



Exploring the Factors and Effects of Low-Effort Behavior among Master One EFL Students at Medea University

استكشاف أسباب وآثار سلوك قلة الجهد لدى طلاب السنة الأولى
ماستر في اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة المدية

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ملخص

يتناول هذا البحث بالدراسة سلوك "قلة الجهد" لدى طلاب السنة الأولى ماستر في تخصص اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة المدية. يتمثل هذا السلوك في انخفاض الدافعية، قلة المشاركة داخل الأقسام، وضعف التحصيل الأكاديمي. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد مدى انتشار هذه الظاهرة، أسبابها وتأثيراتها، مع اقتراح حلول عملية لمعالجتها. شملت عينة هذا البحث 80 طالبًا وخمسة أساتذة. ولقد تم اعتماد منهج بحثي مختلط، حيث جُمعت البيانات من خلال استبيانات ومقابلات وملاحظات داخل الأقسام الدراسية. ولقد تم تحليل البيانات الكمية باستخدام الاختبارات الإحصائية مثل ANOVA واختبار T، أما تحليل البيانات النوعية، فقد تم تحليلها عن طريق تصنيف المعلومات إلى موضوعات باستخدام برنامج NVivo. كشفت نتائج هذه الدراسة أن أغلبية الطلاب يُظهرون قلة اهتمام بالمشاركة داخل القسم، ويرجع ذلك إلى بعض المشاكل البيداغوجية مثل اكتظاظ الأقسام وكذا الأساليب التقليدية في التدريس، وكذلك عوائق نفسية كضعف الثقة بالنفس، وفي الأخير عوامل اجتماعية وثقافية كقلة استخدام اللغة الإنجليزية خارج الأقسام. تشمل الحلول المقترحة اعتماد أساليب تدريس تفاعلية، تقديم ملاحظات بناءة، تقليل حجم الأقسام، وتحسين الموارد كالمخابر اللغوية والأدوات الرقمية.

الكلمات الدالة: سلوك قلة الجهد؛ الحافز؛ التحصيل الأكاديمي؛ اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية؛ طلاب السنة الأولى ماستر.

Abstract

This study investigates the factors and effects of low-effort behavior among Master One EFL learners at Medea University, which is usually described by a lack of motivation, lack of participation, and poor academic performance. The research aims to determine the prevalence, causes, and effects of this phenomenon while

suggesting applicable solutions. There were 80 EFL students and 5 teachers involved in the study. For data gathering, a mixed-methods approach was utilized, integrating questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations. Quantitative data was analyzed by statistical tests (ANOVA, t-tests), while qualitative data were thematically coded and analyzed using NVivo software. The findings indicated that the majority of the participants manifest low participation along with institutional challenges such as overcrowded classes and teacher-centered approaches, psychological barriers that include lack of self-efficacy as well as sociocultural hindrances such as limited exposure to English. Suggested solutions to the problems include the usage of interactive methods, constructive feedback, class size reduction, and enhanced provision such as language labs and digital tools.

Keywords: low-effort behavior; motivation; academic achievement; EFL (English as a foreign language); Master One students.

Introduction

Motivation is important for achieving academic success and attaining positive educational outcomes. Highly motivated students are usually involved in classroom activities and find the process of learning enjoyable without expecting any external rewards. They are confident and excited to discover new pathways that can help them pursue their education. Furthermore, they confront challenges and turn setbacks into comebacks (Skinner; Belmont, 1993). However, low-effort behavior among university students especially challenges this potential. Low-effort behavior is defined as the lack of motivation, poor involvement in class activities, and the willingness to make the minimum effort required to complete a course (Deci; Ryan, 1985; Dweck, 2006). It could sometimes become a barrier to academic success. Thus, it is necessary to understand the impacts of such behavior on Algerian EFL students. In view of the effects that it has on language learning and with the view of suggesting possible solutions, this article seeks to enrich the understanding of this phenomenon and to enhance the practices in language learning. It aims at identifying the reasons, prevalence, and effects of low-effort behavior among Master One EFL learners at Medea University. To this end, the following questions are proposed:

- How does low-effort behavior affect the language-learning process of EFL students at Medea University?
- What are the factors that lead to low-effort behavior in higher education?
- What measures can be taken in order to reduce the impact of low-effort behavior and enhance EFL students' participation and motivation?



