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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACHIEVEMENT

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ABSTRACT
Students' motivation is widely recognized as an important factor influencing learning behavior, persistence, classroom participation, and academic achievement. In English language learning, motivation may be particularly important because language development requires continuous practice, sustained effort, interaction, and willingness to communicate. The present study investigates the relationship between students' motivation and their achievement in English language learning. The study is based on the assumption that students who possess stronger motivation are more likely to participate actively in English lessons, use effective learning strategies, devote greater time to language practice, and persist when they encounter difficulties. A quantitative research approach was adopted, using a correlational research design. Data were conceptualized as being collected from students through a motivation questionnaire and an English language achievement test. Descriptive statistics were used to determine students' levels of motivation and English achievement, while Pearson correlation and regression analysis were proposed to examine the relationship between the two variables. Previous research generally indicates a positive association between motivation and language achievement, although the strength and direction of the relationship can vary according to the type of motivation, learning context, proficiency level, teaching practices, self-efficacy, learning strategies, and other contextual factors. Recent research has also challenged the idea that motivation simply causes achievement in a one-directional manner, suggesting that achievement may subsequently influence students' motivation. The present study therefore treats motivation as an important but not exclusive factor in English language achievement. The expected findings indicate that students with higher levels of motivation tend to demonstrate better English language performance than students with lower levels of motivation. The study concludes that English teachers and educational institutions should create learning environments that support students' intrinsic interest, meaningful goals, confidence, autonomy, engagement, and sustained participation. Such practices may contribute to improved English language learning outcomes.

KEYWORDS: *student motivation, English language achievement, English as a foreign language, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, learning strategies, self-efficacy, academic achievement, language learning, student engagement.*

INTRODUCTION

English has become one of the most important languages for international communication, education, employment, technology, research, and social interaction. For students learning English as a second or foreign language, achievement in English may influence their academic opportunities and future professional development. However, students do not learn English at the same pace or with the same level of success. Some students participate actively in classroom activities, complete assignments regularly, practice English outside the classroom, and continue working even when language learning becomes difficult. Other students may attend classes but demonstrate limited participation, avoid communication activities, postpone assignments, or lose interest when they experience difficulties Akhtar, S. N., Iqbal, M., & Tatlah, I. A. (2017).. found that These differences suggest that psychological and behavioral factors, particularly motivation, can play an important role in language

learning. Motivation refers broadly to the forces, reasons, goals, and beliefs that initiate and sustain an individual's behavior toward a particular activity. In education, motivated students are generally more willing to invest effort, maintain attention, participate in learning activities, and persist in the face of challenges. In English language learning, these characteristics are especially significant because language proficiency does not normally develop through short-term memorization alone. Students need repeated exposure, practice, feedback, interaction, and opportunities to apply language in meaningful contexts. Motivation can therefore influence not only whether students begin learning English but also whether they continue to invest effort in the learning process. The relationship between motivation and second-language learning has a long history in applied linguistics.

Earlier approaches emphasized concepts such as integrative motivation and attitudes toward the language and its speakers. Later approaches increasingly incorporated psychological perspectives, including self-determination, self-efficacy, goal orientation, learner autonomy, and the learner's possible future identity. Dörnyei's work, for example, contributed substantially to the development of contemporary second-language motivation research, including the L2 Motivational Self System. This perspective considers the learner's vision of an ideal future language-speaking self, perceived obligations, and experiences within the language-learning environment. Motivation is not a single, simple construct. Students can learn English because they enjoy the language, want to communicate with other people, hope to obtain better employment, need English for academic examinations, want good grades, or feel pressure from parents or teachers. These different reasons may produce different patterns of engagement. Lena, M. S., Trisno, E., & Khairat, F. (2022). Explained that Intrinsic motivation generally refers to engaging in learning because the activity itself is interesting or satisfying, whereas extrinsic motivation involves learning for separable outcomes such as grades, employment, recognition, or avoidance of punishment. Both forms of motivation may influence students' behavior, although their effects may depend on the educational context and the degree to which external goals are personally valued. Self-Determination. Theory has also provided an influential framework for understanding motivation. From this perspective, students' motivation can be affected by the extent to which their learning environment supports autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

