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Using Music As A Learning Tool To Improve Students' Motivation In English Class

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A R T I C L E I N F O

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A B S T R A C T

This study investigates the implementation of Western pop songs as an instructional resource and explores seventh-grade students' motivational responses in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom at SMP Muhammadiyah Pangkajene, Sidenreng Rappang, Indonesia. A descriptive qualitative design was employed, informed by Keller's Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction (ARCS) framework. The class comprised 21 students; the results chapter reports questionnaire responses from 14 students, while six purposively selected informants participated in semi-structured interviews. A 20-item questionnaire adapted from the Instructional Materials Motivation Survey, interview responses, and instructional documentation informed the analysis. Questionnaire responses were described as frequencies and percentages, whereas interviews were interpreted through data condensation, display, and conclusion drawing. Findings indicated favorable responses to song-based activities, especially for attention and satisfaction. In the questionnaire, 85.7% agreed or strongly agreed that songs captured their attention, and 92.9% expressed pleasure at the prospect of songs being used in future English lessons. Interviews suggested that rhythm and melody stimulated curiosity, familiar musical forms made English more personally relevant, and repeated listening helped some students feel more comfortable. Confidence nevertheless varied, particularly when learners struggled to understand lyrics or worried about errors. These findings suggest that carefully selected songs can provide a motivating supplement to English instruction. Because the design lacked a comparison group and baseline motivational measurements, the findings describe perceived motivational benefits rather than demonstrate causal improvement.

INTRODUCTION

English occupies an important place in education because it provides access to academic information, international communication, and digital cultural resources. For students learning English as a foreign language (EFL), however, opportunities to encounter and use English outside school can be uneven. Classroom instruction consequently carries substantial responsibility for providing comprehensible input and opportunities for participation. English teachers must consider not only the linguistic content of lessons but also whether learners are interested, emotionally prepared, and willing to take part. Crystal (2003) situates the international spread of English within wider historical and social processes, while Harmer (2007) emphasizes the importance of purposeful classroom practice. In this context, creating motivating lessons is a practical educational priority rather than an optional addition to the curriculum.

Motivation influences whether students attend to a learning task, persist when language becomes difficult, and choose to practice beyond formal lessons. In a classroom, students may understand that English is useful yet remain reluctant to answer questions, pronounce unfamiliar words, or attempt listening activities. Their reluctance may arise from anxiety, perceived difficulty, low confidence, or a mismatch between instructional materials and personal interests. Ryan and Deci (2000) distinguish motivation arising from enjoyment and interest from motivation oriented toward external outcomes. Although both may influence participation, an engaging classroom experience can help students approach English as something meaningful rather than merely a subject assessed through examinations. Motivation should therefore be considered in the design of instructional activities, materials, and teacher–student interactions.

These concerns are particularly relevant to early adolescents. Seventh-grade students are adapting to new learning expectations and may be sensitive to peer judgments. English listening tasks can be demanding because speech unfolds rapidly, unfamiliar vocabulary interrupts comprehension, and students cannot always control the speed of spoken input. Rost (2011) describes listening as an active process of constructing meaning, while Richards (2008) explains the interaction between bottom-up processing of language forms and top-down use of background knowledge. If learners interpret every unknown word as evidence of failure, they may withdraw from the activity. Teachers therefore need ways to sustain attention while making listening sufficiently approachable for students with varied levels of proficiency.

Music offers one possible response to these challenges. Songs combine language with melody, rhythm, repetition, and emotional associations. Popular music also circulates widely through everyday media, making it a potentially familiar form of English-language input for adolescents. Murphey (1992) argues that songs provide memorable patterns of language, and Millington (2011) describes practical ways to integrate songs into language teaching. Yet music should not be regarded as automatically effective. A catchy melody can capture attention without ensuring comprehension, and lyrics may include unfamiliar pronunciation, idioms, or inappropriate themes. Effective instructional use requires teachers to choose suitable songs and connect listening to clearly defined learning activities.

