer metacognitive strategies like planning, monitoring, and evaluating their learning. Learners with developed EI also demonstrate better adaptability in selecting strategies appropriate for both personal and situational contexts^[25,85–87]. This adaptability is critical and acute for successful engagement with content and peers, highlighting EI's significant role in enhancing language learning effectiveness^[88–90].

Additionally, studies show that students with higher social awareness effectively utilize social strategies, such as collaborative and autonomous learning, to enhance their English linguistic competence and proficiency. Furthermore, cognitive strategies, which involve mental processes for manipulating language (e.g., summarization, inference), are often favored by those who can regulate their emotional states, thus maintaining focus and motivation. EI, therefore, influences both the selection and practical application of various learning strategies in language learning environments.

Metacognitive strategies^[70,91–93] are significantly influenced by EI. Learners with high emotional regulation can better anticipate challenges, adjust their learning approaches, and critically reflect on their progress. Studies indicate that EFL students with greater EI levels tend to be proactive in seeking feedback and assessing their learning outcomes, leading to improved language skills. Similarly, social strategies^[4,25,33,85,94] are effectively employed by emotionally intelligent learners. These individuals are more inclined to collaborate and communicate with peers, thereby facilitating learning through interaction and shared experiences. Affective strategies^[25,27,95,96], such as seeking emotional support from classmates and harnessing motivation from positive experiences, are equally pivotal. Emotionally intelligent students can leverage their social connections to enhance their learning experience.

EI significantly enhances the effective use of learning strategies, including self-monitoring, peer learning, and seeking feedback. EI improves self-monitoring, enabling students to regulate their emotions and adapt their learning approaches effectively. In peer learning contexts, high EI fosters better collaboration and empathy among students, enhancing group dynamics and knowledge retention^[33,97,98]. Additionally, students with elevated EI are more willing to seek feedback, viewing it as a growth opportunity rather than criticism, a perspective consistent with findings by the researchers^[4,25,70] on feedback's importance for learning enhancement^[14,99]. By empowering students to understand and manage their emotions, interact positively with peers, and view feedback constructively, educators can create a more effective and supportive learning environment. Thus, integrating EI training into EFL curricula is essential for fostering well-rounded, proficient language learners. This integration also highlights the key essential role of feedback in motivating and engaging students^[100,101], a relationship that warrants further scientific investigation in this field.

2.5. Teaching and Assessing EI in the EFL Saudi Context

Incorporating EI, the ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions, into EFL teaching methodologies can significantly enhance language acquisition for Saudi students. Synthesized studies emphasize integrating EI into curriculum design, suggesting the inclusion of activities

that promote empathy, self-awareness, and socio-emotional skills^[16,23,27,33,35,37,47,48,72,74–76,101–104]. For instance, reflective writing exercises can foster self-awareness by encouraging students to explore and articulate their emotional experiences.

Interactive teaching methods, such as collaborative learning and peer-assisted activities, have also shown promise in developing emotional skills^[32,67,89,101,105–110]. This highlights the essential role of educators in promoting EI, with studies proposing a pedagogical shift towards student-centered learning environments where teachers act as facilitators, guiding students to manage their emotions constructively. Moreover, a culturally responsive teaching framework helps align the curriculum with Saudi socio-cultural norms, facilitating better student emotional engagement.

Incorporating EI—the ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions—into EFL teaching significantly enhances language acquisition for Saudi students. Research advocates for integrating EI into curriculum design through activities that promote empathy, self-awareness, and socio-emotional skills^[16,23,27,33,35,37,47,48,72,74–76,101–104]. For example, reflective writing fosters self-awareness by encouraging emotional exploration.

Interactive methods like collaborative and peer-assisted learning also develop emotional skills^[32,67,69–89,101,105–110]. This highlights the educator's role in shifting towards student-centered learning, where teachers facilitate constructive emotion management. A culturally responsive framework further aligns curriculum with Saudi socio-cultural norms, boosting student emotional engagement.

Studies^[43,45] highlight emotional experiences' role in raising student awareness through shared feelings and strategies. Effective EI assessment in EFL settings demands culturally relevant tools. For instance, the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-I) has been adapted and validated for Saudi educational contexts^[2,3,23,107], enabling comprehensive assessment of student emotional competencies. Teacher assessments, part of an all-inclusive approach to EI assessment emphasize continuous observation and feedback in daily classroom activities, allowing teachers to customize support and foster EI development among Saudi EFL students.

Despite these advancements, existing studies lack thorough clarification and detailed reporting, especially within the Saudi EFL context. Analysis of how specific EI compe-

tencies (e.g., self-regulation, empathy) directly influence English learning outcomes among Saudi EFL students remains limited. Furthermore, insufficient exploration of student voices, cultural influences, and contextual factors shaping EI's role in language acquisition hinders the development of practical pedagogical strategies tailored to cultural EI variations, necessitating further research. The theory and long-term impact of EI on designing tailored EFL curricula for language proficiency are underexplored, calling for deeper integration of context-specific EI models and clearer operationalization within Saudi EFL. Existing studies often fail to address specific topics or present conflicting findings, leaving key questions unanswered. Consequently, research on these key issues remains limited, particularly in applied colleges, demanding further scientific investigation.