When students feel that they have some control over their learning, believe that they can successfully complete learning tasks, and experience supportive relationships with teachers and peers, they may develop stronger and more sustained forms of motivation. Consequently, classroom practices can influence motivation rather than motivation being viewed entirely as a fixed personal characteristic. Research on English language learning provides evidence for a relationship between motivation and achievement. A recent study of undergraduate non-English majors found that learning motivation, self-efficacy, and learning strategies positively predicted English achievement, while self-efficacy and learning strategies mediated the relationship between motivation and achievementERIC similarly, research on online EFL classes reported a moderate positive correlation between motivation and academic achievement and found motivation to be a significant predictor of students' grades. ERIC Research involving secondary students has also reported significant positive relationships between English achievement and motivational beliefs such as self-efficacy and intrinsic value, as well as learning strategies and attitudes toward English. ERIC Nevertheless, the relationship should not be understood as completely automatic or

universally positive. Research has produced differing results depending on the context and measurement of motivation. For example, one university-level study found no positive effect of motivation and interest on English learning outcomes, illustrating that motivational relationships can vary across populations and educational settings ERIC In addition, research involving more than 1,700 adolescent English learners identified different motivation-proficiency profiles rather than assuming one uniform relationship between motivation and language proficiency.

The researchers concluded that although motivation and proficiency are connected, the relationship is not necessarily straightforward Cambridge University Press. Another important issue is the direction of the relationship. Traditional research often asks whether motivation predicts achievement. However, successful achievement may also increase students' confidence and motivation. A longitudinal study of language learners found evidence that autonomous motivation at an earlier point could influence later achievement, while achievement at a subsequent point could influence later autonomous motivation. This suggests a potentially reciprocal and dynamic relationship rather than a simple one-way causal relationship. MacIntyre, P. D., Gregersen, T., & Clément, R. (2016). Explains that Teachers therefore need to understand motivation not merely as a personal characteristic that students either possess or lack. Classroom experiences, instructional strategies, feedback, learning materials, teacher support, peer relationships, assessment practices, and opportunities for meaningful communication may all influence students' motivation. Research on teacher motivational interventions has found that increasing learner motivation can contribute to higher achievement, providing evidence for the potential importance of classroom-based motivational support. ERIC The present study focuses specifically on the relationship between students' motivation and English language achievement. The topic is significant because understanding this relationship may help teachers, curriculum developers, school administrators, and students identify factors that contribute to successful English learning.

If a meaningful positive relationship exists, educational institutions may benefit from developing strategies that encourage student interest, autonomy, confidence, persistence, and active participation. The study also recognizes that motivation alone cannot explain all differences in English achievement. Students differ in prior knowledge, language aptitude, socioeconomic circumstances, access to learning resources, teaching quality, exposure to English, learning strategies, anxiety, and opportunities to use English outside the classroom. Therefore, motivation should be regarded as one important component within a larger system of factors affecting language achievement. This research is consequently designed to examine whether students who report higher levels of motivation also demonstrate higher levels of English language achievement. By examining the relationship between the two variables, the study aims to contribute to the broader understanding of motivational factors in English language education and provide practical implications for improving students' learning experiences.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study has the following three objectives:

1. To determine the level of students' motivation toward learning the English language.

2. To determine the level of students' English language achievement.
3. To examine the relationship between students' motivation and their English language achievement.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the level of students' motivation toward learning the English language?
2. What is the level of students' English language achievement?
3. What is the relationship between students' motivation and their English language achievement?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Motivation is one of the central concepts in educational psychology because it explains why learners initiate activities, how much effort they invest, how long they persist, and how they respond to challenges. In language education, motivation is particularly significant because learning a language requires continuous engagement over an extended period. A student may have access to high-quality teaching materials and instruction but fail to make substantial progress if the student is unwilling to participate actively in the learning process. Second-language motivation research has developed considerably over the past several decades. Early work was strongly associated with Gardner's socio-educational perspective, which emphasized attitudes, orientations, and the learner's relationship with the target-language community. Alamer, A., & Al Fraidan, A. (2025). revealed that Later research expanded beyond this social-psychological perspective and incorporated cognitive, educational, and situated approaches. Dörnyei highlighted the importance of classroom context, learner goals, self-related beliefs, and motivational strategies. The field subsequently became increasingly concerned with how motivation changes over time and how learners' experiences influence their willingness to continue learning. Cambridge University Press+1 Motivation can influence several aspects of learning behavior. A motivated student is more likely to attend classes, complete homework, review vocabulary, practice speaking, read English texts, seek feedback, and use additional learning resources. Such behaviors provide greater opportunities for language development. In contrast, low motivation may be associated with reduced effort, avoidance of challenging tasks, limited participation, and weaker persistence. Consequently, motivation may influence achievement indirectly through learning behavior.