In the present study, Western pop songs were selected as a supplementary learning resource for seventh-grade English lessons. Their role was not limited to entertainment. Songs were intended to provide an accessible starting point for listening, vocabulary recognition, attention to meaning, and participation in a classroom activity. The researcher's preliminary observations during a school teaching internship at SMP Muhammadiyah Pangkajene, Sidenreng Rappang, suggested that some learners were passive during textbook-oriented instruction. Students reportedly showed limited voluntary participation, reduced concentration, and signs of boredom. These observations provided the local rationale for examining an alternative instructional approach. They were contextual observations rather than systematic baseline measurements, and should not be interpreted as quantitative evidence of low motivation across the entire class.

A useful theoretical lens for investigating such instruction is Keller's (2010) ARCS model. The model distinguishes four related motivational dimensions: Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction. Attention concerns whether an activity attracts and sustains learners' interest. Relevance refers to perceived connections between the activity and learners' goals or experiences. Confidence concerns expectations of success and perceived ability to complete learning tasks. Satisfaction addresses positive responses to accomplishment and the learning experience. Together these dimensions permit a more precise account of motivation than a general statement that students enjoyed a lesson. A student may like a song but still lack confidence in interpreting its lyrics; another may feel successful without considering the content personally relevant.

The study also draws on Krashen's (1982) affective filter hypothesis, which foregrounds the possible relationship between emotional conditions and language acquisition. In classroom terms, anxiety and fear

of mistakes may discourage learners from engaging with English input. Music may help establish a more relaxed atmosphere, but this possibility must be investigated through student responses rather than assumed. The framework is therefore used interpretively: it helps explain reported comfort and hesitation without claiming to measure an internal psychological filter directly. The combination of ARCS and affective considerations directs attention to both the appeal of music and the limits of that appeal for students who experience difficulty.

Prior studies have examined music and English learning from several perspectives. Afriyuninda and Oktaviani (2021) explored English songs in relation to listening skills, while Sekeon et al. (2022) investigated students' perceptions of songs as listening media. Adara (2020) discussed songs and EFL motivation. In a related local research area, Roni and Hermansyah (2023) examined strategies for improving motivation to learn English in primary school. Collectively, these studies suggest the value of engaging instructional resources, but their distinct contexts and outcomes do not establish that songs will improve motivation in every classroom. Additional context-specific evidence is needed to understand how younger secondary learners experience song-based instruction across different motivational dimensions.

Accordingly, this article addresses two questions: how were Western pop songs implemented as a learning tool in a seventh-grade English class, and how did students perceive the motivational contribution of those activities? The study was conducted at SMP Muhammadiyah Pangkajene during the 2025/2026 academic year. The original thesis identified 21 students in the class, reported questionnaire data for 14 respondents, and presented in-depth interviews with six students. This article preserves these distinctions to avoid overstating the evidence. Rather than treating motivation as a single outcome score, it describes questionnaire tendencies alongside interview accounts organized using ARCS.

The significance of the study is practical and analytical. For teachers, it offers a grounded account of how songs may be used to attract attention, establish relevance, provide manageable opportunities for success, and support enjoyable learning. For researchers, it illustrates the usefulness of combining a descriptive questionnaire with interviews while retaining the limitations of a small, single-site qualitative design. Most importantly, it avoids equating positive perceptions with proven causal improvement. By focusing on what students actually reported, the article seeks to contribute a careful, context-sensitive understanding of music-supported motivation in Indonesian junior secondary EFL education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Motivation in EFL learning is a multidimensional phenomenon involving learners' purposes, interests, expectations, and experiences during instruction. Gardner and Lambert (1972) distinguished integrative and instrumental orientations, highlighting the social and practical reasons for language study. Ryan and Deci (2000) differentiated intrinsic motivation, associated with inherent interest and enjoyment, from extrinsic motivation, associated with separable consequences. These perspectives show why learners may participate for different reasons. A student may wish to earn a high grade while also enjoying a particular English-language song. Teachers should therefore avoid reducing motivation to either classroom enjoyment or external rewards alone.

