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Socio-psychological Factors Influencing EFL Learners' Development of English Proficiency

By

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A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Modern Languages in partial fulfillment of

The requirements for the degree of

BA in ELT

Department of English and Modern Languages

Independent University, Bangladesh

26th April, 2026

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my/our own original work while completing degree at Independent University, Bangladesh.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I/We have acknowledged all main sources of help.

Student's Full Name & Signature

(Signature)

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Approval

The thesis/project titled "Socio-psychological Factors Influencing EFL Learners' Development of English Proficiency" submitted by

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of Spring, 2026 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of BA in ELT on 26-04-2026.

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Ethics Statement

This study strictly adhered to established ethical research standards. Prior to data collection, all participants were fully informed about the purpose and procedures of the study, and their voluntary participation was ensured through informed consent. Participants were also made aware of their right to withdraw at any stage without any consequences. To protect their privacy, all personal information and responses were treated with complete confidentiality, and anonymity was maintained throughout the research process.

Abstract/Executive Summary

This study investigates the socio-psychological factors influencing English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' development of English proficiency. It specifically focuses on three core variables: anxiety, motivation and self-confidence. The research was conducted on 20 undergraduate students (10 male and 10 female) from Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) using a qualitative interview-based approach.

The findings reveal that socio-psychological factors significantly shape learners' English language development. Anxiety was found to be the most dominant negative factor, primarily caused by family pressure, academic stress, financial instability, classroom criticism, and personal emotional trauma. Motivation emerged as a key positive factor strongly influenced by social support systems including family, teachers, and peers. Self-confidence was identified as the strongest determinant of actual English performance.

The study further reveals that these factors are interdependent and form a cyclical relationship influencing language learning outcomes. A major contribution of this research is the proposal of a **counselling-based intervention model**, which suggests that emotional and psychological support for students, teachers, families, peers, and educational institutions can significantly reduce anxiety while enhancing motivation and self-confidence. The counselling model will be focusing on counselling the students, teachers, family members of students, their peers and institutions extensively arranging counselling centers and appointing psychologists so that every stakeholder can benefit from counselling which will ultimately help to create a study-friendly environment.

The study concludes that English proficiency development is not merely a linguistic process but a socio-psychological phenomenon. Addressing emotional well-being is therefore essential for effective EFL learning.

Table of Contents

Declaration ii

Approval iii

Ethics Statement iv

Abstract/ Executive Summary v

Dedication (Optional) vi

Acknowledgement (Optional) vii

Table of Contents viii

List of Tables ix

List of Figures x

List of Acronyms xi

Glossary xii

Chapter 1 Introduction 12-13

1.1 Background of the Study 12

1.2 Socio-psychological Factors in ELT 12

1.3 Problem Statement 12

1.4 Research Questions 13

1.5 Objectives of the Study 13

1.6 Significance of the Study 13

1.7 Scope of the Study 13

Chapter 2 Literature Review 14-18

2.1 Introduction 14

2.2 Theoretical Background of Socio-Psychological Factors in SLA 14

2.3 Literature Review 15

2.4 Synthesis of Literature 17

2.5 Research Gap 17

2.6 Conceptual Framework of the Study 18

Chapter 3 Methodology 19-24

3.1 Introduction 19

3.2 Research Design 19
3.3 Research Paradigm 19
3.4 Research Setting 20
3.5 Participants of the Study 20
3.6 Sampling Technique 20
3.7 Data Collection Method 20
3.8 Data Analysis Method 21
3.9 Ethical Considerations 22
3.10 Reliability and Validity 23
3.11 Limitations of Methodology 23
3.12 Summary 23
Chapter 4 Data Analysis and Findings 25-33
4.1 Introduction 25
4.2 Overview of Themes 25
4.3 Theme 1: Anxiety as a Barrier to English Learning 25
4.4 Theme 2: Motivation as a Driving Force 27
4.5 Theme 3: Self-confidence and Language Performance 28
4.6 Gender-based Comparative Analysis 29
4.7 Integrated Model of Findings 30
4.8 Charts 31
4.9 Summary of Findings 33
Chapter 5 Discussion 34-39
5.1 Introduction 34
5.2 Discussion of Anxiety 34
5.3 Discussion of Motivation 35
5.4 Discussion of Self-Confidence 35
5.5 Interaction of Socio-psychological Factors 36
5.6 Counselling-based Intervention Model (Key Contribution) 37
5.7 Comparison with Literature 38
5.8 Pedagogical Implications 39
5.9 Institutional Implications 39
5.10 Social Implications 39
5.11 Summary of Discussion 39

Chapter 6 Conclusion **40-42**

6.1 Introduction 40

6.2 Summary of Major Findings 40

6.3 Answers to Research Questions 40

6.4 Key Research Contribution 41

6.5 Pedagogical Implications 42

6.6 Institutional Implications 42

6.7 Social and Family Implications 42

6.8 Limitations of the Study 42

6.9 Recommendations for Future Research 42

References **43**

Appendix A. 9

Appendix A **44**

Appendix B **44**

Appendix C **44**

Final Thesis Statement **46**

List of Figures

Figure 1: Anxiety Levels 31

Figure 2: Motivation Levels 32

Figure 3: Self-Confidence Levels 33

List of Acronyms

IUB	Independent University, Bangladesh
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
L2	Second Language
SBE	School of Business and Entrepreneurship
SESM	School of Environmental Science and Management
SLASS	School of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences
SLS	School of Life Sciences

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In the era of globalization, English has become the dominant medium of international communication, education, technology, and employment. As a result, the demand for English proficiency among learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has significantly increased worldwide, including in Bangladesh.

Despite receiving similar classroom instruction, learners often demonstrate significant differences in English proficiency levels. This suggests that language learning is not determined solely by cognitive ability or instructional methods but is deeply influenced by socio-psychological factors.

1.2 Socio-Psychological Factors in ELT

Socio-psychological factors refer to the interaction between social environment and psychological states that influence learning behavior. In EFL contexts, these include anxiety, motivation, self-confidence, attitude, peer influence, family environment, teacher behaviour, socio-economic conditions etc.