3. Research Gap

The literature review discussed important EI strategies used by instructors and learners globally, including in Saudi Arabia. However, a research gap persists regarding the impact of EI on the English language development of Saudi EFL female students in diploma courses. While existing studies cover emotional intelligence, none have specifically investigated how strategic factors influence the English language competence and proficiency of this demographic. Research focusing on English among Saudi EFL diploma female students is needed to enhance their linguistic competence and communication skills. Furthermore, little research has explored how understanding the affective factors influencing their EI could provide valuable insight into designing effective language learning curricula and interventions. This research will build upon the growing recognition of EI as an essential factor in academic performance and well-being, particularly in language learning.

4. Methodology

This research adopts a quantitative descriptive methodology because it facilitates statistical analysis, as the use of an 80-student sample and a Likert scale questionnaire generates numerical data suitable for tools like SPSS, enabling the identification of significant associations. It effectively describes the occurrence and levels of different EI components and their impact within the student sample using numerical

data. Furthermore, using the quantitative method allows the study to generalize its findings.

The study aimed to gather female learners' thoughts, ideas, and opinions about the role of EI in learning English and how various EI strategies influence and affect English language learning. Therefore, a five-point Likert scale questionnaire, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree and including open-ended questions, was prepared to collect the data. The questionnaire was distributed to diploma female students via the university's LMS virtual platform to gather the sample data. IBM SPSS Statistics 21 was used to analyze the data comprehensively, producing tabular reports, charts, plots of distributions, descriptive statistics, and advanced statistical analyses.

4.1. Research Design

The present research is based on Daniel Goleman's existing validated EI model, which consists of five components: Self-awareness, Self-regulation, Motivation, Empathy, and Social skills. Therefore, this EI model is used to understand its role not only in English learning but also in the ability to understand, use, and manage EFL students' emotions; to communicate effectively and empathize with them; and to overcome English learning conflicts and challenges. Consequently, the study examines how strategic EI elements affect Saudi female EFL students' English learning. First, EFL female students' attitudes regarding EI are examined, then how Saudi female students boost their emotional intelligence while learning English is explored. Finally, instructional strategies for maintaining EI in English language learning (ELL) among Saudi female diploma students are revealed. To assess EI, a self-report test designed to appraise, regulate, and utilize emotions in oneself and others for problem-solving was adapted into a five-point Likert scale questionnaire, which was administered to collect random data for this quantitative descriptive study. The descriptive design examines female preparatory year students in the evening second semester of applied colleges, a cohort having a specific cultural and academic profile in EFL learning.

4.2. Participants

An 80-student sample was drawn from diploma courses in business administration, banking, cybersecurity, disaster

management, and health services. While the questionnaire was distributed more broadly, incomplete responses were excluded. The study commenced in January 2024 during the second semester evening classes at two King Khalid University applied colleges in Al Mahala, Saudi Arabia. These specific campuses were chosen because they offered evening semester classes. Stratified random sampling ensured a representative sample of Saudi female EFL students (aged 18–24) from the Assir Region, exhibiting average proficiency, EI, and academic scores. This proportional representation allowed for a more precise examination of EI's affective components in language learning. The questionnaire was administered after students had selected their majors.

4.3. Data Collection

This pilot study was conducted with a sample of 80 students from a similar demographic to identify their beliefs, ensure clarity of items, and gauge preliminary reliability. The researcher designed a five-point Likert scale questionnaire using Google Forms, providing both English and Arabic translations to collect students' opinions on EI and language learning. The survey comprised 35 questions: six items addressed the first research question regarding the effect of EI on language learning, 19 items pertained to the second research question, and 10 items focused on the third. The items for each research question were declarative statements, prompting student responses on a scale ranging from 'Strongly Agree' to 'Strongly Disagree'. The assessment of EI and language competence was conducted via email, ensuring ethical standards and anonymity. Data and opinions

from participant surveys were recorded in a Google Sheet linked to the Google Form and rigorously analyzed using SPSS statistical software. SPSS, a tool supporting rigorous statistical analysis, was used to examine correlations between EI factors (e.g., motivation, anxiety) and language learning outcomes. The detailed results are presented in the findings section of this research.

5. Findings

Research question 1 reveals EI's role in learning the English language among Saudi female students enrolled in diploma courses. The analysis and evaluation of EI are based on six statements in **Table 1** about the attitude and importance of EI in language learning. The first statement elicits a general opinion about the role of EI in language learning. The second statement encompasses the understanding and awareness of the emotions that facilitate effective English language learning. Additionally, comprehending the regulation of emotions during the learning process is crucial; therefore, understanding the regulation of emotions during language learning is also important. The third statement relates to a positive attitude and motivation for learning the language. EI not only considers oneself but also involves understanding and empathizing with others' perspectives, which enhances English learning and language skills. Furthermore, EI includes the development of social skills for effectively learning the English language, as the development of social skills is a component of EI and is essential for effectively acquiring the English language.

Table 1. Role of EI in learning English language.

	Role of EI in Learning English Language	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in the learning of English language.	20	29	11	12	8
2	I believe that being aware of my emotions helps me in learning English effectively.	17	23	17	17	6
3	Emotional intelligence helps me regulate my emotions while learning English.	12	18	23	13	14
4	Having a positive attitude and motivation enhances my English learning.	14	30	17	10	9
5	Understanding and empathizing with others' perspectives improves my English learning.	18	22	13	11	16
6	Developing social skills are essential for effective English language learning	24	21	15	12	8

The findings from the descriptive analysis revealed that out of a total population of 80, 49 students (61.25%) in **Figure 1** agreed that EI plays a crucial role in learning the English language. Eleven students remained neutral, while 20 students (25%) disagreed. Regarding awareness of EI's assistance in learning English, 40 students (50%) agreed with

the statement, 17 students remained neutral, and 23 students (28.75%) disagreed. The regulation of emotions while learning the English language appeared to be less emphasized, as only 30 students (37.5%) agreed with the statement, while 23 students remained neutral. Twenty-seven students expressed their disagreement.