Motivation is also responsive to the learning environment. Harmer (2007) discusses how instructional choices and classroom relationships can influence learners' willingness to engage. Keller (2010) provides a particularly useful instructional design framework through the ARCS model. Attention can be stimulated through variation, curiosity, and interesting presentation. Relevance is strengthened when learners recognize connections to their needs, experiences, or interests. Confidence develops when tasks appear achievable and learners receive opportunities to experience progress. Satisfaction involves recognition of achievement, meaningful feedback, and positive consequences of participation. These components are related but analytically distinguishable, allowing researchers to identify which aspects of an activity students value most.

For song-based English instruction, Attention may arise from melody, rhythm, and a contrast with routine textbook activities. Relevance may develop when the genre or themes connect with students' listening habits. Confidence may increase when lyrics are repeated, words become recognizable, and learners can participate without excessive pressure. Satisfaction may follow from understanding a phrase, completing a lyric task, or simply enjoying an activity perceived as meaningful. These are potential mechanisms rather than inevitable outcomes. Learners who dislike the selected music or find lyrics inaccessible may not experience the same motivational advantages. A theoretically informed analysis should therefore examine divergent as well as positive responses.

Listening is an important setting for these processes because learners must interpret spoken language under

time constraints. Brown (2001) presents listening as an active part of communicative language learning. Rost (2011) emphasizes the cognitive and interactive processes involved, and Richards (2008) explains how learners combine linguistic detail with prior knowledge. Songs can expose learners to pronunciation, rhythm, and repeated lexical patterns, but sung language is not always easier to understand than ordinary speech. Connected sounds, unfamiliar expressions, and musical accompaniment can complicate comprehension. Ur (1996) notes that language teaching must address the practical challenges learners encounter during listening. Song activities therefore benefit from repetition, contextual support, and achievable comprehension tasks.

Music has been discussed as a pedagogical resource because it combines language with memorable auditory patterns. Murphey (1992) describes the role of music and songs in language teaching, while Millington (2011) offers strategies for using songs with younger learners. Suitable activities may include listening for familiar words, predicting meaning from context, matching phrases, discussing themes, and repeating selected expressions. Such activities can make students active listeners instead of passive recipients of music. Their instructional value depends on alignment with objectives, age appropriateness, and careful selection of tempo and lyrical content. Songs are best treated as one resource within a broader teaching repertoire rather than a replacement for explicit instruction.

The emotional dimension is also relevant. Krashen (1982) proposed that affective conditions influence language acquisition, drawing attention to anxiety, motivation, and confidence. In practical terms, a supportive classroom atmosphere may make students more willing to attempt unfamiliar English. Music can contribute to this atmosphere when learners perceive it as enjoyable and nonthreatening. However, reported relaxation is not direct evidence that language acquisition has increased. Affective explanations should be paired with observed or reported participation and, where possible, independent learning measures. The present study primarily documents perceptions, so its conclusions concern motivational experience rather than objectively measured language gains.

Empirical work provides a basis for further inquiry. Afriyuninda and Oktaviani (2021) examined the use of English songs in listening instruction. Sekeon et al. (2022) investigated students' perceptions of English songs as listening media. Adara (2020) addressed the relationship between songs and EFL motivation. Research by Roni and Hermansyah (2023) on primary-school English motivation and Isumarni (2011) on hands-on learning highlights the broader importance of engaging teaching strategies. The findings and contexts of these studies are not interchangeable, but together they justify examining instructional motivation through locally meaningful materials.

A gap remains in the detailed description of how students interpret song-based lessons across the four ARCS dimensions within a specific junior secondary EFL setting. A single overall enjoyment measure could conceal important differences between attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction. This study therefore uses ARCS as a deductive analytical framework, supplemented by students' own descriptions. It focuses on perceived motivational responses to Western pop songs, while recognizing that a descriptive qualitative design cannot establish whether music caused a durable increase in motivation.

METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative design to explore seventh-grade students' experiences of Western pop songs as an English learning tool at SMP Muhammadiyah Pangkajene, Sidenreng Rappang, Indonesia, during the 2025/2026 academic year. The design was appropriate for investigating perceived attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction within a natural classroom setting. Following Creswell (2014) and Merriam (2009), the emphasis was on contextual interpretation rather than experimental estimation of treatment effects. A structured questionnaire provided descriptive supplementary information, but interviews constituted the primary source for understanding students' motivational experiences.

The target class contained 21 seventh-grade students. The thesis methodology described questionnaire distribution to the class; however, the results table explicitly reports N = 14 questionnaire respondents. Accordingly, this article uses 14 as the denominator for all reported questionnaire percentages and does not assume that the remaining seven students completed usable questionnaires. Six students were purposively selected for semi-structured interviews based on questionnaire tendencies and teacher recommendations concerning communicativeness. The interviews allowed exploration of diverse reactions, including enthusiasm, relaxation, uncertainty, and fear of errors. The sample was not intended to represent a wider student population statistically.

The questionnaire was adapted from Keller's (2010) Instructional Materials Motivation Survey and contained 20 statements, with five items assigned to each ARCS dimension. Responses were recorded on a

five-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Its function was to describe motivational tendencies and support selection of interview informants, not to provide a validated causal outcome measure. The interview guide used open-ended questions about the experience of listening to songs, perceived connections to daily interests, confidence in understanding lyrics, enjoyment, and willingness to encounter songs in future lessons. Instructional documentation, including classroom photographs and examples of learning activities, provided supplementary contextual evidence.

In preparation, the researcher selected Western pop songs judged suitable for Grade VII learners on the basis of tempo, intelligibility, and positive or age-appropriate lyrical themes. Song-based learning was then implemented in English lessons, after which the questionnaire was administered and six students were interviewed. The source thesis describes listening, attention to lyrics, and participation in song-related activities, but does not provide a sufficiently precise lesson-by-lesson schedule, exact duration, or complete song list to support more specific procedural claims. Those details are therefore not invented here. Interview responses reported in the thesis were translated into academic English from local-language expressions.

Questionnaire results were summarized using the percentages presented in the original findings table. For each item, the proportion agreeing or strongly agreeing was calculated by adding the two reported percentages; rounding may produce small differences. Interview material was interpreted using the interactive analytical model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014): data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Responses were first organized deductively under Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction, and then examined for recurring experiences within each dimension. Comparisons among questionnaire patterns, interviews, and available documentation supported interpretation.

The thesis reports methodological triangulation and member checking as trustworthiness strategies. The article preserves those reported procedures while recognizing that the available document does not provide a detailed independent audit of their implementation. No pre-intervention motivation scores, randomized comparison group, or delayed follow-up measures were available. Consequently, expressions such as ‘improvement’ are treated as students’ perceived motivational benefits rather than statistically established changes over time. Reporting is restricted to the evidence presented in the thesis, and interview findings are paraphrased where the available translated quotations do not permit verification against complete original recordings.

RESULTS

The findings describe students’ responses to Western pop songs through questionnaire patterns and interview accounts. The study involved a class of 21 seventh-grade students, but the results table was based on 14 questionnaire respondents. Six students participated in semi-structured interviews. The distinction is important because questionnaire percentages represent the 14 respondents, not the full class. The 20-item questionnaire covered five statements for each ARCS dimension, and the results table reported no disagree or strongly disagree responses on any of the 20 items. This pattern indicates generally favorable questionnaire responses, although it also makes the neutral responses and interview qualifications particularly important.

Attention was a prominent feature of the responses. For the statement that Western pop songs immediately captured attention at the beginning of the lesson, 50.0% strongly agreed and 35.7% agreed, yielding 85.7% positive responses. The same combined proportion reported that rhythm and melody made the lesson more interesting than textbooks alone. Another 85.8%, subject to rounding, reported curiosity about the meanings of English lyrics, and 85.7% indicated that musical elements helped prevent boredom or sleepiness. For sustained focus, 78.6% agreed or strongly agreed, while 21.4% selected neutral. These results suggest that music was especially effective as an initial engagement device, while sustained attention was somewhat less unanimous.