Among these, this study focuses specifically on **anxiety, motivation and self-confidence**, as they are most directly linked to English language performance.

1.3 Problem Statement

Many EFL learners experience difficulty in achieving fluency in English despite adequate instruction. A major reason for this gap lies in negative socio-psychological conditions such as anxiety, lack of motivation, and low self-confidence.

This creates a significant gap in ELT research: while cognitive and methodological aspects are widely studied, emotional and psychological dimensions remain underexplored in the Bangladeshi context.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What socio-psychological factors influence EFL learners' English proficiency development?
2. How do anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence affect learners' English learning process?
3. What are the negative impacts of these factors on English proficiency development?
4. What strategies do learners recommend for reducing negative impacts?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

There are mainly four objectives of my research study. The first objective is to identify key socio-psychological factors influencing EFL learners. The second objective is to analyze how anxiety, motivation and self-confidence affect learning. The third objective is to explore negative impacts on English proficiency development. Finally, the fourth or the last objective is to propose counselling-based solutions for improvement.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, this study highlights psychological barriers in EFL learning. Secondly, it provides qualitative insights from Bangladeshi university students. Thirdly, it connects theory with real-life learner experiences. Lastly, it proposes a practical counselling-based intervention model.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study focuses on undergraduate EFL learners at Independent University, Bangladesh. It investigates socio-psychological experiences affecting English learning. It brings out the socio-psychological experiences of learners through the data collection process based mainly on three core socio-psychological factors, like, anxiety, motivation and self-confidence. The research study is based on the findings of the data derived from a sample of 20 EFL learners at IUB.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews existing literature on socio-psychological factors influencing EFL learners' development of English proficiency. The review focuses on three major variables: **anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence**, which are widely recognized in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research as critical affective factors.

The chapter also integrates five empirical research studies and presents them in a synthesized passage form to establish the theoretical and empirical foundation for the present study.

2.2 Theoretical Background of Socio-Psychological Factors in SLA

The role of socio-psychological variables in language learning has been widely discussed in SLA literature. Language learning is no longer viewed as purely cognitive; instead, it is considered an interaction between cognitive ability and affective factors.

2.2.1 Gardner's Socio-Educational Model

Gardner, R. C. (1985) emphasizes that language learning success is influenced by motivation, attitude toward the target language community, integrative orientation and anxiety levels.

According to this model, learners who are positively oriented toward the target language culture are more likely to achieve higher proficiency.

2.2.2 Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System

Dörnyei, Z. (2005) proposes that motivation is shaped by ideal L2 self, that is, desired future identity; ought-to L2 self, that is, external expectations and learning experience.

This framework highlights that motivation is dynamic and identity-driven.

2.2.3 Horwitz's Foreign Language Anxiety Theory

Horwitz et al. (1986) define foreign language anxiety as a distinct psychological phenomenon that affects speaking performance, classroom participation and cognitive processing.

It is considered a major barrier in language acquisition.

2.2.4 Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory

Bandura, A. (1997) emphasizes that learners' belief in their ability directly influences effort, persistence and performance.

In language learning, self-confidence plays a central role in oral fluency and communication.

2.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.3.1 Study One: Anxiety, Motivation, and Achievement (Mahmoodi, M., & Yavuz, M.A. (2025))

Mahmoodi, M., & Yavuz, M.A.(2025) investigated the relationship among EFL learners' anxiety, motivation, and academic achievement. Their study revealed a strong negative correlation between anxiety and motivation, meaning that higher anxiety leads to lower motivation and reduced academic performance. The study also confirmed that anxiety significantly impairs learners' ability to perform in English, particularly in speaking and comprehension tasks. Furthermore, demographic variables such as age and gender were found to have no significant influence, indicating that psychological factors are more powerful determinants of success in EFL learning.

This study strongly supports the present research by demonstrating that anxiety is a key barrier to English proficiency development and that motivation plays a crucial mediating role in academic success.

2.3.2 Study Two: Learner Proficiency and Motivation (Pariyanto, P., & Pradipta, B. (2020))

This qualitative study examined the factors influencing EFL proficiency from a teacher's perspective. The findings highlighted three major influences: internal motivation, social context, and positive attitude toward English. The study revealed that learners who are supported by family, teachers, and social environment tend to develop higher motivation and better proficiency. It also emphasized that motivation is closely linked to emotional engagement and consistent exposure to English.

The study is relevant to the present research because it highlights the importance of external support systems, which aligns with findings that family and teacher support significantly affect learners' motivation and confidence.

2.3.3 Study Three: Socio-Psychological Predictors of EFL Proficiency (Hu, R. –J. S. (2001))

Hu's (2001) study identified self-confidence as the strongest predictor of English language proficiency, followed by motivation and cultural exposure. The research found that learners with higher self-confidence performed significantly better in grammar and listening tasks. Conversely, learners with low confidence experienced higher anxiety and lower academic achievement.

This study provides strong empirical support for the present research, particularly in identifying self-confidence as the most powerful determinant of English performance.

2.3.4 Study Four: Motivation Across Proficiency Levels (Bagheri Nevisi, R., & Farhani, A. (2022))

This study explored how motivation varies across different proficiency levels. The findings revealed that beginners are primarily extrinsically motivated, while advanced learners are more intrinsically motivated. Intermediate learners showed a combination of both motivational types. The study concluded that motivation is not static but evolves with language proficiency development.

This is relevant to the current study because it shows that motivation is dynamic and influenced by learners' progress, which aligns with the observation that emotional and social conditions shape motivational levels.

2.3.5 Study Five: Socio-Psychological Factors in Oral Performance (Benmessahel, R., & Dedardja,W. (2022))

This study examined the impact of socio-psychological factors on learners' oral performance. It found that anxiety, lack of motivation, and poor classroom environment significantly hinder speaking ability. The research emphasized that speaking skills are more sensitive to psychological barriers than other language skills such as reading or writing.

This study directly supports the present research, as many participants reported fear of speaking English due to anxiety and lack of confidence.