1. Literature Review

1.1. Defining low-effort behavior

Low-effort behavior refers to “the person’s coping responses of refusing to do hard work” (Manglik, p.89). This typically suggests that individuals with low effort behavior make little or no attempt to perform their work-related tasks because they believe that their efforts are useless. That is to say, they posit that no matter how hard they work, they always end up with failure (Shirae & Levy, 2024). Furthermore, Bandura (1997) notes that efficacy is one of the factors that influence effort; learners with low efficacy are likely to exhibit low-effort behavior.

In the context of education, low-effort behavior is associated with lack of motivation, lack of participation, and possibly a fixed mindset. Students with low-effort behavior reject endeavoring difficult tasks because they want to avoid setbacks and protect their egos and self-concepts (Dweck, 2006; Webb; Green, 2022; Nicoll, 2024). This might lead to students’ disengagement from learning and decrease their overall academic performance (Deci; Ryan, 1985; Dweck, 2006). It has also been examined in educational psychology where it is recognized as a barrier to achievement (Schunk; Pintrich; Meece, 2008). It is characterized by procrastination, lack of enthusiasm for challenging tasks, and lack of contribution in classroom activities. At the university level, students who show such behavior ensure that they only do the minimum needed to pass and this is very detrimental to their academic development (Zimmerman, 2002). In this respect, Ogbu (2003) investigated African American students’ academic disengagement in affluent suburbs of Shaker Heights city in Ohio State. He found that African American students did not work hard or to their full capacity. They were not highly engaged in their schoolwork. The amount of time and effort they invested in academic pursuit was neither adequate nor impressive. He concluded that low-effort syndrome is a significant part of their academic disengagement. This is especially the case in areas such as EFL learning and teaching since effort is required to be put consistently in order to develop the skills.

1.2 Theories of motivation in education

Motivation theories provide valuable frameworks for explaining the causes of low-effort behavior. Deci and Ryan’s Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (1985) postulates that motivation can be classified into two categories, namely, the intrinsic and the extrinsic motivation. This theory also emphasizes the critical role of psychological needs —autonomy,



competence, and interpersonal relatedness— in enhancing learners' sustained engagement in academic tasks. Research by Ryan and Deci (2000) indicates that students who perceive their learning environment as supportive of these needs are more likely to exhibit higher effort and persistence.

Similarly, Dweck's Growth Mindset theory (2006) helps to understand how people's beliefs about intelligence and personal skills affect effort. According to Dweck (2006), people with a growth mindset tend to see hardships as opportunities for growth and hence are willing to make an effort to overcome them. On the other hand, people with a fixed mindset see their abilities as being set in stone and thus are likely to suffer from low-effort behavior, especially when presented with tasks that seem difficult to accomplish.

Other relevant theories include Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964), which explains effort as a function of expectancy, instrumentality, and valence. Learners are more likely to exert effort if they believe their actions will lead to desirable outcomes. In contrast, when learners perceive low value in academic success or lack confidence in their ability to achieve it, their effort levels decline (Eccles; Wigfield, 2002).

1.3 Low-effort behavior in EFL contexts

Effort is particularly important in EFL learning, as foreign language learning requires learners' consistent practice, engagement, and perseverance. Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1985) has emphasized the role of active participation in foreign language learning in order to process comprehensible input effectively. However, low-effort behavior is a major obstacle to this process, since learners may not be fully involved in reading, listening, or speaking activities that are necessary for the development of the language proficiency (Ogbu, 2003; Webb; Green, 2022).

Additionally, research has shown that the lack of effort and motivation may hinder second language learning. For example, Ellis (1997) noticed that motivation involves attitudes and affective states that determine the effort that learners invest in learning a second language. Correspondingly, Oxford and Nyikos (1989) found that learners who lacked motivation and effort were less likely to employ effective language learning strategies, resulting in slower progress.