Interview accounts helped explain the attention responses. Students described being interested in the rhythm and melody and wanting to understand the meanings of unfamiliar lyrics. Several contrasted songs favorably with opening a textbook immediately. One interviewee emphasized that the catchy rhythm made words easier to remember, while another associated music with curiosity about the language. The accounts suggest that attention involved more than enjoyment of sound: musical interest sometimes prompted learners to focus on English expressions. At the same time, the data do not show how long attention was maintained or whether engagement remained equally strong across repeated lessons.

Relevance concerned whether students connected song-based instruction with their own interests and experiences. For the statement that learning through songs matched personal musical interests outside

school, 78.6% responded positively. The same percentage agreed or strongly agreed that lyrics contained useful vocabulary for everyday life, that popular music made learning feel practical and familiar, and that song themes related to real-life situations and emotions. Similarly, 78.6% considered the activities useful for understanding naturally used English expressions. Across these items, 21.4% selected neutral, indicating that the relevance of songs was meaningful to many respondents but not universally endorsed.

The interviews reflected these patterns. Some students described English songs as connected to music they encountered outside school and therefore less distant from their everyday lives. The use of recognizable musical forms appeared to make English seem more approachable and useful. Participants also expressed interest in understanding lyrics rather than merely hearing the melodies. Nevertheless, the questionnaire does not establish that every student was familiar with the selected songs, and the interview evidence cannot establish that perceived relevance led to greater language practice outside class. The results support a narrower conclusion: song-based materials were personally meaningful to several participating learners.

Confidence was the most qualified dimension. On the statement that relaxed music reduced anxiety and fear of making mistakes, 71.5% agreed or strongly agreed after rounding, while 28.6% were neutral. The same approximate positive proportion was recorded for recognizing words through moderate tempo, understanding the main message of a song, improving confidence in pronunciation through repetition, and feeling capable of completing learning tasks after repeated exposure. In each case, more than one quarter of respondents were neutral. The consistency of these responses suggests that although many students felt more comfortable, confidence remained less firmly established than enjoyment or immediate attention.

Interview findings clarified why confidence did not rise uniformly. Some students reported that they became more relaxed after hearing a song more than once. Repetition appeared to reduce initial tension and allowed learners to recognize portions of the lyrics. Others continued to find unfamiliar words difficult or remained worried about making mistakes. This contrast is important: music could create a friendlier atmosphere without removing the linguistic difficulty of English listening. Confidence appeared to depend on the match between task demands and students' ability to follow the lyrics. The evidence therefore supports careful scaffolding rather than assuming that exposure to a song is sufficient to build confidence.

Satisfaction was the strongest and most consistent dimension. For the statement that students felt happy and entertained while learning with Western pop songs, 57.1% strongly agreed and 35.7% agreed, a combined 92.8% after rounding. For the wish to use songs in future English lessons, 64.3% strongly agreed and 28.6% agreed, totaling 92.9%. Positive responses to feeling a sense of achievement when understanding or translating lyrics were approximately 85.8%, as were responses concerning enjoyment of participation and motivation to practice songs independently at home. These results indicate high immediate satisfaction and favorable attitudes toward continued use of music.

All six interviewed informants were described in the thesis as expressing enjoyment and a desire for song-based activities to continue. Students associated the lessons with pleasure, interest, and a more comfortable classroom environment. Satisfaction also appeared when learners recognized or interpreted lyrics successfully. The reported intention to practice at home is encouraging, but intention should not be confused with verified independent behavior. No home-practice logs or follow-up observations were presented. Thus, the evidence indicates positive attitudes and self-reported willingness rather than documented long-term engagement.

