INVESTIGATING LEARNERS' ENGLISH READING AND WRITING SKILL ENHANCEMENT USING A FRAMEWORK OF STRENGTHENING IDEAL L2 SELF FOR VIETNAMESE ENGLISH-MAJORED UNDERGRADUATES

Dao Thi Thuy Nguyen[1]

Abstract: This study investigates the degree to which the first-year English-major students' reading and writing skills were enhanced and how they perceived their skill enhancement after the treatment of the Visionary Motivational Process (VMP) was integrated into the existing course of reading and writing at a university in Vietnam. Employing the theory of L2 Motivational Self System (L2 MSS) accompanied with the workable visionary enhancement activities in building up and developing students' Ideal L2 self, this paper's primary purposes comprise enhancing students' language skills as regards reading and writing skills and exploring their perceptions towards the skill development through the intervention of the VMP. With the mixed methods used, the quantitative data (pre/post-test), and the qualitative data (learner diary) both revealed students' reading and writing skills were significantly enhanced after the VMP, and notably, students' perceptions towards the skill enhancement were recorded positively and mainly focused on 'learning satisfaction' in their learning and 'motivational value' of the VMP lesson plan.

Introduction
It is widely researched language learning achievements and long-lasting learning interests cannot be solely reached if learners do not possess a certain degree of motivation in learning (Dembo, 2004; Ushioda, 2013, Mackay, 2019). It is, therefore, asserted that motivation in learning appear to be a great predictor of students' success in language learning (Ushioda, 2013). Among various influential theories concerning L2 motivation, the L2 MSS (Dörnyei, 2009), with an emphasis on creating students' Ideal L2 Self, has been used and

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[1] Lecturer, Department of English Language Teaching Methodology, Faculty of Foreign Languages, An Giang University – Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. nttdao@agu.edu.vn

validated to bring positive effects on students' motivation in learning English in diverse English language teaching contexts across the globe (Kim, 2009; Kim, 2012; Lamb, 2012; Magid & Chan, 2012; Ryan, 2009; Sampson, 2012, You & Chan, 2015). *Ideal L2 Self*, described as an elaborate future image that the language learner would like to become, is reviewed to be an active element and driving force for the learners' academic success. There has been a considerable amount of research exploring a profound impact of the Ideal L2 Self on learners' English language learning proficiency or academic outcomes (Kim & Kim, 2014; Lamb, 2012; Magid, 2011; Magid & Chan, 2012; Sampson, 2012).

In another aspect, reading and writing skills are regarded as indispensable and necessary skills that need to be equipped for language learners. The fact, however, shows that these two receptive and productive skills bear their own trouble to both L2 teachers and students, especially in language Vietnamese context (Tran, 2016; Gorsuch and Taguchi, 2008; Ho, 2012; Kam, 2002; Nguyen, 2009; Tran, 2007). These views lead to the current study on the L2 motivation and its effect on reading and writing skill enhancement so that students can find interest in their learning and boost their academic results in terms of reading and writing skills.

Related Theories
L2 Motivational Self System
In an attempt to reconceptualize the notion of motivation as a consequence of the inappropriateness of the integrative motivation from Gardner (2001), Dörnyei et al. (2006) conducted a large-scale study with more than 13,000 students in Hungary. This study helps Dörnyei define the term of 'integrativeness' (Gardner, 2001) which emphasizes the native language community as a main purpose of language learning, into a broader concept of 'Ideal L2 Self', which reflects the importance of 'self' as a source of motivational action leading language learners to their learning goals or outcomes in the age of globalization (Sampson, 2012). With this view in mind, Dörnyei (2009) constructs the L2 MSS as a motivation theory closely related to motivational psychology in which learners' identity and selves are of great emphasis. The ideology in this theory was revealed by the idea that the magnitude of the future self-image students can shape in their mind would serve as a trigger to engage students to generate motivated behavior in their current learning status (Dörnyei, Henry & Muir, 2016) by matching their current self with their ideal self to reduce the discrepancy between the desired learning status and the reality of it.

The L2 MSS is the tridimensional construct which is comprised of elements as follows:

- the *Ideal L2 Self* (the specific future image of the person we would like to become),
- the *Ought-to L2 Self* and (the self that we think we ought to possess to reach learning expectations and prevent negative learning outcomes)
- the *L2 learning experience* (the learning environment including the teacher and peer's impact, the curriculum and the experience of success).

The construct of the L2 MSS is studied to spread its success both theoretically and empirically in diverse L2 settings (Aubrey, 2014; Islam et al., 2013; Kim, 2009; Kim, 2012; Kong et al., 2018; Papi, 2010; Sampson, 2012; Taguchi et al., 2009). With its influential reputation, research shows that, among the three components, the *Ideal L2 Self* was the most impacting factor which leads to L2 learners' achievements and motivation enhancement (Gao, 2013; Kim, 2009; Kim, 2012; Lamb, 2012; Magid & Chan, 2012; Ryan, 2009; Sampson, 2012; You & Chan, 2015, etc.). The study therefore mainly focuses on this most influential component.