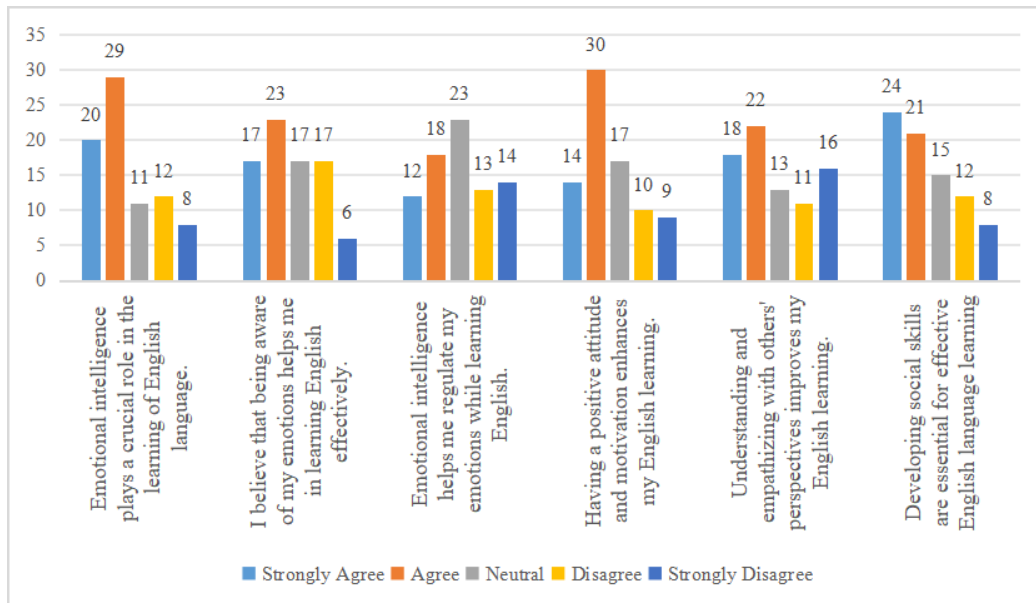


Figure 1. Role of EI in learning English language.

Regarding the positive attitude and the motivation, it is found that they have the most important role in learning a language. Forty-four students (55%) showed their approval. Seventeen remained neutral, and only a few 19 students disagreed with this fact. Understanding and empathizing with others' perspectives improves their English learning, which the students prioritize. Forty students (50%) agreed with this statement, while 27 students disagreed. Developing social skills is also becoming a part of learning English. Forty-five students (56.25%) agreed with it, while others showed their

disagreement and became neutral about this statement.

Research question two investigates, "What strategies do Saudi female students employ to enhance their emotional intelligence in the process of learning English? This section identifies the four most important and eminent English learning components. These designated factors and components are self-awareness, self-regulation, intrinsic motivation, and empathy. In the process of learning English, the students follow some specific strategies under each component. **Table 2** shows identified EI strategies related to each component.

Table 2. Strategic factors of emotional intelligence in learning English.

Strategic Factors of Emotional Intelligence in Learning English		5	4	3	2	1
1. Self-Awareness EI Strategies in Language Learning		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Monitoring my emotions helps me identify areas of improvement in learning English.	16	25	13	10	16
2	Reflecting on my strengths and weaknesses in English learning helps me set goals.	25	30	7	7	11
3	Recognizing my learning style helps me tailor my English learning strategies.	23	26	12	10	9
4	Being aware of my emotions during English learning improves my overall performance.	23	22	15	11	9

Table 2. Cont.

Strategic Factors of Emotional Intelligence in Learning English		5	4	3	2	1
2. Self-Regulation EI Strategies in Language Learning		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	Setting specific learning goals helps me stay focused during English learning.	15	32	9	10	14
6	Managing my time effectively enhances my progress in learning English.	19	26	15	10	10
7	Developing self-discipline and persistence positively impact my English learning.	21	27	12	9	11
8	Utilizing stress-management techniques improves my English learning experience.	21	27	12	9	11
9	Adapting to challenges and setbacks while learning English helps me grow.	25	35	9	4	7
3. Intrinsic Motivational EI Strategies in Language learning		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10	Setting clear career goals motivates me to learn English more effectively.	23	26	14	9	8
11	Celebrating small achievements in English learning keeps me motivated.	16	33	8	12	11
12	Engaging in self-reward strategies enhances my motivation for learning English.	15	28	17	11	9
13	Developing a positive learning environment boosts my motivation for English learning.	17	25	18	12	8
14	Seeking support and encouragement from peers and instructors keeps me motivated.	19	29	6	2	4
4. Empathy and Social EI Strategies in Language Learning		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
15	Understanding cultural differences and perspectives improves my English language learning.	14	29	22	8	7
16	Considering others' opinions and feedback positively impacts my English learning.	17	31	12	9	11
17	Actively listening to others during English learning enhances my understanding.	14	28	13	12	13
18	Expressing empathy towards fellow learners promotes a supportive English learning environment.	16	24	22	9	9
19	Practicing teamwork and collaboration improves my English learning.	17	31	12	11	9