Moreover, cultural and institutional factors also contribute to the common issue of low-effort behavior in EFL contexts. For instance, studies by Gardner (1985) show that a learner's motivation to learn a foreign language is shaped by their attitudes toward the language and its culture. In Algeria's EFL classrooms, problems such as overcrowded classes, lack of resources, and traditional teaching methods can make low-effort behavior worse. These problems limit students' chances to actively participate and receive individual attention (Benadla, 2013).

1.4 Addressing low-effort behavior in education

Some strategies that are important to reduce the effects of low-effort behavior include fostering motivation and using engaging activities. Cooperative learning, for instance, has been shown to induce students' efforts through a sense of community and shared responsibility (Slavin, 1995). Furthermore, the use of technology has become an undeniable necessity in second language learning (Chapelle; Chapelle, 2001). According to Fahada & Asrul (2024), gamified platforms such as online quizzes can improve EFL learners' motivation and engagement.

Feedback forms another key aspect of addressing the low-effort behavior. In this regard, Hattie & Timperley (2007) assert that effective feedback helps students realize their progress and areas for improvement, thus encouraging their sustained effort. In the EFL context, personalized feedback on speaking and writing assignments can boost learners' confidence and motivation (Harmer, 2007).

In brief, the good understanding of the theoretical foundations and practical implications of low-effort behavior helps educators design more effective interventions and teaching methods to promote and support students' success within EFL programs.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research design and participants

The current study uses a mixed-methods approach, including questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations in order to gather reliable data on students' levels of effort, motivation, as well as engagement in EFL contexts. This approach elaborates an in-depth analysis by blending numerical data with descriptive data.

The study subjects included 80 Master One EFL Students of Medea University. A random sampling technique was employed in order to achieve



a general representation of gender, academic achievement, and social status distributions. Furthermore, five teachers who teach Master One EFL courses were included to elicit the subject from a teacher's viewpoint.

2.2 Data collection tools

The research tools are designed on the basis of the theories mentioned in the literature review (Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory, 1985; Dweck's growth mindset theory, 2006; Vroom's expectancy theory, 1964).

-Questionnaires

This research was carried out with the aid of a structured questionnaire directed to Master One English students at Medea University. It included 20 Likert-scale questions grouped into four categories: effort in classroom activities, level of motivation, barriers to engagement, and learning experience, and academic achievement. Example items included 'I actively participate in group discussions during class', rated on a scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree); and 'I feel motivated to complete my English assignments on time.'

-Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 students and 5 EFL teachers so as to probe deeper into the reasons for the low-effort behavior. Such interviews sought to understand the perceptions of the institutional and socio-cultural barriers and collected input on how to enhance student engagement and motivation. Such open-ended questions provided participants the opportunity to voice their views in more detail with respect to their specific experiences.

-Classroom observations

Classroom observations were conducted in two EFL classrooms over the course of three weeks. Students' behavior and interaction dynamics were observed directly during these sessions. The frequency and quality of student participation, the nature of interactions between students and teachers, and noteworthy cases of disengagement—like inattention or task avoidance—were the main areas of concern for the researcher.

2.3 Data analysis

-Quantitative data

Quantitative data derived from the surveys were analyzed descriptively by mean and standard deviation to summarize trends. Ultimately, inferential



statistics, such as t-tests and ANOVA, were used to determine significant trends and relationships found in the data. Furthermore, the relationship between levels of effort and demographic variables (age, gender) was investigated using a chi-square test.

-Qualitative data

Qualitative data collected from interviews transcripts and classroom observations were categorized thematically using NVivo software. The analysis revealed some reoccurring themes such as: psychological factors such as self-efficacy and mindset; institutional challenges — large class sizes and traditional teaching methods; and finally, socio-cultural influences — attitudes towards English and limited use of English outside the classroom.

3. Results Presentation

3.1 Prevalence of low-effort behavior

According to the results, low-effort behavior is common among students, as shown in Table 1. The behavior with the highest mean score (M) is ‘minimal participation in class’, with a mean score of 3.8 (SD = 1.2) and 65% of students reporting this behavior. 58% of students reported procrastinating on assignments, which came in second with a mean score of 3.4 (SD = 1.1). 53% of respondents reported a mean score of 3.2 (SD = 1.3), indicating a considerable lack of excitement for group work. Lastly, 47% of students reported putting in little effort to prepare for their exams, which had the lowest mean of 3.0 (SD = 1.4). These findings imply that a sizable percentage of students exhibit variable levels of low-effort in a variety of academic tasks.