'Ideal L2 Self' Enhancement
As previously mentioned, *Ideal L2 Self* is perceived as the most influential motivating component in the tripartite construct of the L2 MSS, and there is a range of studies highlighting the crucial role of *Ideal L2 Self* in motivating learners in their learning, from which L2 learners can reach their academic outcomes (Lamb, 2012; Magid and Chan, 2012; Sampson, 2012) and be stimulated in language learning process (Gao, 2013; Kim, 2009; Mackay (2014), Magid (2014), Sampson (2012) and You and Chan (2015). As a result, heightening the vital part of learners' *Ideal L2 Self* so that learners can be motivated in learning is essential for the increase of their learning engagement.

According to Dörnyei (2009) and Hadfield and Dörnyei (2013), learners' Ideal L2 Self is promoted under the motivational paths entailing six-phase strategies which are described as follows.

1. Creating the vision: this step aims at helping learners to create their Ideal L2 Self, which means the visions of the person they would like to become in the future
2. Strengthening the vision: this step aims at helping students enhance their Ideal L2 Self in a more clarifying and urgent action
3. Substantiating the vision: this step aims at helping students make their Ideal L2 Self in relation to realistic and plausible expectations
4. Keeping the vision alive: this step aims at helping students activate their Ideal L2 Self regularly by providing an engaging framework

5. Operationalizing the vision: this step aims at helping students develop a set of concrete action plans to make their Ideal L2 Self productive
6. Counterbalancing the vision: this step aims at helping students consider failure or depict negative consequences to offset their desired future self

To illustrate the motivational strategies in a more practical and logical manner, Hadfield and Dörnyei (2013) rearrange the order of the phases in their *Visionary Motivational Programme* so that the strategies described start from building up the learners' visions to developing action plans and identity. Therefore, the practical framework for the visionary motivational activities is inclusive of logical order of phases: (1) Creating the vision, (2) Substantiating the vision, (3) Counterbalancing the vision, (4) Strengthening the vision, (5) Operationalizing the vision and (6) Keeping the vision alive.

Reading and Writing skills in Vietnam
L2 reading and writing are essential skills for L2 learners besides listening and speaking skills in the English language curriculum. The teaching of these skills still confronts some challenges (Tran, 2016; Gorsuch and Taguchi, 2008; Ho, 2012; Kam, 2002; Nguyen, 2009; Tran, 2007), which, to large extent, affect students' motivation in learning, thus the pressing issues of how to deal with the problems are in line with how to motivate them in learning.

The problematic issues associated with L2 reading skills are identified in some studies. Gorsuch and Taguchi (2008) assume that although reading skills are treated as special skills for language learners, the laborious process of doing reading assignments may interfere in learners' reading interest. As well as this, the reality of limited word recognition skills which L2 learners encounter may result in their low reading fluency. Regarding vocabulary knowledge, regardless of its important role in supporting learners' reading skills, this area remains the biggest downside of university L2 learners (Ho, 2012). Furthermore, problems concerning L2 reading skills of Vietnamese learners are involved in the monotonous atmosphere in the reading classroom and passive L2 learners in the reading lessons (Tran, 2016). Those drawbacks generally lead to L2 learners' low level of motivation.

As regards writing skills, different aspects are found to negatively affect learners' writing interest. To Nguyen (2009), most writing teachers of English perceive writing skills are complicated and not easy to teach, which probably causes learners' low learning outcomes while in contrast, it is studied that getting high grades in writing is a factor contributing to students' motivation increase (Tran, 2007). Furthermore, writing activities in the English language classrooms are thought to be not interesting and effective enough to arouse

learners' interest (Nguyen et al., 2011). They, therefore, get into trouble and face certain challenges such as lacking vocabularies to write and committing common grammatical mistakes in compositions. Additionally, in most Vietnamese high schools, ELF writing is solely considered as a means for the assessment of vocabulary and grammar, and most students find learning L2 writing is tough, unrewarding, and subordinate to grammar lessons (Nguyen, 2012).

The gaps arising from the reality of teaching L2 reading and writing skills in Vietnam show the imperative need to foster learners' L2 motivation in learning as a basic prioritized step to help learners maintain their learning engagement and reach their learning achievements. Within this regard, the conception of L2 motivation related to L2 MSS (Dörnyei, 2009) can be a better treatment as it approaches the learners from their own self and helps them enhance their visions of their Ideal L2 Self through visionary motivational activities.