Figure 2 emphasizes self-awareness EI strategies such as monitoring emotions, reflecting on strengths and weaknesses, recognizing learning styles, and being aware of emotions during English learning to enhance language knowledge and expand confidence. It demonstrates that understanding one's strengths and weaknesses in English learning can facilitate the process and make learning easier. Fifty-five students out of the total population agreed with this statement, while only seven students remained neutral. At the same time, 18 students disagreed with this statement. On the other hand, knowing one's learning style is also essential and depends on various factors and issues. For example, learning a language varies from person to person because of a unique instinct, and secondly, it is based on different skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Each skill has its own ap-

proach, method, manner, and strategies, such as recognition, cognition, understanding, or psychomotor learning.

Forty-nine students agreed that recognizing learning mode, mood, and manner is also helpful and assisting. Awareness of emotions, like feeling happy, sad, energetic, low, motivated, and excited, also plays a vital role in learning English. Consequently, good emotions indicate a favorable disposition toward learning English, while flawed and contrary emotions reflect negatively. Forty-five students concurred with this assertion, whereas 15 maintained a neutral stance. Students can discern places for enhancement by observing the aforementioned emotions. Forty-one out of eighty students indicated this is significant and concurred with the statement. Thirteen pupils maintained a neutral position about this truth, while twenty students agreed with it.

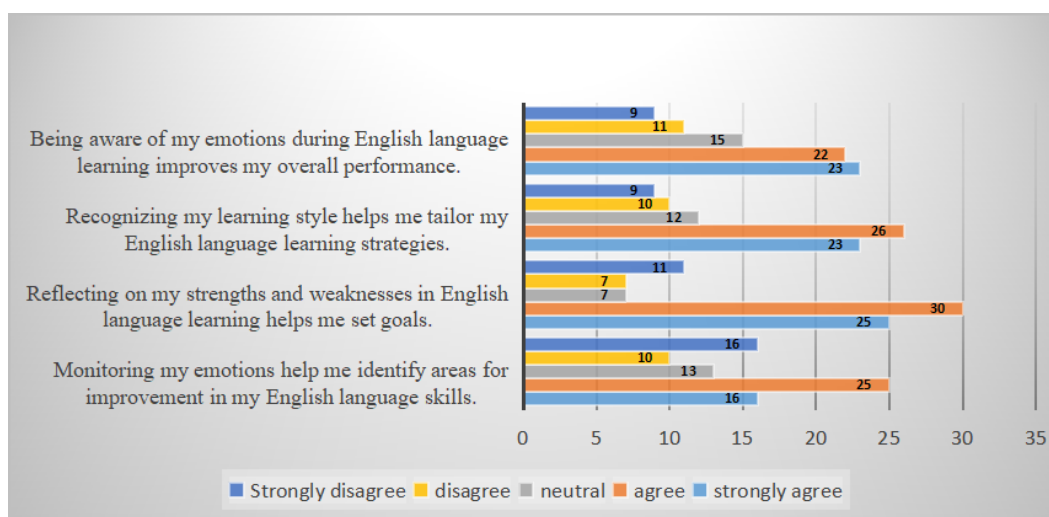


Figure 2. Self-awareness EI strategies in language learning.

Self-regulation EI strategies play an inclusive and comprehensive role in learning English. The primary self-regulation techniques comprise setting specific learning goals and objectives to stay focused. It includes managing time effectively, developing self-discipline and persistence, utilizing stress-management techniques, and adapting to the challenges and setbacks during English learning. In addition, the first strategy is setting specific learning goals is a coherent and logical helping tool. As **Figure 3** shows that forty-seven students were fully concurred with this statement. Nine students remained neutral, while 24 students disagreed with the statement. Effective time management is also one of the self-regulatory strategies. Forty-five students found time management very effective, while 15 remained neutral, and 20 needed to give it more importance in **Figure 3**. In addition, self-discipline and persistence regarding the English language positively impact learning. Forty-five students agreed with it. Stress management techniques are incomprehensible and fundamental when learning English. Forty-eight students agreed with this statement. Adapting to the challenges and setbacks during English language learning remained the most important out of all self-regulatory strategies. Sixty students agreed with this statement.

Motivations (intrinsic and extrinsic) are essential in English learning and acquisition. Experts view intrinsic motivating and EI tactics as effective in enhancing language acquisition. Intrinsic motivation entails establishing clear objectives, celebrating little accomplishments, employing

self-reward techniques, fostering a pleasant learning environment, and seeking support and encouragement from peers and instructors to maintain learner motivation. Upon separate analysis of each item in **Figure 4**, forty-nine students concurred that establishing clear goals enhances a positive attitude and outlook to study English more efficiently. Fourteen pupils maintained neutrality toward this message. Secondly, acknowledging minor accomplishments and successes enhances learners' happiness and motivates them. Forty-nine students endorsed this statement. Self-reward and self-appreciation also motivate learners to acquire a foreign language. Forty-three students considered self-reward to be an effective emotional intelligence method, while 17 students expressed neutrality toward this assertion. A favorable setting enhances the learning process as mentioned in **Figure 4**. Consequently, 42 pupils concurred that it enhances motivation for studying English. Support and encouragement from peers and teachers are highly advantageous for sustaining student motivation. Forty students endorsed this message.