Taken together, the questionnaire and interviews indicate a differentiated motivational profile. Attention and satisfaction were especially favorable, relevance was generally positive, and confidence was positive but more tentative. The findings also suggest a practical sequence: rhythm and melody drew attention, recognizable cultural material created perceived relevance, repeated listening sometimes supported confidence, and successful participation contributed to satisfaction. This is an interpretive account of student perceptions, not a tested causal pathway. Because there were no baseline measurements or comparison condition, the study cannot determine whether motivation increased relative to conventional instruction. Its strongest empirical contribution is the description of how students experienced song-based English lessons across the four ARCS dimensions.

DISCUSSION

The study indicates that Western pop songs can be a promising supplementary resource for motivating seventh-grade EFL learners, particularly through attention and satisfaction. Questionnaire results showed substantial agreement that music attracted interest, made lessons more engaging, and encouraged a desire for similar activities in the future. Interviews provided contextual explanations for these responses, highlighting curiosity about lyrics and pleasure in listening. These findings align with the instructional

perspective of Keller (2010), who treats motivation as a design consideration involving more than a single feeling of enjoyment. The four ARCS dimensions help distinguish what students found appealing from what they found achievable.

The attention findings suggest that musical features provided an effective contrast with routine textbook-based instruction. Rhythm and melody introduced sensory variety, while English lyrics supplied a question worth pursuing: what do the words mean? This relationship between curiosity and language content is pedagogically important. A song that merely entertains may interrupt monotony but contribute little to learning. By contrast, when learners are encouraged to identify expressions, predict meaning, or discuss phrases, initial interest can be directed toward an instructional objective. Murphey (1992) and Millington (2011) offer complementary reasons for treating songs as language resources rather than background entertainment. The present findings support the usefulness of such purposeful integration, though they do not measure actual learning gains.

The relevance results reveal how popular music can connect school English with students' informal experiences. Many respondents agreed that songs reflected personal interests and contained language relevant to everyday life. This connection may be especially important in EFL environments where students encounter English through media more frequently than through face-to-face interaction. The finding is consistent with the broader principle that meaningful materials can support engagement. However, it is important not to assume that all adolescents share the same musical tastes. The neutral responses show that relevance depends on the individual. Teachers should therefore consider learner preferences, accessible themes, and cultural appropriateness rather than selecting music solely because it is popular.

Confidence presents a more complex interpretation. Most questionnaire respondents endorsed statements about reduced anxiety, word recognition, and willingness to repeat lyrics, yet nearly three in ten selected neutral for each confidence item. Interviewees similarly described both increased comfort and persistent uncertainty about comprehension. Keller's (2010) confidence dimension concerns expectations of success, which depend partly on the difficulty and structure of the task. If learners cannot identify words in a fast song, their enjoyment may coexist with low perceived competence. This distinction cautions against treating music as a universal solution to language anxiety. Teachers should choose manageable material, provide repeated listening opportunities, and establish attainable goals.

The confidence findings can also be discussed in relation to Krashen's (1982) affective filter hypothesis. Students who reported feeling more relaxed may have become more willing to attend to English input. Nevertheless, the research did not directly measure anxiety using an independent validated instrument, nor did it measure language acquisition. The hypothesis therefore offers a possible explanatory perspective rather than a demonstrated mechanism. A relaxed atmosphere is educationally valuable, but it is not sufficient evidence of improved listening proficiency. Future studies could pair motivational interviews with direct measures of comprehension, anxiety, and classroom participation to investigate these relationships more rigorously.

Satisfaction was the clearest area of positive response. Students frequently described enjoyment and expressed a desire for song-based lessons to continue. This pattern corresponds with the intrinsic interest emphasized by Ryan and Deci (2000). Enjoyment may encourage students to approach English voluntarily, especially when successful interpretation of a lyric produces a sense of achievement. Yet immediate satisfaction should be distinguished from durable intrinsic motivation. Students may enjoy a novel classroom activity without sustaining independent study weeks later. The reported willingness to practice songs at home is best understood as an intention that merits follow-up. Longitudinal observation would be needed to determine whether positive feelings become stable learning habits.