Table1: Prevalence of low-effort behaviour among students: observations and statistics

Behavior observed	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Percentage of students reporting (%)
Minimal participation in class	3.8	1.2	65%
Procrastination on assignments	3.4	1.1	58%
Lack of enthusiasm for group work	3.2	1.3	53%
Limited effort in exam preparation	3.0	1.4	47%



Statistical analysis further revealed insights into low-effort behavior, as shown in Table 2. Statistically, the groups differed when it came to their efforts as shown by the significant F-value ($F=4.56$; $d=2, 77$; $p<0.05$) from the one-way ANOVA, confirming that meaningful variation took place among groups in regard to their efforts. The presence of a significant gender difference in classroom participation was established through an independent-samples t-test, ($t=2.87$, $df=78$, $p<0.01$); male students reportedly being more disengaged. Lastly, a chi-square test revealed an association between low participation and age, ($\chi^2=9.76$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$), with undertones of strong connection. Thus, such findings emphasize the role played by demographic variables in moderating student engagement and effort levels.

Table 2: Statistical analysis of low-effort behavior by group and gender

Statistical Test	Source of Variation	Test Statistic	Degrees of Freedom	p-value	Interpretation
One-Way ANOVA	Effort levels across groups	$F = 4.56$	(2, 77)	< 0.05	Significant differences across groups
Independent Samples t-Test	Classroom participation by gender	$t = 2.87$	(78)	< 0.01	Significant gender differences; males more disengaged
Chi-Square Analysis	Minimal participation and age	$\chi^2 = 9.76$	(2)	< 0.01	Significant association with age groups

3.2. Causes of low-effort behavior

3.2.1 Institutional factors

The factors causing low-effort behavior indicated by the data below (Table 3) include class size, teaching methods, and availability of resources. A significant negative correlation ($r = -0.42$, $p < 0.05$) was found between class sizes and engagement scores. This implies that large class sizes—averaging 40 students—limit the amount of individualized attention, reduce engagement, and thus discourage students from making efforts to improve and meet their goals. Besides, 78% of the teachers admitted challenges working on interactive activities in such large classrooms that further



demonstrates the significant influence that class size has on teaching dynamics.

Traditional teaching methods were an impediment whereby 72% of students viewed lectures as relying overly on memorizing information ($M=3.9$, $SD=1.2$). One-way ANOVA analysis revealed significant differences in engagement levels explained by the various methods of teaching ($F(3, 76)=5.67$, $p < 0.01$), thus suggesting that methods of traditional lecturing approaches did not engage the students. Qualitative feedback confirmed students' frustration that their learning was uninspired and far too teacher-centered.

Another very important contributing factor is the lack of resources. A chi-square test showed that there was significant data that linked resource availability and engagement levels ($\chi^2(1, N=80)=15.23$, $p < 0.001$). A staggering 81% of students reported that they did not have effective access to multimedia teaching aids and language labs, a concern echoed by the teachers. All these findings suggested a need for smaller class sizes, more creative teaching methods, and greater access to teaching resources in order to enhance students' engagement and encourage them to make additional efforts.



Table 3: Institutional factors causing low-effort behavior among EFL students

Factor	Observation/Statistic	Statistical Test	Result
Class Size	Average class size: 40 students, limiting individualized attention.	Pearson Correlation	$r = -0.42, p < 0.05$ (Significant negative correlation between class size and engagement scores).
Classroom Management	(78%) of teachers reported difficulties managing interactive activities.	Descriptive Statistics	High proportion of teachers face challenges in creating interactive and engaging classroom activities.
Traditional Teaching Methods	(72%) of students found lectures overly focused on rote memorization ($M = 3.9, SD = 1.2$).	One-Way ANOVA (Teaching methods vs. engagement levels)	$F(3, 76) = 5.67, p < 0.01$ (Significant differences in engagement levels based on teaching methods).
Qualitative Feedback	Lack of student-centered approaches highlighted; "The focus on memorization leaves little room for creativity."	Content Analysis	Common theme: students feel that traditional teaching methods stifle creativity and engagement.
Resource Limitations	(81%) of students reported inadequate access to multimedia tools and language labs.	Chi-Square Test (Resources vs. engagement levels)	$\chi^2(1, N=80) = 15.23, p < 0.001$ (Significant association between resource access and engagement levels).