Figure 5 deals with the empathy and social EI strategies that are practically important for English language learners. These strategies are essential for improving understanding while learning English. For example, EFL learners must pay close attention to what others say, speak, convey, and discuss their thoughts and feelings. The following five items—practicing teamwork and collaboration and expressing empathy toward fellow learners—promote a supportive ELL environment.

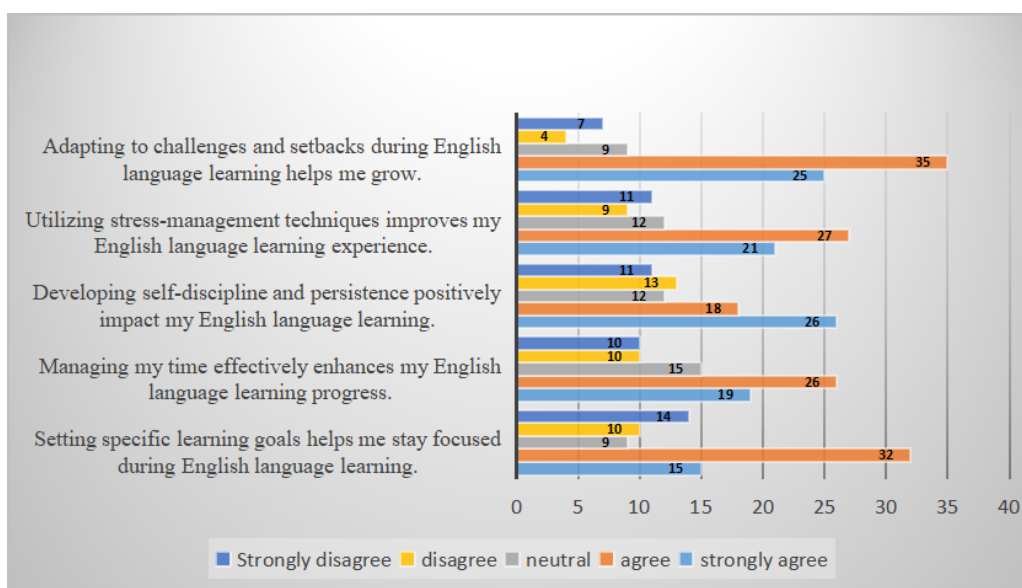


Figure 3. Self-regulation EI strategies in language learning.

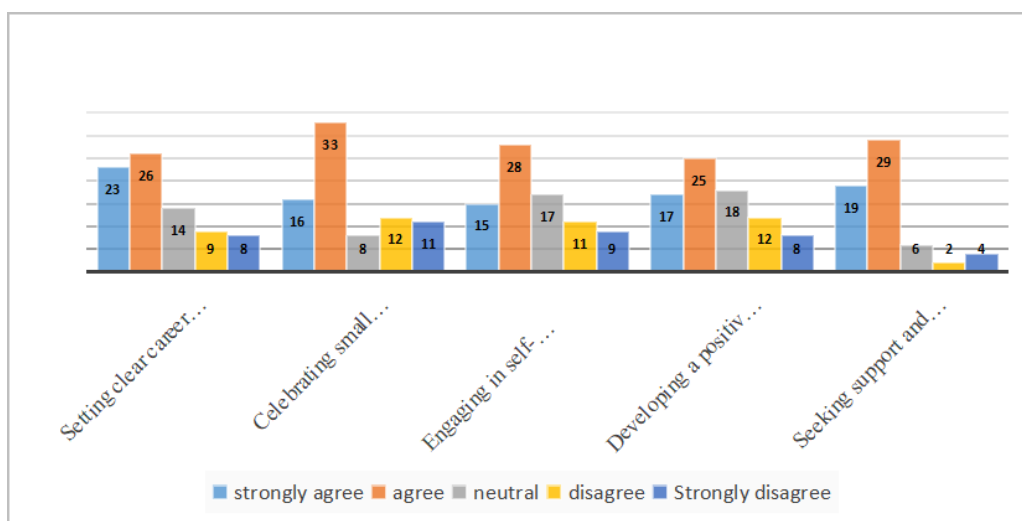


Figure 4. Intrinsic motivational EI strategies in language learning.

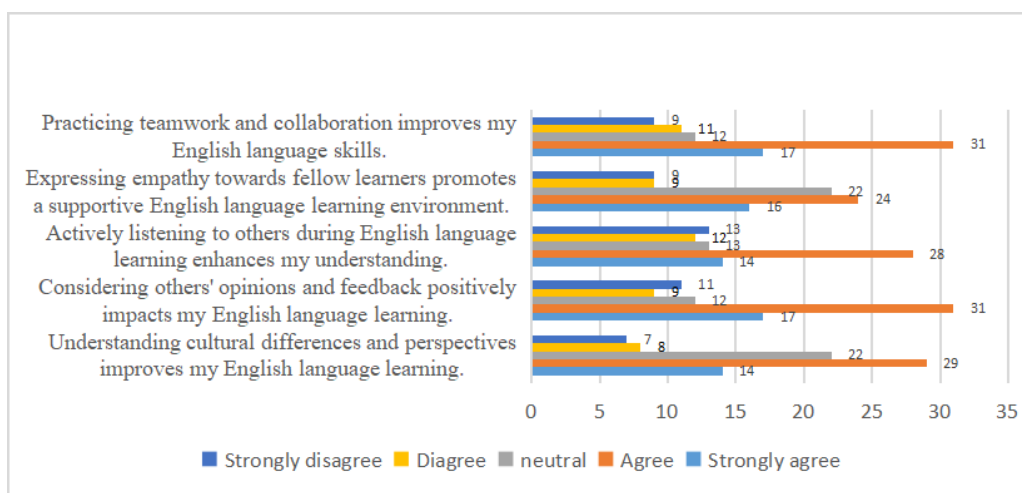


Figure 5. Empathy and social EI strategies in language learning.