2.4 SYNTHESIS OF LITERATURE

Across the five studies, several consistent patterns emerge. Five similar patterns are the most notable among them. Firstly, anxiety negatively affects English learning outcomes. Secondly, motivation enhances engagement and achievement. Thirdly, self-confidence is a key predictor of performance. Fourthly, social environment comprising of family, teachers, peers etc. strongly influences learning. Fifthly, psychological factors are more influential than demographic variables.

These findings collectively confirm that EFL learning is deeply affected by emotional and social dimensions.

2.5 RESEARCH GAP

Despite extensive research on socio-psychological factors, several gaps remain. Firstly, limited qualitative research has been done in Bangladeshi university contexts. Secondly, insufficient integration of anxiety, motivation and self-confidence in a single framework is evident. Thirdly, lack of emphasis on counselling –based intervention strategies has been witnessed. Fourthly, there was limited focus in the Bangladeshi context in this research study.

This study addresses these gaps by providing a qualitative exploration of 20 EFL learners and proposing a counselling-based support model.

2.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The conceptual framework of this study is based on the interaction of three core variables. These three independent variables are anxiety, motivation and self-confidence. In this case, the dependent variable is English proficiency development. On the other hand, the moderating factors are family environment, teacher behaviour, peer influence, financial condition etc.

The relationship can be summarized as:

Socio-psychological factors → Emotional state → Learning engagement → English proficiency outcome

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological framework adopted for this study. It explains the research design, philosophical orientation, participants, sampling technique, data collection procedures, and data analysis methods. Ethical considerations and limitations of the methodology are also discussed.

The aim of this chapter is to provide a transparent account of how the study was conducted to ensure reliability, validity, and academic rigor.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopts a **qualitative research design**, which is appropriate for exploring socio-psychological experiences of EFL learners in depth.

Qualitative research is particularly suitable for few specific reasons. Firstly, it focuses on meaning and lived experiences. Secondly, it allows exploration of emotions, perceptions and attitudes. Thirdly, it provides rich, descriptive data rather than numerical measurement.

In the context of this study, qualitative design enables an in-depth understanding of how anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence influence English proficiency development.

3.3 Research Paradigm

The study is grounded in an **interpretivist research paradigm**.

Interpretivism assumes certain concepts. Firstly, reality is socially constructed. Secondly, human behaviour is shaped by personal experiences. Thirdly, multiple realities exist depending on individual perception.

Since this study investigates learners' subjective experiences of English learning, interpretivism is the most appropriate philosophical approach.

3.4 Research Setting

The research was conducted at **Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB)**, a private university where English is used as the medium of instruction in most academic programs.

The setting is relevant for a few reasons. Firstly, students come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Secondly, English proficiency levels of learners vary significantly. Thirdly, learners experience different psychological and academic pressures.

3.5 Participants of the Study

The study involved **20 undergraduate students**, including 10 male students and 10 female students.

Participants were selected from different academic disciplines to ensure diversity of experiences. Participants were selected from the School of Business and Entrepreneurship (SBE), School of Environmental Science & Management (SESM), School of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences (SLASS) and School of Life Sciences (SLS). More specifically, participants were selected from the Department of Economics, Department of Marketing, Department of Environmental Science, Department of English, Department of Anthropology and the Department of Microbiology.

3.6 Sampling Technique

A **purposive sampling technique** was used.

This method was chosen for a few reasons. Firstly, participants were selected based on relevance to the research topic. Secondly, only students with EFL learning experience were included. Thirdly, it allows deeper insight into socio-psychological variation.

Purposive sampling ensures that data is rich, relevant, and context-specific.

3.7 Data Collection Method

Qualitative methods were used for data collection. The primary data collection method was **semi-structured face-to-face interviews**. The sample consisted of 20 participants including 10 male and 10 female participants. Each participant was interviewed for about 10 to 20 minutes.

Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were chosen as the method of data collection because it helps extensively to bring out the personal information of the lived experiences of the participants which is highly essential in conducting this research study.

3.7.1 Rationale for Interviews

Interviews were chosen for a few reasons. Firstly, interviews allow detailed exploration of personal experiences. Secondly, they enable clarification of responses. Thirdly, they capture emotional and psychological dimensions of learning.

3.7.2 Interview Procedure

Interviews were conducted individually. Male students were interviewed in the university food court. On the other hand, female students were interviewed in the female common room. Each interview lasted approximately 10 to 20 minutes. Responses were recorded and later transcribed.

3.7.3 Interview Focus Areas

The interviews focused on certain areas. The first focus area of the interview was anxiety in English learning. The second focus area was motivation levels. The third focus area was self-confidence issues. The fourth focus area was family and social influence. The fifth focus area was classroom experiences.

3.8 Data Analysis Method

The study used **thematic analysis**, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework. Thematic analysis in ELT research is a qualitative method used to identify, analyze and interpret recurring patterns and themes within data. The data has been obtained from interviews in this research study which is also a part of thematic analysis. The goal of thematic analysis is to organize rich, detailed information into meaningful categories that capture important aspects of language teaching and learning. Thematic analysis is important in ELT research because it captures real classroom experiences, is a flexible and adaptable method, helps interpret qualitative data systematically, reveals patterns and insights, supports theory and practice and gives voice to participants. In short, thematic analysis is essential in ELT research because it turns complex qualitative data into meaningful insights that can improve both teaching practices and learning outcomes. For these advantages, I have chosen thematic analysis for this research study of mine.

3.8.1 Steps of Thematic Analysis

The first step of the thematic analysis of my research study was familiarization with data. All interview responses were read multiple times to gain familiarity. The second step was initial coding. Key phrases related to anxiety, motivation and self-confidence were identified. The third step was theme generation. Codes were grouped into three major themes, like, anxiety, motivation and self-confidence. The fourth step was reviewing themes. Themes were reviewed to ensure consistency and relevance. The fifth step was defining themes. Each theme was clearly defined in relation to English proficiency development. The sixth step was writing up. Themes were interpreted and linked to research questions and literature.

3.8.2 Final Themes Identified

Three themes have been finally identified in this research study. These themes are associated with the three core socio-psychological factors influencing EFL learners' development of English proficiency, like, anxiety, motivation and self-confidence. The three themes demonstrate the basis of the data collection of this research study. The three final themes are:

1.Anxiety as a barrier to learning

2.Motivation as a driving force

3.Self-confidence as a performance determinant

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were strictly followed. Participation was voluntary. Informed consent was obtained. Confidentiality was ensured. No real names were used. Data was used only for academic purposes. Participants were allowed to withdraw at any time.