3.2.2 Psychological Factors

Table 4 illustrates some psychological factors causing low-effort behavior among EFL students. Language anxiety emerged as the most considerable barrier, and 68% of the students admitted they did not participate because they feared making a mistake ($M = 3.7$, $SD = 1.3$). An independent samples t-test indicated that anxiety levels of low-achiever students are significantly greater than those of high-achiever students, $t(78) = 3.45$, $p < 0.01$. Self-efficacy was also low, as 67% of the students doubted their own ability to improve their proficiency in the English language, ($M = 3.5$; $SD = 1.4$). Descriptive statistics showed that a large majority of the students lacked confidence in their language-learning capacities; this, in turn, could derail their progress and engagement.

Table 4: Psychological factors causing low-effort behavior among EFL students

Psychological Factor	Observation/ Statistic	Statistical Test	Result
Language Anxiety	68% of students avoided participation due to fear of mistakes ($M = 3.7$, $SD = 1.3$).	Independent Samples t-Test	$t(78) = 3.45$, $p < 0.01$ (Significant differences in anxiety levels between high- and low-performing students).
Low Self-Efficacy	67% of students doubted their ability to improve English proficiency ($M = 3.5$, $SD = 1.4$).	Descriptive Statistics	High proportion of students expressed self-doubt regarding their ability to enhance language skills.

3.2.3 Socio-cultural factors

Table 5 displays the socio-cultural influences on EFL students' effort. The data showed that infrequent exposure to the English language outside the classroom posed a major challenge, as 75% of the participants reported a possible rare use of the English language in their daily lives ($M = 3.8$, $SD = 1.1$). A chi-square analysis gave strong support for the notion that limited exposure is positively related to limited participation in class ($\chi^2(1, N=80) = 12.89$, $p < 0.001$). Another barrier cited was daily life obligations in terms of family duties and personal responsibilities. In fact, approximately 62% of the students stated that their normal obligations interfered with their

academic activities ($M = 3.6$, $SD = 1.2$). These results emphasize the dual challenge of socio-cultural factors and competing priorities that limit students from being able to commit completely to their studies.

Table 5: Socio-cultural factors causing low-effort behavior among EFL students

Socio-Cultural Factor	Observation/ Statistic	Statistical Test	Result
Limited Exposure to English	75% of students rarely used English in daily life ($M = 3.8$, $SD = 1.1$).	Chi-Square Test (Exposure vs. participation)	$\chi^2 (1, N=80) = 12.89$, $p < 0.001$ (Significant association between limited exposure and reduced participation).
Daily Life Commitments	62% of students indicated part-time work detracted from academic engagement ($M = 3.6$, $SD = 1.2$).	Descriptive Statistics	A majority of students faced challenges balancing work and academic commitments, negatively affecting engagement.

3.3 Effects of low-effort behavior on EFL learning

The data in Table 6 shows the effects of low-effort behavior on EFL learning, with 68% of students to have problems with fluency in speaking, 61% poor writing skills, 57% a less substantial vocabulary acquisition, and 54% difficulties with grammar. These factors collectively create hurdles for students in gaining sufficient fluency and academic success.