In addition, active listening, considering others' opinions, giving feedback positively, and understanding cultural differences and perspectives improve English learning among students. In distinct analysis of each item, 48 students agreed that practicing teamwork and collaboration improves students' English language skills. Responding to the second research item, expressing empathy toward fellow learners, promotes a supportive learning environment; 22 students showed a neutral response, indicating that they do not even know about it. Out of the 80 students, 40 (50%) agreed with this statement. Forty-two students agreed that active and meaningful listening to others enhances students' understanding. While considering others' opinions and feedback positively impacts students' language learning, 48 students agreed with this statement. Lastly, understanding cultural differences and perspectives also improves English language learning, which 43 students favor out of 80.

Research question 3 discusses the implications and recommendations for educational practices to maintain and enhance EI in English learning among Saudi female learners (refer **Figure 6**). The research question, "In your opinion, how important is emotional intelligence in the process of English language learning (ELL)?" elicited responses from 40 out of 80 students, with 16 remaining neutral and the rest disagreeing with this statement. In response to the question, "To what extent do students feel that incorporating emotional intelligence activities is important in ELL?"

activities is important in ELL?" forty-nine students agreed with including these activities in English learning, while 19 disagreed. Regarding the supportiveness of English language teachers in promoting EI, 51 students agreed with this, while 14 students remained neutral and only 15 students disagreed. Responding to the statement "to what degree do you believe that EI development should be included in the curriculum of ELL," 47 students agreed and favored the inclusion of EI in ELL. Out of 80, 13 students remained neutral while 20 disagreed. Focusing on the effectiveness of the implications of EI in teachers' training programs, 54 students found the training programs very effective. Responding to the next statement, "To what extent do you feel that a nurturing and supportive classroom environment contributes to maintaining EI?" fifty-three students found it to a great extent, considering it very effective. Only 18 students found it ineffective, and 9 showed a neutral response. Regarding how actively engaged activities promote self-reflection and emotional self-regulation during ELL, 43 students said involvement in such activities is very effective. Based on the effectiveness of mindfulness-based techniques in maintaining EI in ELL, 44 students found them very effective. Lastly, the likelihood of recommending the inclusion of specific emotional intelligence activities and strategies in EI practices for ELLs and the extent to which collaborative learning and peer interaction contribute to maintaining EI are asked here.

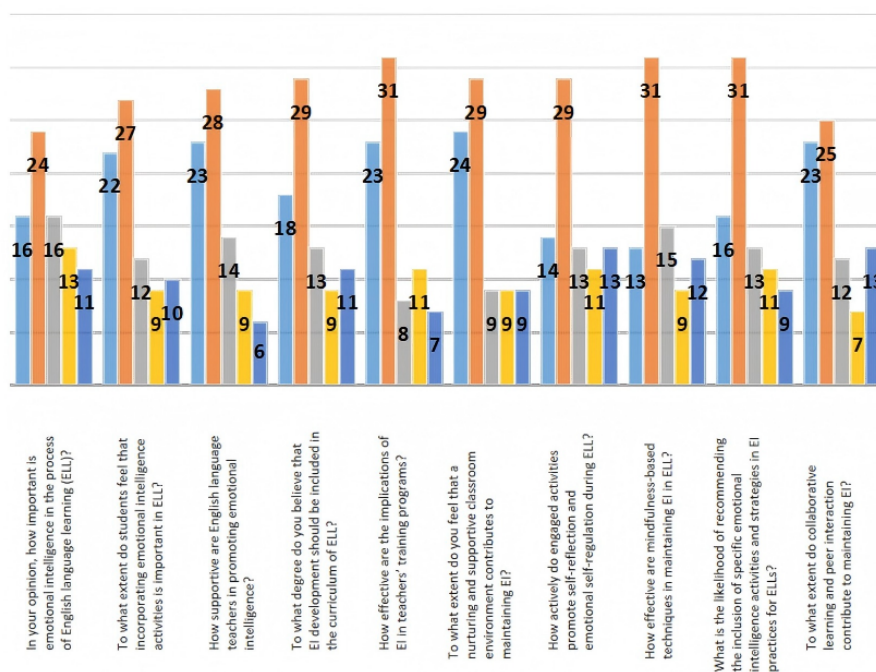


Figure 6. Implications and recommendations.