Special care was taken to protect sensitive emotional narratives, especially those involving family and personal trauma.

3.10 Reliability and Validity

To ensure research trustworthiness, focus was given on credibility. Data was collected directly from participants, Real-life experiences were recorded. Secondly, focus was given on transferability. Diverse student backgrounds were included. Thirdly, focus was given on dependability. Systematic interview process was followed. Lastly, focus was given on confirmability. Findings were grounded in participant narratives.

3.11 Limitations of Methodology

The study has several limitations. The sample size is very small comprising of only 20 participants. There was limited time for interviews. Emotional responses may influence subjectivity. Findings are not statistically generalizable. Only one university context was studied.

However, the qualitative depth compensates for lack of generalizability.

3.12 Summary

This chapter presented the qualitative framework of the study, including interpretivist philosophy, purposive sampling, semi-structured interviews, and thematic analysis. The methodology is designed to capture rich socio-psychological experiences of EFL learners in Bangladesh.

This chapter has provided a comprehensive account of the methodological framework underpinning the present study, outlining the key decisions and procedures that guided the research process. The study is grounded in a qualitative research design within an interpretivist paradigm, which together offer an appropriate and coherent foundation for investigating the complex, subjective, and socially constructed nature of EFL learners' socio-psychological experiences. By prioritizing participants' perspectives and lived realities, the study seeks to move beyond surface-level analysis and generate deeper insights into the factors influencing English language proficiency development.

The research was conducted at Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB), a context characterized by linguistic diversity, varying levels of English proficiency, and significant academic and social pressures. This setting provided a rich and relevant environment for examining how socio-psychological variables operate within real-life EFL learning situations. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select 20 undergraduate students from multiple academic disciplines, ensuring both relevance to the research objectives and diversity in

experiences. This diversity strengthened the depth and contextual richness of the data, allowing for a more nuanced exploration of learner differences.

Data collection was carried out through semi-structured face-to-face interviews, a method well-suited to capturing detailed, personal, and emotionally grounded accounts of language learning. The flexibility of this approach enabled participants to express their thoughts freely while allowing the researcher to probe deeper into key issues such as anxiety, motivation, self-confidence, social influence, and classroom experiences. As a result, the study was able to generate rich qualitative data that reflects the complexity of learners' psychological and social realities.

The data analysis process was conducted using thematic analysis, following a systematic and rigorous procedure. Through careful coding, categorization, and interpretation, recurring patterns were identified and organized into three central themes: anxiety as a barrier to learning, motivation as a driving force, and self-confidence as a determinant of performance. These themes not only reflect the core socio-psychological dimensions of the study but also provide a structured framework for linking empirical findings with existing theoretical perspectives in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT).

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a detailed thematic analysis of the qualitative data collected from 20 undergraduate EFL learners at Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB). The purpose of this chapter is to explore how socio-psychological factors—particularly **anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence**—influence learners' English proficiency development.

The findings are presented through three major themes derived from Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis framework.

4.2 Overview of Themes

The analysis of interview data generated the following dominant themes:

1. Anxiety as a barrier to English learning
2. Motivation as a driving force for learning success
3. Self-confidence as a determinant of English performance

These themes are interconnected and collectively shape learners' academic experiences.

4.3 THEME 1: ANXIETY AS A BARRIER TO ENGLISH LEARNING

4.3.1 Nature of Anxiety Among Learners

The findings reveal that anxiety is the most dominant negative socio-psychological factor affecting EFL learners. It manifests in emotional distress, fear of failure, lack of concentration, and avoidance of classroom participation.

Anxiety among participants was triggered by family pressure, academic expectations, teacher criticism, financial instability, romantic relationship breakdown, childhood trauma etc.

4.3.2 Male Students and Anxiety

Several male participants demonstrated severe anxiety linked to personal life experiences. Boy 1 experienced emotional trauma due to parental divorce, which disrupted his academic stability. Boy 2 faced continuous parental criticism and pressure, leading to demotivation. Boy 3 and Boy 4 experienced emotional distress due to breakup, affecting concentration and study habits. Boy 5 reported humiliation by teachers in public, leading to fear of participation. Boy 6 suffered from family conflict and disturbed home environment. Boy 7 experienced psychological trauma due to family-related loss and pressure.

4.3.3 Female Students and Anxiety

Female participants reported anxiety primarily linked to social and cultural pressure. Girl 1 and Girl 2 faced parental pressure regarding academic success and marriage expectations. Girl 3 experienced anxiety due to peer and teacher criticism. Girl 4 suffered emotional breakdown after relationship failure. Girl 5 and Girl 6 faced unstable family environments and financial difficulties. Girl 7 reported long-term trauma due to childhood punishment for poor academic performance. Girl 8 experienced academic disruption due to financial hardship.

4.3.4 Interpretation of Theme 1

The data strongly suggest that anxiety is not classroom-specific but deeply rooted in learners' social environments. The key causes of anxiety were family instability, emotional trauma, academic pressure, financial insecurity, negative classroom feedback etc. On the other hand, the effects of anxiety were reduced participation, fear of speaking English, lack of concentration, poor academic performance etc.

4.4 THEME 2: MOTIVATION AS A DRIVING FORCE

4.4.1 Nature of Motivation

Motivation emerged as a key positive factor influencing English learning success. It was strongly associated with emotional support, academic encouragement, and positive learning environments.

4.4.2 Highly Motivated Learners

Participants with strong motivation included Boy 8, Boy 9, Boy 10, Girl 9 and Girl 10. These students demonstrated high academic achievement, strong English proficiency, active classroom participation and confidence in communication.

4.4.3 Sources of Motivation

Motivation was influenced by supportive families, encouraging teachers, positive peer relationships, scholarships and academic success, personal interest in English etc.

4.4.4 Low Motivation Cases

Participants experiencing anxiety (Boy 1–7, Girl 1–8) showed lack of interest in English, low engagement in learning tasks, avoidance of speaking activities, inconsistent study habits etc.