Objectives of the Study
In general, the objectives of the study include:
1. To investigate how students' reading skills are enhanced
2. To investigate how students' writing skills are enhanced
3. To explore how they perceive the VMP lesson plan regarding its effect on their skill enhancement
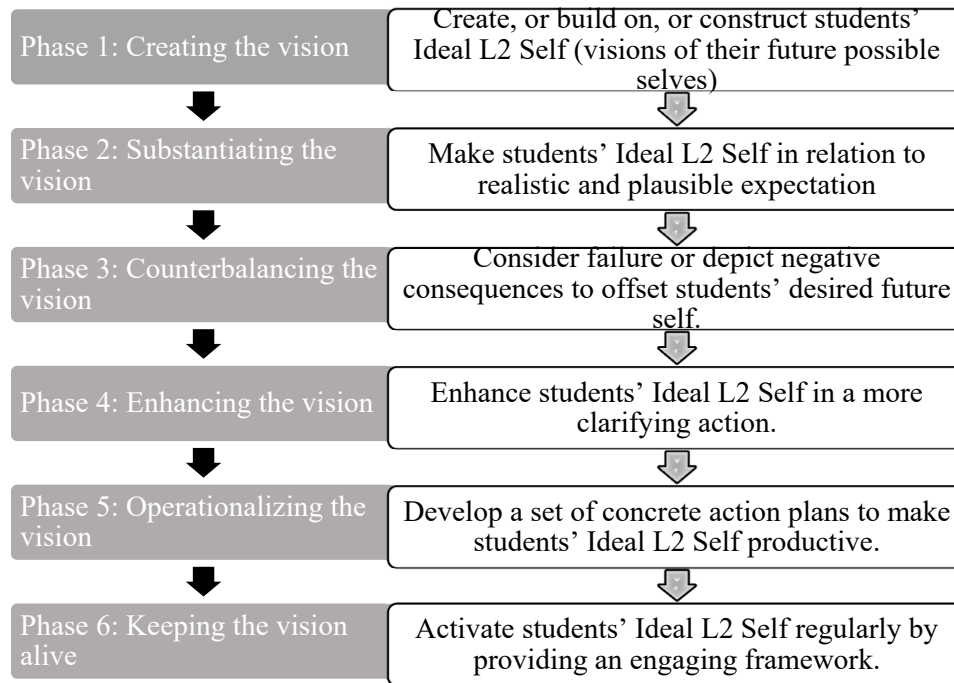
Methodology
Subjects of the study
There were 31 first-year English-majored students attending the course of Reading-Writing 1 into which the VMP was integrated, at a university in the south of Vietnam. The distribution of the students into any particular classes was distributed by the Academic Affairs office, so convenience sampling was used for this group of students.

Research Instruments
The study is inclusive of pre/post-test and learner diary. Additionally, the Visionary Motivational Process (VMP) lesson plan was used as a pedagogical tool in this study.

The VMP, integrated into the course of Reading-Writing 1 in the research context, aims at developing the first-year English-majored students' Ideal L2 Self in reading and writing skills. The six-phase VMP includes 14 reading - writing activities whose objectives were congruent with the objectives of the coursebook, illustrated in Figure 1.

Phase 1: Creating the vision	Create, or build on, or construct students' Ideal L2 Self (visions of their future possible selves)
Phase 2: Substantiating the vision	Make students' Ideal L2 Self in relation to realistic and plausible expectation
Phase 3: Counterbalancing the vision	Consider failure or depict negative consequences to offset students' desired future self.
Phase 4: Enhancing the vision	Enhance students' Ideal L2 Self in a more clarifying action.
Phase 5: Operationalizing the vision	Develop a set of concrete action plans to make students' Ideal L2 Self productive.
Phase 6: Keeping the vision alive	Activate students' Ideal L2 Self regularly by providing an engaging framework.

Figure 1. *The Six-Phase VMP and its Objectives*

The fourteen VMP activities were distributed during the six phases of the VMP and focused on solely reading and writing activities which were tailored by the teacher/researcher and adapted from Hadfield and Dörnyei (2013). The activities designed and selected follows three criteria of suitability, which includes (1) suitability for students' level of English proficiency (level of A2 according to CEFR), (2) suitability for the objectives of the VMP and (3) suitability for the target skill objectives in the course. By such a way of designing, the correlation of the level of difficulty between the activities was assured.

The pre/post-test was designed to investigate the degree of enhancement of students' reading and writing skills before and after the course. It is identical in terms of form/construct and content despite being administered at different points of time. The pre/post-test was developed comprising two parts which are *reading comprehension test* and *writing test*. The results obtained from the pre/post-test indicate inferences about the students' ability to perform the test tasks so that the researcher could make assumptions about the students' progress and grading and compare the results between the pre-test and post-test.