Intrinsic motivation occurs when students engage in learning because they find the activity interesting, enjoyable, satisfying, or personally meaningful. An intrinsically motivated student may study English because they enjoy reading English literature, watching English-language content, communicating with other speakers, or discovering how the language works. Such motivation can encourage students to continue learning even when there is no immediate external reward. Extrinsic motivation, by contrast, involves external outcomes or pressures. Students may study English to obtain high examination scores, secure university admission, obtain employment, receive parental approval, or avoid negative consequences. Extrinsic motivation should not automatically be considered negative. External goals can provide students with an important reason to invest effort, particularly when the goals are personally meaningful. Dörnyei, Z. (2002). Elaborated on Self-Determination Theory

distinguishes different forms of extrinsic motivation according to the degree to which external reasons become personally accepted. Thus, the important question is not simply whether motivation is intrinsic or extrinsic, but also the quality and internalization of the motivation. Students who perceive English as personally valuable may demonstrate strong persistence even when their original reason for learning was externally motivated.

A substantial body of research indicates that motivation can be associated with language achievement. For example, a study involving university students in an online EFL environment found a moderate positive correlation between motivation and academic achievement and reported that motivation significantly predicted students' grades ERIC Such evidence supports the argument that students who are more motivated may be more likely to demonstrate successful academic performance. Similarly, research on English achievement among secondary students found relationships between achievement and several motivational variables, including self-efficacy, intrinsic value, self-regulation, cognitive strategies, and attitudes toward English. The researchers reported that motivational beliefs and learning strategies together explained a substantial proportion of variation in English academic achievement. More recent research has emphasized the interaction between motivation and other learner characteristics. A 2025 study of undergraduate non-English majors found that learning motivation, self-efficacy, and learning strategies all positively predicted English achievement. Ma, R., Luo, Z., Zhang, Y., Zhan, L., Jia, T., Cheng, P., ... & Sun, H. (2025). found that The study also found that self-efficacy and learning strategies mediated the relationship between motivation and achievement, suggesting that motivation may contribute to achievement partly because motivated learners develop stronger confidence and use more effective learning strategies This finding is important because it indicates that motivation may not directly produce higher achievement in every situation. Instead, motivation may encourage behaviors and psychological processes that support learning. For example, a motivated student may spend more time studying, select appropriate strategies, participate in communicative activities, and seek clarification when confused. These behaviors can subsequently improve language knowledge and performance. Self-efficacy refers to students' beliefs about their ability to perform particular tasks successfully. In English learning, self-efficacy may involve beliefs such as "I can understand English texts," "I can communicate in English," or "I can successfully complete an English examination." Students with strong self-efficacy may be more willing to attempt challenging tasks because they expect that effort can lead to success.

Motivation and self-efficacy can therefore reinforce each other. A motivated learner may practice more frequently, leading to improved performance. Improved performance can increase confidence, which can subsequently strengthen motivation. This reciprocal process provides one possible explanation for why the relationship between motivation and achievement may change over time. Recent research supports the importance of this relationship. The study of undergraduate English learners mentioned above found self-efficacy to be a mediator between motivation and English achievementERIC This means that motivation may contribute to achievement partly through its relationship with students' beliefs about their own capabilities. Learning strategies refer to the methods students use to understand, remember, practice, and apply new knowledge. In English learning, strategies may include vocabulary review, note-taking, summarizing, repeated reading, practicing speaking, using contextual clues, self-testing, planning study time, and monitoring one's

progress. can encourage students to use learning strategies more consistently. A student who has clear goals and strong motivation may be more likely to plan study activities and monitor progress. Conversely, a student with low motivation may know effective strategies but fail to use them regularly. The relationship between motivation, learning strategies, and achievement is therefore potentially interconnected. Recent evidence indicates that learning strategies can mediate the relationship between motivation and English achievementERIC This suggests that improving motivation without helping students develop appropriate learning strategies may not be sufficient to maximize achievement.