4.4.5 Interpretation of Theme 2

Motivation is not an isolated factor but depends on emotional stability. High anxiety leads to low motivation which in turn leads to reduced engagement in studies. On the other hand, low anxiety leads to high motivation which ultimately leads to academic success. This is demonstrated below using arrows:

Key insight:

High anxiety → low motivation → reduced engagement
Low anxiety → high motivation → academic success

4.5 THEME 3: SELF-CONFIDENCE AND LANGUAGE PERFORMANCE

4.5.1 Role of Self-Confidence

Self-confidence emerged as the strongest determinant of actual English performance. It determines whether learners can effectively use their knowledge in real communication.

4.5.2 High Confidence Learners

High confidence learners were Boy 8, Boy 9, Boy 10, Girl 9 and Girl 10. Their characteristics were fluent English communication, active classroom participation, willingness to speak English, strong academic performance etc.

4.5.3 Low Confidence Learners

Most anxious learners showed fear of making mistakes, hesitation in speaking English, avoidance of classroom interaction, dependence on memorization etc.

4.5.4 Interpretation of Theme 3

Self-confidence acts as a **psychological bridge between knowledge and performance**.

Even highly knowledgeable students fail to perform well without confidence.

4.6 GENDER-BASED COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

4.6.1 Male Students

Male students were more affected by emotional trauma, like, breakups, divorce, family loss etc. They were also affected by anxiety strongly linked to personal life disruption. Some male participants reported social pressure. Moreover, it has been observed from the data collection that performance of male students improves significantly in supportive environments.

4.6.2 Female Students

Female students were more affected by social and cultural expectations. They were highly affected by anxiety linked to marriage pressure and family expectations. Some female participants also reported personal trauma. Besides, it has been observed from the data collection that classroom criticism significantly impacts confidence.

4.6.3 Key Insight

It was found from the findings of the data collection that anxiety among male participants was mainly due to emotional and personal causes. On the other hand, it was found that anxiety among female participants was mainly due to social and cultural pressure. This is represented below:

- Male anxiety = emotional/personal causes
- Female anxiety = social/cultural pressure

However, both groups show similar outcomes in terms of reduced English proficiency when anxiety is high.

4.7 INTEGRATED MODEL OF FINDINGS

The findings reveal a cyclical relationship. They reveal a negative cycle which shows that anxiety leads to low confidence which in turn leads to low motivation which ultimately leads to poor academic performance. On the other hand, the findings also reveal a positive cycle which demonstrates that low anxiety leads to high confidence which in turn leads to high motivation which finally leads to high academic performance. This cyclical relationship is demonstrated below using arrows:

Negative cycle:

Anxiety → Low Confidence → Low Motivation → Poor Performance

Positive cycle:

Low Anxiety → High Confidence → High Motivation → High Performance

4.8 CHARTS

Anxiety was observed in both the male and female participants. Though most of the participants experienced anxiety, the level of anxiety varied among them. Below is a pie chart demonstrating the percentages of participants among the 20 participants of the sample experiencing high, moderate and low anxiety levels:

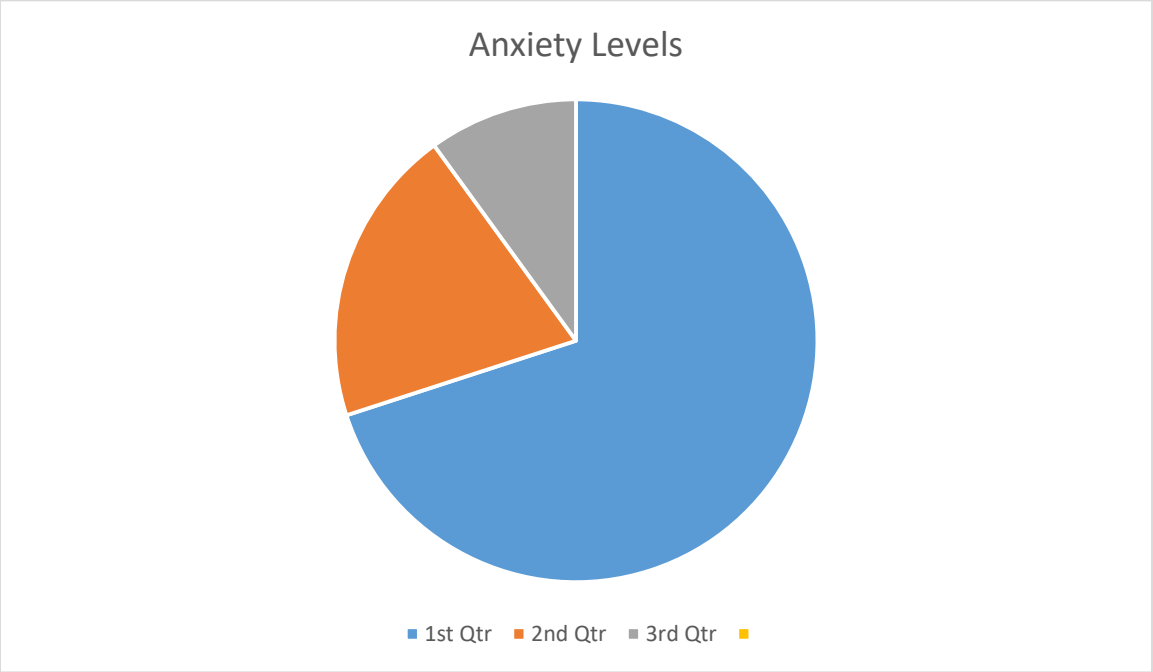


Figure 1: Distribution of Anxiety Levels among Participants (N=20)

- High anxiety: 70%
- Moderate anxiety: 20%
- Low anxiety: 10%

High anxiety was coded when participants explicitly described persistent fear, physical symptoms or avoidance behaviours. Moderate anxiety was coded when participants acknowledged nervousness but continued to participate. Low anxiety was coded when participants reported comfort with English use.