The learner diary was used so that students' perceptions of their skill enhancement were explored with the two guiding questions as follows:

1) Do you feel the activities help you enhance your reading skills?
   - If Yes, please justify your answers.
   - If No, please justify your answers.

2) Do you feel the activities help you enhance your writing skills?
   - If Yes, please justify your answers.
   - If No, please justify your answers.

Students were requested to write the learner diary after each session of the VMP (six times corresponding to six phases of the VMP). In terms of language used, they could choose whether English or Vietnamese to reflect their ideas as long as they felt at ease with the language chosen. The teacher/researcher referred to Vietnamese for their writing since ideas could be fully expressed and clarified. By this way, the Vietnamese-English translation was made and checked by the teacher of Translation in the university context.

Data Collection
The pre/post-test was administered at the beginning of the course (week 1) and the end of the course (week 15). The test was undertaken under time allotment and collected by the teacher/researcher.

The learner diary sheet was distributed after each phase of the VMP. All students were required to write their learner diary at home and submitted it to the teacher/researcher on the following day of the class.

Data Analysis
For research objective 1, a paired-sample t-test was calculated to assess students' level of enhancement before and after the course, which means the mean scores of the pre/post-test were compared, and p-value was figured to see the significant difference regarding their reading skills.

For research objective 2, a paired-sample t-test was also applied so that students' level of enhancement before and after the course was examined. Accordingly, the mean scores of the pre/post-test were then compared with p-value identified to see the significant difference regarding their writing skills. For research objective 3, the thematic-based analysis was used by assessing students' explanations in the learner diary and looking for keywords/thoughts bearing best relations to the guiding questions provided. All codes (key words)

were then analyzed for possible potential emerging categories and themes to interpret students' perceptions of their skill enhancement.

Findings
Findings for the Research Objective 1: To Investigate How Students' Reading Skills are Enhanced
The findings from the pre/post-test to explore students' reading skill enhancement show that the mean score for the post-test (M = 4.06, SD = .42) was higher than that of the pre-test (M = 3.52, SD = .59), which indicates that students' reading skills were enhanced after the course. The representation of the mean scores for both tests is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. *The Interpretation of the Mean Scores for Reading Skills*

Test of Reading Skills	N	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Pre-test	31	3.52	.59	High
Post-test	31	4.06	.42	High

As can be seen from the table, in both tests, students' reading skills were marked at 'high' level although the mean scores for both tests were recorded differently. This means that students did not find some difficulties with their reading skills during the course. This can be explained by the fact that the high-school curriculum was engaged with teaching reading skills and reading comprehension tests appeared in most of the tests or examinations at lower school levels. Therefore, students, once equipped with knowledge and skills in their earlier time of learning, may not encounter obstacles in dealing with tasks or assignments associated with this receptive skill at university level.

Further, in order to examine whether their reading skills were significantly enhanced after the treatment of the VMP, a paired-sample t-test was calculated to compare the two mean scores. The results from the paired-sample t-test are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. *Output of the Paired-Sample T-Test for Reading Skills*

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair	Pre-Test of Reading & Post-Test of Reading	31	.402	.025

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair	Pre-test of Reading – Post-test of Reading	-.54032	.57770	.10376	-.75222	-.32842	-5.208	30	.000

The findings from the mean scores between the pre/post-test and those from the paired-sample t-test (M = 3.53, SD = .59 for the pre-test and M = 4.06, SD = .42 for the post-test; t (30) = --3.28, *p* =.000) show that students' reading skills were significantly enhanced after the treatment of the VMP, indicating that the VMP did considerably contribute to students' reading skill achievement. The positive results can be clarified by several explanations. Firstly, the VMP activities were assumed to be appropriate for students in terms of level of English proficiency when the design of them was beginner-learner oriented. Secondly, the activities in the VMP center around students' future self-image and the ways to develop that image which was likely a motivating factor from which they would make effortless attempts to reduce their current self and reach their future self (Ideal L2 Self) in the process of self-improvement. Thirdly, the activities in the VMP were closely linked with those from the current coursebook, hence students had more opportunities to practice as well as review the skills learnt, which led to their better understanding of the skills and improved outcomes. Overall, that students' reading skills got significant improvement during the course partly show the effectiveness of the VMP integrated into the course.

Findings for the Research Objective 2: To Investigate How Students' Writing Skills are Enhanced
In investigating the degree of enhancement students got in their writing skills, the descriptive test was applied and demonstrates that the mean score for the post-test (M = 3.67, SD = .66) was higher than that of the pre-test (M = 1.95, SD = 1.17). This gave apparent indication of the increase in students' writing skills over the period of learning. The results from the descriptive test are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. *The Interpretation of the Mean Scores for Reading Skills*

Test of Writing Skills	N	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Pre-test	31	1.95	1.17	Low
Post-test	31	3.67	.66	Moderate

It is clearly seen that students' writing skills in the pre-test were recorded at 'low' level while in the post-test, there was an increase in the mean score of students' writing skills, which was recorded at 'moderate' level. These results imply that students made improvement in their writing skills during 15-week of learning. However, to investigate whether there was a significant difference in their writing skill enhancement, a paired-sample t-test was used and its results are shown in the table below.