The findings relate to previous research on music and English learning but should not be interpreted as direct replication. Afriyuninda and Oktaviani (2021) focused on listening skills, whereas Sekeon et al. (2022) examined perceptions of songs as listening media. Adara (2020) addressed songs and motivation, providing a closer conceptual connection. The current study contributes a locally situated description of four motivational dimensions among seventh-grade learners. Roni and Hermansyah (2023), while concerned with primary-school motivation rather than songs specifically, further underscores the educational importance of learner engagement. These connections support the plausibility of music-based motivation while respecting differences in research settings, participants, and outcome measures.

Methodologically, the study illustrates the value of using interviews to qualify questionnaire patterns. A table containing only positive and neutral responses might suggest nearly universal success. Interviews reveal a more nuanced picture in which learners enjoy music but may still struggle with lyrics or fear mistakes. The ARCS framework helps identify this tension because satisfaction and confidence are not

identical. The study also demonstrates the importance of transparent sample reporting. The methodology identifies 21 students in the class, whereas the questionnaire findings are explicitly based on 14 respondents. The discrepancy cannot be resolved without additional records, so conclusions about response proportions must remain limited to the 14 students represented in the table.

Several further limitations constrain interpretation. The study was conducted in one school and one grade level, with six interviewees selected purposively. The source document does not specify an exact sequence of song-based lessons, implementation duration, or full list of musical materials. There was no pretest–posttest motivation comparison, no conventional-instruction comparison group, and no follow-up assessment. Furthermore, questionnaire responses were uniformly nonnegative, which could reflect genuinely favorable perceptions but might also be influenced by response style or classroom context. Without further instrument validation and independent observations, these alternatives cannot be assessed. Accordingly, causal language such as 'music significantly improved motivation' would exceed the evidence.

For practice, the results suggest that teachers can use songs most effectively when each activity serves a clear motivational and linguistic purpose. A lesson might begin with an age-appropriate song to capture attention, connect its theme to students' experiences, provide short and achievable listening tasks to support confidence, and conclude with feedback or reflection that reinforces satisfaction. Lyrics should be screened for clarity, suitability, and vocabulary demands. Students should have opportunities to express preferences, and teachers should avoid forcing public singing when it may increase anxiety. Music should complement, not displace, instruction in listening strategies, vocabulary, and communication.

Future research should document the intervention in greater detail and include more diverse learners. Repeated measurements could examine whether motivational responses persist after the novelty of songs diminishes. Comparative or mixed-methods designs could test changes in motivation and language performance while retaining interviews to explain student experiences. Within the limits of the present evidence, the central implication is measured but useful: Western pop songs were perceived as engaging and enjoyable by many participating students, while confidence remained variable. The pedagogical promise of music lies not simply in playing songs, but in designing accessible, relevant, and supportive learning experiences around them.

CONCLUSION

This study explored seventh-grade students' motivational responses to Western pop songs as a supplementary English learning resource at SMP Muhammadiyah Pangkajene, Sidenreng Rappang. Questionnaire results from 14 respondents and interviews with six informants indicated generally positive experiences across Keller's ARCS dimensions. Attention and satisfaction were especially strong: students described music as interesting, enjoyable, and preferable to exclusively textbook-oriented activities, while many perceived song lyrics as connected to their everyday interests. Confidence was more variable, with some students reporting greater relaxation after repeated listening and others remaining uncertain about their ability to understand lyrics or avoid mistakes. These findings support the use of carefully chosen songs to create a more inviting English classroom, but they do not demonstrate a causal or lasting increase in motivation.

English teachers are encouraged to integrate age-appropriate songs with explicit learning objectives, manageable listening tasks, repeated exposure, and supportive feedback. The findings should be interpreted within the study's single-school qualitative design, its distinction between 21 class members and 14 questionnaire respondents, and the absence of baseline or comparison data. Future research should document song selection and instructional duration more precisely, investigate learners with different preferences and proficiency levels, and combine motivational evidence with longitudinal or comparative measures. Such work would clarify when and for whom music-supported instruction can contribute to sustained engagement and English learning.

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