Motivation was observed in many of the participants. However, the level of motivation varied among the 20 participants. Below is a pie chart demonstrating the percentages of participants with high, moderate and low motivation levels respectively:

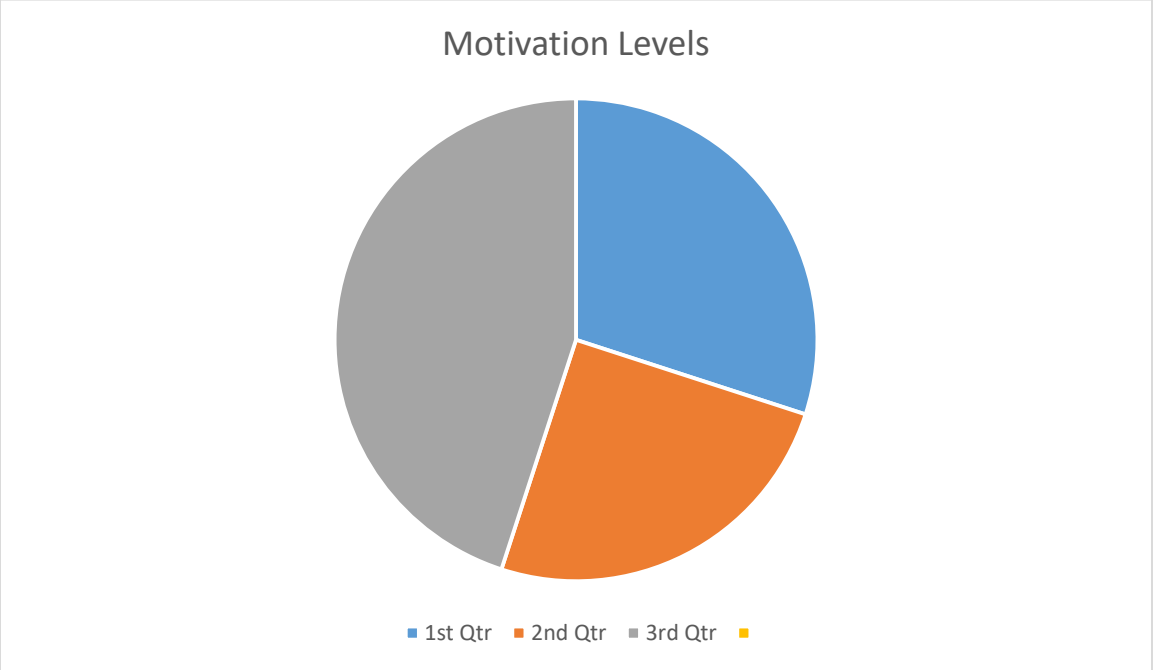


Figure 2: Distribution of Motivation Levels among Participants (N=20)

- High motivation: 30%
- Moderate motivation: 25%
- Low motivation: 45%

High motivation was coded when participants reported comfort with English use. Moderate motivation was coded when participants showed signs during their participation showing that their motivation was moderate. Low motivation was coded when participants were extremely hesitant to participate.

Confidence was observed in many of the participants. However, the level of confidence varied among the 20 participants. Below is a pie chart demonstrating the percentages of participants with high, moderate and low confidence levels respectively:

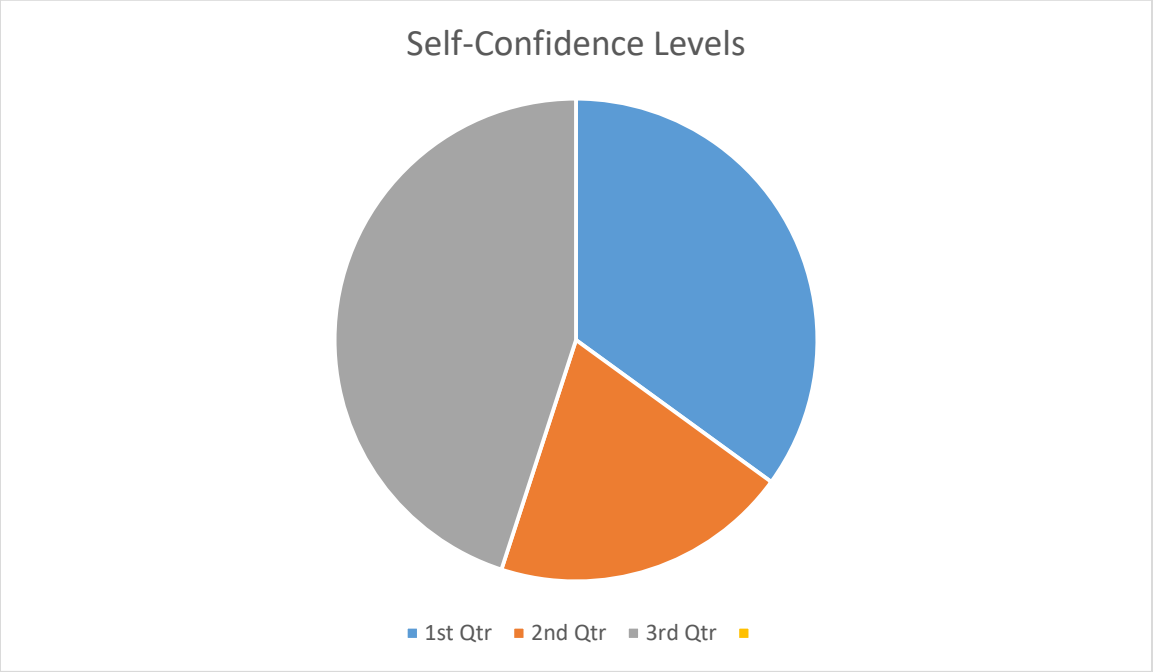


Figure 3: Distribution of Confidence Levels among Participants (N=20)

- High confidence: 35%
- Moderate confidence: 20%
- Low confidence: 45%

High confidence was coded when participants participated spontaneously with a fluent and high pitch. Moderate confidence was coded when participants participated somewhat fluently with a moderate pitch. Low confidence was coded when participants participated without any fluency fumbling while participating every now and then.