Table 4. *Output of the Paired-Sample T-Test for Writing Skills*

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair	Pre-Test of Writing & Post-Test of Writing	31	.813	.000

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pre-Test of Writing – Post-Test of Writing	-1.72581	.73981	.13287	-1.99717	-1.45444	-12.988	30	.000

The results from the paired-sample t-test indicate that the students' writing skills were significantly enhanced (M = 1.95, SD = 1.17 for the pre-test and M = 3.67, SD = .66 for the post-test; t (30) = -12.9, *p* =.000). These results were also in line with the variation of level of enhancement, from 'low' to 'moderate' level. The disparity between the students' level generated from the pre/post-test was due to several reasons. Firstly, at high school or lower school levels, writing skills were not a key skill to be taught in the English language classroom; it was rather introduced at 'sentence writing' than 'paragraph writing'. The students' inability of writing was, therefore, as a result of lacking knowledge or insufficient practice at these school levels. In the research context, when learning and getting enough practice with the visionary motivational activities, students become more interested in learning to make improvement in this skill. Secondly, like earlier explanations, the VMP provided students with imagery activities of their future self-image which likely acts as a motivating predictor of the motivated behavior to learn and endeavor so as to achieve their learning outcomes. Thirdly, the VMP activities were designed based on the objectives of the skills taught in class, so students

could find the similarities between the activities for their revision and practice. Consequently, the more time for practice increased, the better the students became.

Findings for the Research Objective 3: To Explore How They Perceive the VMP Lesson Plan Regarding its Effect on Their Skill Enhancement
The findings obtained from students' responses are illustrated into two different categories regarding quantitative data (Yes/No answers) and qualitative data (students' justifications). Prior to give the responses to the sub-guiding questions which are (1) *Do you feel the activities help you enhance your reading skills*? and (2) *Do you feel the activities help you enhance your writing skills?* students determined the degree of agreement (Yes/No) to the interrogative sentences. The results from their rates are demonstrated in Table 5.

Table 5. *Students' Response as to Their Reading and Writing Skill Enhancement Over Six Phases*

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5	Phase 6
Reading	96.7%	93.5%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Writing	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

From the table, it appears that from phases 3-6, all students (100%) reached consensus on the idea that their reading and writing skill enhancement resulted from the support of the VMP activities. The high percentage of agreement was also recorded as 96.7% and 93.5% for phases 1 and 2, respectively, suggesting that the VMP integrated into the existing course did bring positive effect on students' reading and writing skill enhancement. Data from students' explanations analyzed to figure out the similarities of the codes show emerged themes with the frequency, described in Table 6.

Table 6. *Emerged Themes and Frequency*

Emerged themes	Learning satisfaction	Motivational value	Instructional value	Practicality	Novelty value	Total codes
Frequency	*Students' perceptions towards the effect of the VMP on reading skills*					
Count	135	81	66	8	4	294
%	45.9	27.6	22.4	2.7	1.4	100
	Students' perceptions towards the effects of the VMP on writing skills					
Count	139	97	43	5	2	286
%	48.6	33.9	15	1.8	0.7	100
Total count	274	178	109	13	6	580
Percentage	47.2	30.7	18.8	2.3	1	100

The results from the students' justifications displayed five emerging themes: (1) learning satisfaction, (2) motivational value, (3) instructional value, (4)

practicality and (5) novelty value reflected in their perceptions of both reading and writing skills, ranked in descending order. Among which, '*learning satisfaction*' and '*motivational value*' were most highly reported as the factors which have a great impact on students' perceptions towards the effects of the VMP on their reading and writing skills. The following section is the analysis of students' explanations. It should be noted that their writings were not edited and in case students wrote in Vietnamese, the researcher translated into English with the English version checked for the reliability by a teacher of translation in the research context. The analysis of these themes is presented in the section below.

Theme 1: Learning Satisfaction
In this study, what students perceived as learning *satisfaction* was mainly related to good feelings that students have in learning, or their assumptions about what they have achieved or expect to achieve in the academic improvement. In the data obtained from students' explanations over six phases of the VMP, *learning satisfaction* was recorded as the most influential factor having a great impact on the skills, namely, reading (45.9%) and writing (48.6%). Accordingly, there was a total of 47.2% of codes reflecting the presence of *learning satisfaction* when students were asked to explain why they thought the activities in the VMP helped them gain their reading and writing skills. Some extracts from students' justifications are displayed in the following table.