6. Discussion

Discussing the findings acknowledged from the SPSS analysis, EI's resilient and accentuated role is very apparent and noticeable among EFL female learners. EI plays an imperative and necessary role in recognizing one's emotions and dealing with them accordingly. It is very operative and functional for female English learners at applied colleges. Hence, being aware of self-emotions and regulating them cautiously helps female learners learn English effectively. The result backs up the researches^[67,68] which shows that EI is linked to language learners' beliefs about learning a language and helps them become more independent and improve their communication skills. Extracting the positive role of EI, the study associates the researchers^[1,4,6,7,10,16] who found that higher EI levels correlate with lower anxiety and higher language proficiency and positive outcomes of learning English. The study's results also conclude that positive attitude, motivation, empathizing with others' perspectives, and socializing are expedient and beneficial in language learning. The study reveals that while the cognition of releasing emotions is comprehensive, it is often overlooked and undervalued among EFL female learners, leading to adverse outcomes. Therefore, female students ascertained that positive attitudes and motivation are supportive and cooperative in ELL. The result supports^[6,7,33,60–63,69–71] on EI in language learning success. Knowing how female learners cope with EI improves their grasp of self-regulation and learning motivation.

The findings showed that the most pragmatic and significant EI strategy is self-awareness, which involves looking into one's strengths and weaknesses and recognizing the most supportive ways to overcome difficulties while learning English. Moreover, it teaches EFL learners how to respond and communicate in certain situations and with certain people. Self-awareness EI tactics assist learners in moderating their communication style and motivate them to heed the perspectives of others around them. These self-awareness strategies familiarize learners with their most used strategies and help monitor accommodating emotions, enhancing English language learning (ELL). The study ascertained that once female learners have identified the areas that need attention, they can actively apply self-awareness EI strategies. The results support the findings^[111] indicated a link between EI and memory, cognitive and compensation strategies, interpersonal skills,

and different types of English learning strategies. By cultivating accurate self-awareness, students can improve their capacity to recognize failures and adeptly utilize existing technology to strengthen their pronunciation and vocabulary. The findings regarding the Saudi EFL learners demonstrate a high-to-medium frequency use of learning strategies, with metacognitive strategies ranking highest^[33,112].

Discussing the self-regulation EI strategies in language learning, adapting to the challenges and setbacks during ELL benefits female learners the most. Modern approaches to language learning focus on learners taking initiative in their learning. The findings correspond to the outcomes^[113] which found that self-regulated learning encompasses language learners' tactics to modify their cognitive processes. Similarly, this article found that time management and prioritizing difficult tasks activate and enhance English language learning. Developing self-regulation skills empowers female learners to navigate their educational journeys more effectively and fosters resilience in the face of challenges.

Additionally, cultivating a growth mindset can further enhance their ability to tackle obstacles and embrace new learning opportunities. Discipline and persistence, combined with Huang's self-regulation tactics of controlling behavior, emotions, and thoughts, are key essentials to achieve long-term goals^[113]. Utilizing stress-management techniques improves English language learning among female learners and aligns with Huang's self-regulation tactics, which are influenced by factors such as hope and joy. These self-regulation strategies are familiar to Şadıman Hunutlu^[114], who posits that self-regulation strategies like self-evaluation, goal setting, and time management are significant for student success. Self-regulated learning strategies, including metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral strategies, can be effective for second language learning when supported by instructors^[115].

Intrinsic motivation refers to the impulse to learn that emerges from internal factors, such as an interest in language acquisition or a desire for personal growth. The most favored intrinsic motivational EI adopted by female diploma students is celebrating small achievements, a concept related to positive reinforcement propounded by B. F. Skinner in 1958. Learning becomes more intense and progressive if EFL learners are given a reward and prize for an achievement^[116]. Developing a positive learning environment boosts learners'

motivation to learn English. Engaging in self-reward strategies has also become the most adopted method by female learners. Seeking classmates' support and peers' encouragement also motivates learners to learn English emotionally intelligent way. These findings are consistent with earlier researchers' [117–119] surveys revealed the importance of motivation in Saudi EFL settings, emphasizing the need for strategies to improve learning outcomes to be EI in English skills competency. This research answers the question of learning improvement strategies for female learners. Social EI strategies significantly positively impacted EFL female learners. The study aligns with the findings [25,31,48,61,65], indicating that social and cultural strategies for understanding differences and perspectives enhance students' ability to interact meaningfully and positively, potentially reducing instances of bullying. Students may be prompted to express their opinions, enhance their awareness of personal emotional responses, and observe the postures and facial expressions of their peers.

Empathy, a core component of EI, involves understanding and sharing another person's feelings. Therefore, understanding and empathizing with others' perspectives improves English language skills. This finding aligns with the researches [115–120]. Moreover, the study [13] also suggests that empathy-related teaching techniques can improve students' speaking proficiency by creating a more favorable affective state. Most EFL female learners positively favored social skills as an essential strategy for English learning. This outcome mirrors [111] positive correlations between intrapersonal skills and various learning strategies, as well as between social strategies and adaptability/stress management. In addition, social strategies [112] are frequently employed, while memory strategies are least utilized.

The final part provides significant practical implications and recommendations from female students' perspectives. Most students responded that understanding EI is essential for language learning, and they want to embrace and implement it. Hence, students stated that knowing how to apply and incorporate EI activities while learning English is comprehensible. Therefore, the role of teachers is perceived as very supportive, assuring, and encouraging. The acknowledgement of EI and the development of EI in the curriculum is considered coherent and graspable. From the

students' point of view, teachers' training programs should be included in professional development programs, as teachers'/instructors' directions and motivations are worthy and effective for students.