4.9 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This chapter demonstrates certain facts. Firstly, anxiety is the strongest negative factor. Secondly, motivation is a key positive driver. Thirdly, self-confidence is the strongest predictor of performance. Fourthly, all factors are interconnected. Lastly, social environment plays a crucial role in shaping outcomes.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter interprets the findings of the study in relation to existing literature and theoretical frameworks in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). It provides a critical discussion of how **anxiety, motivation and self-confidence interact** to influence EFL learners' English proficiency development.

A major contribution of this chapter is the development of a **counselling-based intervention model**, which addresses socio-psychological barriers in English language learning.

5.2 Discussion of Anxiety

The findings of this study reveal that anxiety is the most powerful negative socio-psychological factor affecting EFL learners' English proficiency development.

Participants reported anxiety arising from family pressure, academic expectations, teacher criticism, financial instability, emotional trauma etc.

This finding strongly supports **Horwitz et al. (1986)**, who define foreign language anxiety as a distinct psychological barrier that interferes with language acquisition.

Similarly, Mahmoodi and Yavuz found that anxiety negatively correlates with both motivation and academic achievement.

5.2.1 Interpretation

In this study, anxiety is not limited to classroom fear but extends into learners' **social and emotional lives**.

Anxiety leads to reduced participation, fear of speaking English, cognitive blockage, lack of concentration etc.

Thus, anxiety functions as a **psychological barrier that disrupts language processing and output**.

5.3 Discussion of Motivation

Motivation emerged as a key positive determinant of English learning success. Students with supportive environments demonstrated higher motivation and better academic performance.

This aligns with **Dörnyei's, Z. (2005) L2 Motivational Self System**, which emphasizes that learners are driven by their "ideal L2 self."

Similarly, Nevisi and Farhani found that motivation shifts from extrinsic to intrinsic as proficiency increases.

5.3.1 Interpretation

In this study, motivated learners showed consistent English improvement. Motivation increased engagement and classroom participation. Motivation was strongly influenced by emotional stability.

However, motivation was found to be **fragile**, easily disrupted by anxiety and negative social environments.

5.4 Discussion of Self-Confidence

Self-confidence was found to be the strongest predictor of actual English performance. This finding supports Bandura's, A. (1997) Self- Efficacy Theory and Hu's (2001) socio-psychological model. Learners with high confidence spoke English fluently, participated actively and performed better academically.

5.4.1 Interpretation

Self-confidence acts as a **bridge between knowledge and performance**.

Even when learners understand English, lack of confidence prevents them from using it effectively. Knowledge and confidence together leads the learners towards good performance. On the other hand, Knowledge minus confidence leads the learners towards silence, that is, weak or no performance at all. This is demonstrated below using a quote from my interpretation:

Knowledge + Confidence = Performance
Knowledge – Confidence = Silence

5.5 INTERACTION OF SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

A major finding of this study is the **interconnected nature** of anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence.

5.5.1 Negative Cycle

A negative cycle exists in this research study. Increase in anxiety leads to decrease in confidence which in turn leads to a drop in motivation level which ultimately lead to poor academic performance. This cycle is demonstrated using arrows below:

- Anxiety increases → confidence decreases
- Confidence decreases → motivation drops
- Motivation drops → poor performance

5.5.2 Positive Cycle

A positive cycle exists in this research study. Low anxiety leads to high confidence which in turn leads to high motivation which finally leads to strong English performance. This cycle is represented using arrows below:

- Low anxiety → high confidence
- High confidence → high motivation
- High motivation → strong English performance

5.5.3 Theoretical Integration

This interaction supports Gardner's, R.C. (1985) socio-educational model, Dornyei's, Z. (2005) motivational system and Bandura's, A. (1997) self-efficacy theory. But this study adds a new insight, which is --- These factors are not linear---they operate as a continuous emotional cycle.

5.6 COUNSELLING-BASED INTERVENTION MODEL (KEY CONTRIBUTION)

A major original contribution of this study is the proposal of a **holistic counselling framework** to reduce anxiety and enhance motivation and self-confidence.

5.6.1 Why Counselling is Needed

Findings show that learners suffer from emotional trauma, academic pressure, financial stress, family conflict, classroom fear etc.

These issues cannot be solved by teaching methods alone.

Therefore, psychological intervention is essential.

5.6.2 Counselling for Students

Counselling is necessary for students for a few reasons. It will provide emotional support for anxiety and trauma. It will teach the students academic stress management skills. It will enhance their confidence through confidence-building sessions. It will cause the personal growth of the students through speaking practice therapy groups.

5.6.3 Counselling for Teachers

Teachers should be provided training on giving supportive feedback to the students so that they avoid public criticism. They should be trained to create low-anxiety classrooms. They should also be trained in such a manner which helps them to understand student psychology.

5.6.4 Counselling for Parents and Family

Parents and family members of the students should be counselled in awareness programs about psychological pressure. They should be counselled and asked to reduce academic expectations. They should be trained to encourage emotional support at home.

5.6.5 Peer Counselling

Peer support groups have to be created. Collaborative learning activities should be promoted. Fear of judgement has to be reduced in the classroom context.

5.6.6 Institutional Counselling

Universities should provide student counselling centers, mental health services, teacher psychological training, stress management workshops etc.

5.6.7 Impact of Counselling Model

Counselling leads to reduced anxiety, increased motivation, improved self-confidence and thus better English performance.

5.7 COMPARISON WITH LITERATURE

The findings strongly align with the reviewed studies. The findings align with Mahmoodi's, M. & Yavuz's, M. A. research article where it emphasized that anxiety reduces motivation. Secondly, they align with Hu's, R. J. S. (2003) article where it emphasized that self-confidence is the strongest predictor. Thirdly, the findings align with Dornyei's, Z. (2005) article where it emphasized that motivation is identity-driven. Fourthly, they align with Horwitz's et al. (1986) article where it emphasized that anxiety is a major barrier. Fifthly, the findings also align with Nevisi's, R. B., & Farhani's, A. article where it emphasized that motivation evolves over time.

However, this study adds real-life emotional narratives, Bangladeshi university context and counselling-based solution model.

5.8 PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Teachers should encourage participation without fear, provide positive reinforcement, reduce anxiety triggers and support confidence-building activities.