Table 7. *Students' Extracts Showing the Role of 'Learning Satisfaction'*

Reading Skills	Writing Skills
▪ Nắm rõ được các kỹ năng đọc, có được những câu trả lời chính xác nhất cho các câu hỏi, có thêm được những từ vựng mới. [Master the reading skills, know the correct answers to the questions, gain new vocabulary]. [S28, P1] *	▪ Hoạt động VMP này giúp cho tôi dần cải thiện từ từ kỹ năng viết đoạn, sửa những lỗi sai khi viết. [This VMP helps me gradually improve my paragraph writing skills, correct common mistakes in writing]. [S27, P1]
▪ Các bài tập trong bài học giúp tôi nâng cao kỹ năng đọc. [The assignments in the lesson help me enhance reading skills.] [S20, P2]	▪ Because I get high scores through doing the VMP every week, and my writing skills are improved. [S14, P2]
▪ Nắm rõ nhanh các thông tin trong các đoạn ngữ liệu thông qua các kỹ năng đọc. [Learn better and quickly the information in the texts through reading skills]. [S28, P3]	▪ Because my writing skills are improved by doing the VMP. For example, I can write a paragraph without looking up the dictionary on the Internet. Therefore, the VMP activities help enhance my writing skills so much. [S14, P3]
▪ VMP activities help me learn new words and some structures easily. I	▪ My writing skills are more complete. My idea is more perfect. [S31, P4]
	▪ Biết được những lỗi viết mà bản thân hay sai thông qua các bài viết VMP, từ đó rút kinh nghiệm cho những lần viết sau. [Recognize the common mistakes made in the writings of the

Reading Skills	Writing Skills
can read and understand whole passages or text. [S4, P4] ▪ Có thêm được nhiều kỹ năng đọc, cũng như nắm chắc các thao tác đọc hiểu hơn. [Gain more reading skills, and master better reading strategies]. [S28, P5]	VMP, which then helps myself be improved for the latter writings.] [S28, P5] ▪ Nó giúp em biết lỗi sai và sửa lỗi khi viết. [It helps me recognize my mistakes and correct them when writing]. [S11, P6].

Note: [S28, P1] means 'Student No. 28, Phase 1'

Most students admitted that their reading skills were enhanced because their *learning satisfaction* was achieved. The aspects students referred to their *learning satisfaction* associated with the enlarged vocabulary or more new words and structures. Students also mentioned the assignments in the lesson partly contributed to their learning enhancement, and they got improved because of the mastery of reading strategies learnt. The improvement was also measured by their ability to find out the correct answers for the reading text and develop understanding of the whole text. The evidence of these explanations proves the significant role of *learning satisfaction* in students' perceptions of their reading skill enhancement.

Students' perceptions of their writing skill enhancement were also recorded by the great influence of *learning satisfaction* on students' thoughts/explanations revealed in the learner diary. Many cases claimed that they were able to recognize the writing mistakes and thus made less mistakes in their writing. Another point of their improvement was the gained skills of writing and perfect idea made. Also, students probably produced their writing without the assistance of the Internet in looking up the dictionary, and their scores for writing were improved. That is to say, *learning satisfaction* was the major cause for their reading and writing skill enhancement.

Theme 2: Motivational Value
Being ranked second (30.7%) out of the variables displaying students' perceptions of their skill enhancement, *motivational value* refers to the quality to which the VMP is designed to be interesting, or to arouse students' engagement/enjoyment/interest, or to stimulate their effort/hard work in the learning process. In other words, from the students' perspectives, the VMP was motivating since the activities were created to trigger their motivated behavior in their learning. Some explanations generated from the students' learner diary in six phases are displayed in the following table.

Table 8. *Students' Extracts Showing the Role of 'Motivational Value'*

Reading Skills	Writing Skills
▪ Because I feel happy when I practice reading with my friends and become more confident. [S25, P1] ▪ Because it makes me try hard and overcome my reading mistakes. I try to be careful in reading. [S14, P2] ▪ I am excited and happy when learning VMP; I can improve reading. [S16, P3] ▪ Because the interesting lesson makes me more receptive and to practice my reading skills more often. [S17, P4] ▪ The VMP activities are very interesting and hot. It makes me have more motivation in learning English. [S26, P5] ▪ I read better. I practice reading every day after each lesson at class. [S16, P6]	▪ Because I could write down what I think about my future life, my VMP. Thus, day by day, my writing skills will be improved. [S14, P1] ▪ I practice writing a paragraph. Thanks to it, I can improve my limitation in using grammar and spelling. [S4, P2] ▪ I feel more confident after I have mistakes in writing because I will revise the next times. [S29, P4] ▪ Because I have to imagine about me in the future and write what I have imagined. [S13, P5] ▪ Bởi vì nó giúp tôi có thể viết nhiều chủ đề khác nhau, đặc biệt là về việc nâng cao tầm nhìn của tôi về việc học. [Because it helps me be able to write many different topics, especially enhance my visions of learning]. [S21, P6]

From the explanations, it can be seen that students interpreted the *motivational value* in the reading skills with regard to two main factors. The first factor came from the VMP itself, which was interesting to help students have more learning efforts to achieve their learning desire. The second factor was related to students' feelings (being happy and excited) of their learning activities, from which they would exert themselves to practice the skills more frequently. Generally, the VMP was regarded as a motivating factor contributing to students' interest in learning, and in a reverse order, students also felt positive in learning the VMP.