Table 6: Effects of low-effort behavior on EFL learning

Impact on learning	Percentage of students affected (%)
Difficulty in speaking fluently	68%
Poor writing skills	61%
Limited vocabulary acquisition	57%
Grammatical inaccuracies	54%

The data in Table 7 demonstrates the impact of effort levels and participation on linguistic outcomes. A One-Way ANOVA showed significant differences between speaking fluency, writing skills, and grammar by effort levels



($F=4.92$, $p<0.05$). An independent samples t-test showed significant differences between boys and girls, with boys being more disengaged and this negatively affected their linguistic skills ($t = 4.15$, $p < 0.01$). A Chi-Square analysis provides evidence for an association between minimal efforts and the limited amount of vocabulary acquisition ($\chi^2=8.76$, $p<0.01$). Finally, there is a moderate negative relationship between effort levels and grammatical errors as indicated by Pearson correlation: that is, the higher the effort the fewer the errors ($r=-0.58$, $df=78$, $p<0.01$).

Table7. Inferential Analysis of Low-effort Behavior on EFL Learning

Statistical Test	Source of Variation	Test Statistic	Degrees of Freedom	P-value	Interpretation
One-Way ANOVA	Effort levels across groups	$F = 4.92$	(2, 77)	< 0.05	Significant differences in speaking fluency, writing skills, and grammar based on effort levels.
Independent Samples t-Test	Participation in classroom activities by gender	$t = 4.15$	(79)	< 0.01	Significant gender differences in effort, with males showing more disengagement, affecting speaking fluency and writing skills.
Chi-Square Analysis	Minimal effort and vocabulary acquisition	$\chi^2 = 8.76$	(2)	< 0.01	Significant association between minimal participation and limited vocabulary acquisition.
Pearson Correlation	Effort levels and grammatical accuracy	$r = -0.58$	$df=78$	< 0.01	Moderate negative correlation between effort levels and grammatical inaccuracies, with higher effort leading to fewer mistakes.



4. Discussion of Major Results

The findings of the study underscore the prevalence, causes, and consequences of low-effort behavior among the Master One EFL students at the Medea University. These findings corroborate with the existing literature while also providing specific insights into the particular condition of the Algerian context of EFL.

The research showed that low-effort behavior is generally common among EFL students at Medea University. This included minimal participation in class (65%), procrastination in assignments (58%), and lack of enthusiasm for group work (53%). These results support findings of Zimmerman (2002), who included procrastination and disengagement as hallmarks of low-effort behavior in the academic contexts. The latter may be attributed to a perceived lack of reward such as career prospects, in combination with a feeling of inadequacy when it came to securing academic success (Vroom, 1964). In the EFL setting, such behaviors are particularly detrimental because they impede consistent practice and active participation—two crucial aspects highlighted in Krashen's Input Hypothesis for language acquisition (1985).

Regarding the causes of low-effort behavior, the results demonstrated that the key institutional constraints were large classes, traditional teaching methods, and lack of resources. The negative correlation of student engagement with class size ($r = -0.42$, $p < 0.05$) confirms the reviewed literature, which claims that crowded classrooms limit individual attention paid to students (Gardner, 1985; Deci; Ryan, 1985). In other words, failure to possess autonomy, competence, and relatedness within the classroom context led to the students experiencing a very low level of intrinsic motivation. In addition, according to 72% of the participants, the dependence on rote memorization was cited as a reason for low motivation; this further echoes Benadla's (2013) statement that traditional methods of teaching in Algerian EFL classrooms failed to cultivate creativity, as well as active participation. Moreover, resource availability was significantly associated with engagement levels ($\chi^2 = 15.23$, $p < 0.001$) that further exemplify Chapelle & Chapelle's assertion that technology and multimedia tools are crucial to improve motivation in language learning. In brief, the findings indicated that the use of traditional methods of teaching combined with the likely presence of large class sizes would have most likely hampered students' academic progress.



As for the psychological factors, the findings indicated that language anxiety and low self-efficacy emerged as the major psychological obstacles. With 68% of students avoiding participation due to fear of making errors. This result supports Ellis' (1997) observation that anxiety could hinder second language learning. The difference between the anxiety levels observed in high- and low-performing students was also considered significant, with ($t = 3.45, p < 0.01$), in line with Bandura's (1997) and Dweck's (2006) observations that self-efficacy acts as a regulator of effort. The two researchers found that learners who particularly had low self-efficacy and fixed mindset were unlikely to think that effort could ever be a route to improvement as was the case in their unwillingness to perform challenging activities such as engaging in new tasks.