Adopting nurturing and supportive classroom environments is essential for maintaining EI among EFL learners. Teacher support and peers' feedback are essential for group work. For the students, the classroom environment effectively enhances EI among female learners, particularly when based on mindfulness activities, which would be practical and operative in maintaining EI among the students.

On the other hand, in the current setting of technological shifts, the language acquisition is undergoing a profound transformation with the emergence of AI tools. These tools are playing a revolutionary role in mitigating and reducing the Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) experienced by EFL learners. Therefore, it is strongly advised that EFL students adopt AI tools to enhance their English proficiency, competency, and high EI. These erudite digital platforms serve as non-judgmental e-interlocutors, offering EFL learners unprecedented autonomy to encourage communicative participation, improve language proficiency, linguistic competence, and develop high EI. By employing AI-driven conversational agents, students can engage in fearless, iterative practice. This practice is unencumbered by the potential discomfort of peer observation or evaluative enquiry, which effectively dismantles the psychological barriers that traditionally inhibit speaking performance, presentation, and active participation due to the fear of errors. Within this private, low-stakes testing environment, EFL learners are empowered to confidently experiment with the accuracy of their communicative contents, phrasing and prosodic variations, sentence structure complexities, and lexical exactness, regardless of transient errors. Consequently, the iterative cycle of self-initiated output, immediate algorithmic feedback, and insightful recalibration promotes not only linguistic fluency but also metacognitive strategies and high EI. Through this symbiotic integration of technology and affect, AI tools catalyze a transformative shift: EFL learners can mitigate their FLA, overcome negative self-sentiments, refine stubborn self-doubts, and improve their physical gestures with confidence. This, in turn, promotes and enhances high EI and ensures successful fluency in English-speaking competency within EFL context.

7. Conclusion

This study explored the impact of strategic EI factors (self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, social skills, and motivation) on English language learning among EFL students. The study proves that EI plays a significant key role in English learning. Due to the use of social media and other technologies, students' awareness about EI has increased, yet how to regulate it is still unclear for them. The EI factors can be highly applicable and practical for them. The findings revealed a significant positive effect of the strategic aspects of EI on EFL students' language proficiency. We found that the most important predictor of successful language learning is self-awareness. Students who are more aware of their emotions and know their strengths and weaknesses can learn English effectively and efficiently. The study concludes that self-regulation EI strategies are very important to set learning goals, regulate temper, be optimistic and action-oriented, manage emotions under stress, and practice self-discipline. In order to learn English and decide on objectives, self-regulation EI methods are very essential.

Social skills facilitated effective communication and collaboration in group activities, enhancing overall language learning and proficiency. Empathy is also an essential element of social skills. Students who understand and share the feelings of others tend to favor and promote deeper connections, enhance communication, and build stronger relationships. Empathy encourages a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. It enabled students to understand better and connect with their peers and instructors, leading to improved listening and speaking skills. From the students' point of view, motivation was a strong driving force for consistent effort and perseverance, resulting in higher levels of overall language learning and achievement.

In current language education revolution and new technological shifts, AI tools are effectively reducing EFL learners' FLA by providing a non-judgmental environment for practice. It is recommended that EFL students adopt AI tools to enhance their linguistic proficiency and emotional intelligence. These platforms offer a low-stakes, private space where learners can freely practice speaking, pronunciation, intonation, and sentence construction without fear of observation or criticism. As a result, students can experiment confidently, receive instant feedback, and correct errors in real time—lessening anxiety, building confidence,

and improving both speaking fluency and high EI in English communication and competency.

These findings underscore the implications of EI practices to maintain EI in English language learning (ELL). The students' responses recommended including EI development courses in the curriculum. In addition, a nurturing and supportive classroom environment contributes to maintaining the EI among Saudi female EFL students.

8. Limitations

This research study has several limitations. Firstly, the reliance on a quantitative method may not capture the nuanced personal experiences of EFL students regarding EI. Additionally, the sample size, indicated by 80 EFL, may not be representative of the broader EFL population, potentially affecting the generalizability of the findings. The study's focus on Goleman's Five Components Model may overlook other relevant EI frameworks that could provide more comprehensive insights. Lastly, self-reported data could introduce bias, as students may have different perceptions of their EI levels and learning outcomes, impacting the accuracy of the results.

9. Future Research and Practices in EI

Future research should investigate deeper into how emotional intelligence (EI) components, especially self-awareness and self-regulation, can be systematically integrated into EFL curricula. It would be beneficial to explore longitudinal studies that track EI's impact on language acquisition over time. Additionally, implementing experimental designs could help identify which specific strategies yield the most significant improvements in language proficiency and student engagement. Workshops and teacher training focusing on enhancing EI can be conducted to equip educators with tools to foster these skills in students. Exploring the role of cultural contexts in EI's influence on learning outcomes would enrich understanding and practice in diverse educational settings. Finally, in the current setting of technological shifts, the language acquisition is undergoing a profound transformation with the emergence of AI tools, how, are playing a revolutionary role in mitigating and reducing the FLA

experienced by EFL learners.

10. Recommendations

Further research can explore how this emotional intelligence can be applied to EFL learners. Investigating the impact of different instructional approaches, classroom environments, and curriculum designs are further topics of investigation. How emotional intelligence training programs can be integrated into language classrooms can be investigated by the researchers. The role of teaching methods and the teacher's role in teaching EI can be a topic of further discussion. EFL educators can significantly improve student outcomes and create a more holistic and rewarding learning experience for all.

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Data Availability Statement

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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