In writing skills, many students explained the *motivational value* throughout the six phases mostly related to the ongoing practice they did when they learnt with the VMP. In other words, students found themselves more engaged with the learning activities by various motivated behaviors such as writing down their future plan, imaging their future self and practicing writing to enhance their learning visions. Therefore, the *motivational value* concerning their writing skills was more perceived from their positive reaction towards their learning activities.

Theme 3: Instructional Value
From the data collected in the students' learner diary (18.8%), *instructional value* was another theme revealed in their explanations of how students perceived their skill enhancement. In most cases, *instructional value* refers to

the quality to which the VMP is designed to give useful information or provide knowledge to students. More evidence of the influence of this theme on students' perceptions is shown in the following table.

Table 9. *Students' Extracts Showing the Role of 'Instructional Value'*

Reading Skills	Writing Skills
▪ Bởi vì nó cung cấp cho ta nhiều vốn từ vựng mới, cấu trúc câu mới. [Because it provides us with new vocabulary, new sentence structures]. [S24, P1] ▪ It has a lot of activities about reading skills so I can improve my skills. [S6, P2] ▪ VMP provides reading skills well such as skimming, scanning paragraph, finding key word, … They are good ways; VMP helps me read the texts quickly and better, and I understand the meaning of the article usefully. [S18, P3] ▪ Because they taught me how to read for details, read table, skim for the main idea … [S3, P5] ▪ Because it has very useful reading methods and many exercises to practice. [S17, P6]	▪ Because I can know how to have good writing skills. [S2, P1] ▪ VMP có những bài học tốt giúp kỹ năng viết của em được nâng cao. [VMP includes many good lessons which helps my writing skills be enhanced.] [S11, P2] ▪ Because it helps me learn full paragraph structure. Since then, my paragraph is clear and well better [S10, P3] ▪ It has a lot of activities to improve my writing skills. I can write paragraphs with a lot of topics. [S6, P5] ▪ Because it has some writing exercises and I have to finish them, which helps me practice my writing skills. [S13, P6]

For reading skills, students referred to *instructional value* with a close connection with the usefulness of the VMP in providing them new vocabulary, sentence structures, reading skills and reading-related activities. In general, students perceived the VMP as a useful material so that they could better learn and practice their skills.

Similarly, for writing skills, the *instructional value* was mentioned since the VMP was thought to supply knowledge-based information as regards good lessons or a variety of activities and exercises to back up students' writing skills. As a result of the provision of learning content and activities, the VMP revealed its *instructional value* which, to some extent, influences students' writing skill enhancement.

Theme 4: Practicality
There were few cases reported that the emerged theme of practicality emerged in their learner diary (2.3%) in both reading and writing skills from phases 1-6 of the VMP. However, for these few students, *practicality* was partly a major element leading to their positive perceptions of the skill enhancement in the learning process. In this study, *practicality* refers to the quality to which the VMP designed is effective for their learning (effectiveness). The small number of extracts showing the crucial role of this element is illustrated in Table 10.

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Table 10. *Students' Extracts Showing the Role of Practicality*

Reading Skills	Writing Skills
▪ Because VMP provides much new vocabulary. It gives me a very good way of learning English. [S18, P1] ▪ Nó đã đưa ra các phương pháp học tập thú vị để giúp em học tốt hơn. [It has given some interesting learning methods which help me learn better]. [S11, P3] ▪ VMP activities help me review a lot of vocabulary. It supports my reading skills clearly. [S4, P5]	▪ Hỗ trợ kỹ năng viết. [Support writing skills.] [S8, P1] ▪ Because VMP supports in writing paragraphs. [S12, P2] ▪ Có nhiều phương pháp học tập thú vị. [It has many interesting learning methods]. [S11, P3]

The *practicality* of the VMP was reviewed in students' perceptions of their reading skill enhancement rather than writing skill enhancement although in students' learner diary about these two skills, the effectiveness of the VMP was mentioned. This was explained by the fact that the VMP provided interesting learning methods or relevant activities supporting their skills so that they could learn better and get improved in their learning. *Practicality* was obviously not a high-mentioned theme in students' explanations; however, the presence of it in students' learner diary proves that the effective feature of the VMP was also important for students to enhance their skill competence during their learning process.