5.9 INSTITUTIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Universities should integrate counselling services, train teachers in psychology-aware teaching and support student mental health systems.

5.10 SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Society and families should reduce academic pressure, support emotional well-being and recognize psychological aspects of learning.

5.11 SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

This chapter demonstrates that English learning is deeply influenced by psychological and social conditions. Anxiety disrupts learning, motivation drives engagement, and self-confidence determines performance.

The proposed counselling model offers a practical solution to improve EFL learning outcomes.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This final chapter presents the conclusion of the study based on the findings and discussion. It summarizes the major outcomes of the research, answers the research questions, highlights pedagogical and institutional implications, and provides recommendations for future research.

6.2 Summary of Major Findings

This study investigated socio-psychological factors influencing EFL learners' development of English proficiency, with a particular focus on anxiety, motivation and self-confidence. The findings revealed that anxiety is the most dominant negative factor affecting learners. They also revealed that motivation acts as a key driving force for learning success. Thirdly, they revealed that self-confidence is the strongest predictor of actual English performance. Fourthly, the findings revealed that all three factors are deeply interconnected. Lastly, they revealed that social, familial, academic and emotional environments significantly shape learner outcomes.

6.3 Answers to Research Questions

RQ1: What socio-psychological factors influence EFL learners' English proficiency development?

The study found that the most influential socio-psychological factors are anxiety, motivation, self-confidence, family environment, teacher behaviour, peer influence, financial and emotional conditions etc.

However, anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence were identified as the core psychological determinants.

RQ2: How do socio-psychological factors influence English proficiency development?

These factors influence learning through emotional stability or instability, willingness to participate in English communication, classroom engagement, cognitive performance under stress, long-term motivation for learning etc.

High anxiety reduces performance, while motivation and confidence enhance it.

RQ3: What negative impacts hinder English proficiency development?

The negative impacts that hinder English proficiency development identified in the study are fear of speaking English, lack of participation, emotional trauma, low confidence, academic demotivation, family pressure and conflict, financial stress etc.

These factors significantly reduce learners' ability to develop English proficiency.

RQ4: How can these negative impacts be minimized?

The study proposes a **counselling-based intervention model**, including student counselling services, teacher training in emotional support, parental awareness programs, peer support systems, institutional mental health services etc.

This holistic approach reduces anxiety and increases motivation and confidence.

6.4 Key Research Contribution

This study contributes to ELT literature by providing qualitative evidence from Bangladeshi EFL learners, highlighting real-life socio-emotional challenges, integrating psychological theory with lived experiences and proposing a counselling-for-all model including students, teachers, parents and family members, peers and institutions.

6.5 Pedagogical Implications

Teachers should create low-anxiety classrooms, avoid public criticism, encourage student participation, provide positive reinforcement etc.

6.6 Institutional Implications

Universities should establish counselling centers, train teachers in emotional awareness, promote student mental well-being programs etc.

6.7 Social and Family Implications

Families should reduce academic pressure, provide emotional support, encourage healthy communication etc.

6.8 Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. Firstly, the sample size is very small including 20 students only. Secondly, data has been collected from a single institutional context, that is, only IUB. Thirdly, the duration of the interviews was short. Fourthly, there is high possibility of emotional bias in self-reported data. Fifthly, this research study has limited generalizability. Since the interviews were done in food court and the female common room, there was moderate possibility of privacy being hampered. However, I would like to mention here that I brought my interviewees to a corner and then interviewed them. One limitation here was that there was noise disruption during the interviews which was slightly challenging to manage. Besides, there was no member checking in this research study of mine which is also another limitation of the study.

Despite these limitations, the study provides deep qualitative insight into learner experiences.

6.9 Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies may include larger sample sizes, use mixed-method approaches, compare multiple universities, include teachers' perspectives, explore long-term psychological interventions etc.

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Appendix A

List of Socio-Psychological Factors Provided to Participants

- Anxiety
- Motivation
- Self-confidence
- Family environment
- Peer influence
- Teacher behavior
- Financial condition
- Emotional well-being

Appendix B: Interview Questions

The following questions were asked to participants:

1. How is your learning process and academic performance at IUB going?
2. What socio-psychological factors influence your English learning?
3. How do these factors affect your English proficiency development?
4. What negative impacts do these factors have on your learning?
5. How can these problems be minimized for better English learning outcomes?
6. Can you tell me more about these?

Appendix C: Interview Data

Male Students

Boy 1: Experienced emotional trauma due to parental divorce affecting academic performance.
Boy 2: Faced parental pressure and criticism leading to demotivation.
Boy 3: Breakup caused depression and reduced academic focus.
Boy 4: Emotional distress due to relationship breakdown affected studies.
Boy 5: Public criticism by teachers reduced confidence.
Boy 6: Family conflict created disturbed study environment.
Boy 7: Family-related emotional trauma caused anxiety and poor focus.
Boy 8: Strong support system led to high achievement.
Boy 9: Supportive environment improved English proficiency.
Boy 10: Positive family and academic environment enhanced performance.

Female Students

Girl 1: Parental pressure regarding study and marriage created anxiety.
Girl 2: Academic and marriage pressure caused emotional distress.
Girl 3: Teacher and peer criticism reduced confidence.
Girl 4: Breakup caused emotional trauma and depression.
Girl 5: Family conflict disrupted academic focus.
Girl 6: Financial and family discrimination caused anxiety.
Girl 7: Childhood punishment created long-term fear of exams.
Girl 8: Financial hardship delayed academic progress and reduced confidence.
Girl 9: Strong support system improved motivation and performance.
Girl 10: High motivation and support led to academic excellence.

FINAL THESIS STATEMENT

This study concludes that socio-psychological factors play a decisive role in shaping EFL learners' English proficiency development. Among them, anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence are the most influential. A counselling-based holistic intervention involving students, teachers, parents, peers, and institutions can significantly improve English learning outcomes. In a nutshell, high anxiety leads to low confidence which in turn leads to low motivation which ultimately leads to poor academic performance. On the other hand, low anxiety leads to high confidence which in turn leads to high motivation which ultimately leads to good academic performance.