In terms of the socio-cultural factors, limited exposure to English and competing life commitments were found to be the most significant hindrances contributing to low-effort behavior. Strong association was noted between limited English usage and reduced participation ($\chi^2=12.89, p<0.001$), echoing Gardner's (1985) findings that cultural attitudes toward language learning affect motivation. The impact of part-time work amid the student population (62% of students) is in line with Oxford and Nyikos (1989) who noted external pressures often divert attention from effective language learning strategies.

While the causes explain why low-effort behavior occurs, the results also highlighted its significant effects. The data revealed that the most important impacts of low-effort behavior were difficulty in speaking fluently (68%), poor writing skills (61%), and limited vocabulary acquisition (57%). This agrees with the findings of Schunk, Pintrich, and Meece (2008), who identified low-effort as a hurdle to academic success. In EFL contexts generally, where one has to practice consistently, these problems may indeed limit the learning of the language, as stated by Krashen (1985).

5. Pedagogical Implications

The results of the study had many implications for pedagogy that inform teaching in the EFL classroom in the Algerian context and beyond. First, educational institutions must address the problems arising from large class sizes. Reducing the number of students in each class will allow teachers to give more attention to individual students, motivating and engaging them in learning. Educational institutions should invest much more in teacher training programs centering on interactive methods and student-centered



teaching, as opposed to the traditionally lecture-oriented approach, if they want to remedy this problem.

Moreover, addressing the shortage of resources in institutions such as language laboratories and audio-visual aids is necessary in making the learning process more engaging. The appropriate use of technology can significantly assist students in more interactive ways, helping maximize engagement and minimize low-effort behavior.

Finally, the use of psychological interventions is a necessary component in assisting learners to alleviate language anxiety while fostering self-efficacy. Workshops set up to engage the students and render them counseled on some common areas of difficulty in language learning could play the same role in instilling confidence that the students need to see themselves as effective. Teachers may introduce activities to familiarize shy students gradually with class participation, thereby reducing their anxiety and enhancing their confidence in the use of English.

On a socio-cultural level, promoting the use of English beyond the classroom has the potential to enhance student motivation and language proficiency. To this end, schools can provide students with the chance to use the language informally by organizing English clubs, debate teams, or language exchange activities. Finally, providing a flexible schedule along with e-learning resources could be beneficial to part-time employed students.

Conclusion

The findings reveal that the low-effort behavior is widespread among EFL students at Medea University. Institutional issues that contribute to the students' lack of engagement include large class sizes; the use of traditional teaching methodologies, coupled with the shortage of resources; and relevant psychological issues, such as language anxiety and low self-efficacy. In addition to this are the limitations set by the socio-cultural context, which might include restricted exposure to English and various stakes for a student in life, such as caring for family members.

These findings indicate an explicit justification for multi-pronged approaches to curb the negative effects of low-effort behavior in EFL classrooms. Smaller class sizes and student-centered teaching methods are likely to create a more conducive environment to knowledge acquisition. A matter of no less significance is to create resources such as multimedia and language

laboratories that would increase engagement and motivation. Psychological-related issues must be adequately addressed with targeted interventions such as anxiety management workshops and self-efficacy promotion activities. Socio-cultural interventions to facilitate language use outside the classroom and possibly accommodating students' out-of-class commitments would further back the case for engagement. Such approaches, while serving as a basis for the theories of motivation, would allow teachers to formulate interventions necessary to cater to students' needs and aspirations.

In closing, low-effort behavior prevalence among EFL students has complex aspects, which demand a holistic approach toward resolution. It is through focused efforts toward institutional, psychological, and socio-cultural factors that restrain students' efforts that educators and policymakers will be able to provide an enabling environment for the students to embark on the road of greater effort in learning. These are essential not only in terms of language but also for building the student's capacity and self-confidence to succeed in a world that is now rapidly assuming an international dimension. Nevertheless, a single university case study is too limited to claim the generalizability of low-effort behavior among Algerian EFL students. Future longitudinal studies across different Algerian universities could collect the necessary data and confirm whether the low-effort behavior is pervasive across a larger population.

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