Theme 5: Novelty Value
Novelty value, which refers to the quality to which the VMP designed is new and creative to students, was the least-mentioned theme out of the five emerged themes (1%). Very few students mentioned this theme in their learner diary as to their perspectives of why their reading skills were enhanced, which means they related their reading skill enhancement to the *novelty value* of the VMP (without any connections with their writing skills), which is depicted in Table 11.

Table 11. *Students' Extracts Showing the Role of 'Novelty Value'*

Reading Skills
▪ Because there are many interesting exercises and readings on a variety of topic in life. [S10, P1] ▪ Because the VMP helps improve reading skills and learn different topics. [S21, P1] ▪ It gives me new kind of reading, and it is really helpful for me. [S3, P6] ▪ Bài đọc đa dạng, nắm được các kỹ năng đọc, cải thiện vốn từ vựng. [Varied reading texts. Master the reading skills and improve my own vocabulary]. [S28, P6]

The *novelty value* reported in the students' explanations mainly focuses on the variety of the reading topics or new reading types, which was assumed to be interesting and helpful for their learning. The VMP, actually includes self-

related reading topics which were believed to be newly, compared with normal reading texts in other coursebook or materials.

To sum up, based on students' explanations in the learner diary, there was convergence between these findings and those from research objectives 1 and 2. While the data from the pre/post-test shows that students' reading and writing skills were significantly enhanced after learning with the VMP (objectives 1 and 2), the data from the learner diary reports the theme '*learning satisfaction*' was the most influential theme when students' perceptions of their skill enhancement mostly reflected by this significant variable. This means that academic satisfaction was the biggest concern for students, and this became what the VMP brought them throughout the learning process so that they could achieve the desired results.

Discussion
From the results of the study, there are some key findings. Firstly, both students' language skills of reading and writing got improved over the course, indicating students' better academic results after learning with the VMP integrated into the curriculum. These findings appear to be identical with the findings from Kim and Kim's (2014) and Magid's (2011) studies since they all reveal that the more elaboration of the Ideal L2 Self in the learning process leads to students' better English proficiency. Additionally, the findings highlight the positive influence of visual orientation on L2 learning through imagination activities, Ideal L2 Self, and motivated behavior. The results, therefore, contribute to the assertion of the correlation between L2 motivation and L2 learning achievement, by which better accomplishment of students' academic outcomes are a result of the higher degree of learning motivation. Within this regard, the findings generally suggest that visual orientation in learning, which is closely related to imagination and Ideal L2 Self, is probably a strong explanatory power for students' academic outcomes.

Secondly, although students' reading and writing skills got substantially enhanced after the intervention, a higher level of significant improvement was seen in students' writing skills than in reading skills. The study clearly demonstrates a stronger correlation between the VMP lesson plan and students' writing skills. The reasoning for this finding comes from the traditional ELT methods in Vietnam, in which writing skills are not the key language skills in the high schools' classrooms. Accordingly, when first coming to the tertiary education settings, students usually encounter difficulties with writing skills, which can then be improved through the VMP integrated with the course. On the other hand, at high schools, reading skills are regarded as essential skills when students usually have to complete in their

school curriculum. As a result, in this study, most students have no problems with reading skills, resulting in their scores for reading skills remain high after the pre/post-test.

Lastly, the findings emphasize the vital role of academic results – namely *learning satisfaction* and motivation enhancement – namely *motivation value* when students were asked about how they perceived the VMP lesson regarding its effect on their skill enhancement. The findings are consistent with those of Mackay (2019), Magid and Chan (2012), and Sampson (2012) as all of them specify the impact of the motivational enhancement activities on students' motivation enhancement and learning satisfaction. Obviously, the relationship among those factors became apparent in light of students imaging their future self-image.

Conclusion

The present study has asserted the great influence of the theory of Motivational Self System, in general, and the centered role of the Ideal L2 Self, in particular, on learners' motivation enhancement and better academic outcomes. The study adds to educators or practitioners' understanding of using the motivational enhancement activities or VMP lesson plan in helping learners be engaged in their learning activties, thus gaining interest and improving academic results.

The study was, however, limited in several ways. The target skills of reading and writing in this study were accessed without any investigations into speaking and listening skills while these four skills are necessary for L2 learners. Therefore, it is hoped that, in the future, more findings from these two skills will be explored so that more general findings related to Ideal L2 Self and L2 motivation associated with learning achievement can be reached. Also, the study was conducted with only one group of students, thus any comparisons between the control group and experimental group were not made to get more persuasive results. Further research, accordingly, should concentrate on making comparisons between these two groups to better interpret the findings more thoroughly.

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