One influential contemporary perspective is Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System. This model emphasizes the learner's vision of a future self who is capable of using the second language. The ideal L2 self refers to the learner's desired future identity as an English user, while the ought-to L2 self-concerns characteristics that the learner believes they should possess because of duties, expectations, or social responsibilities. A further dimension involves the learner's experiences in the immediate language-learning environment Cambridge University Press The model is useful because it connects motivation with students' personal identities and future goals. A student who imagines becoming a successful professional who communicates confidently in English may have a powerful reason to study the language. Shurovi, M., Yahaya, M. F., Hajimia, H., & Hasan, M. K. (2024). Explained that The stronger and more realistic the connection between the student's present behavior and desired future identity, the more likely the student may be to maintain effort. Research on L2 motivation has increasingly moved toward complex models rather than treating motivation as a single score. Contemporary research recognizes that students can possess different motivational profiles and that the relationship between motivation and proficiency may differ across learners. A large-scale study of adolescent English learners, for example, identified five different motivation-proficiency profiles, demonstrating that students with similar proficiency levels may have different motivational characteristics Cambridge University Press Teachers play an important role in shaping students' motivational experiences. A supportive teacher can create opportunities for students to make choices, experience success, communicate meaningfully, receive constructive feedback, and develop confidence. Conversely, excessive control, humiliation, monotonous instruction, or repeated experiences of failure may weaken motivation.

The classroom environment is especially important in English language learning because language use can involve anxiety and vulnerability. Students may feel uncomfortable making pronunciation or grammatical mistakes in front of classmates. Teachers who create a supportive environment can reduce fear of failure and encourage students to participate. Research on motivational interventions provides evidence that teachers can actively influence motivation. One intervention study found that motivational support in the EFL classroom increased learner motivation and was associated with higher achievement in the experimental group ERIC This suggests that motivation should be considered partly responsive to instructional practices rather than simply an individual characteristic. Although motivation is frequently associated with achievement, research indicates that the relationship is complex. A large study of adolescent English learners found that motivation and proficiency were connected but did not form one simple relationship across all students Cambridge University Press Different learners may possess different combinations of motivation and proficiency because language achievement is influenced by many variables. For example, a highly

motivated student may have limited access to English outside school. Another student may achieve high scores because of extensive exposure to English at home despite reporting relatively low classroom motivation. Similarly, students may possess strong motivation but ineffective learning strategies. These examples demonstrate why motivation should not be treated as the sole explanation for English achievement. Contemporary research increasingly views motivation as dynamic. Students' motivation can change according to their experiences, success, failure, relationships, goals, and perceptions of progress. A student who performs poorly on an examination may become discouraged and reduce effort. Conversely, a student who experiences success may become more confident and motivated.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a quantitative research approach. A quantitative approach is appropriate because the purpose of the study is to measure students' motivation numerically and examine its relationship with measurable English language achievement. The quantitative approach allows the researcher to collect standardized data from a group of students and analyze the data using statistical procedures. In this study, students' motivation is measured through a structured questionnaire, while English achievement is measured through an English language achievement test or students' standardized English examination scores. The approach is appropriate for the research questions because the study seeks to determine the level of motivation, determine the level of achievement, and establish whether a statistical relationship exists between the two variables. The study follows a quantitative research approach because the main purpose is to examine the relationship between motivation and English language achievement using numerical data. Quantitative research enables the researcher to collect standardized information from a relatively large number of students and analyze the information through statistical procedures. In this study, students' motivation is measured through a Liker-scale questionnaire, while English language achievement is measured through an achievement test or officially recorded English examination scores. The numerical scores obtained from both instruments are compared and statistically analyzed.

RESEARCH DESIGN

A correlational research design is proposed for the study. Correlational research is appropriate when the researcher wishes to investigate whether two or more variables are statistically associated without manipulating the variables. Motivation functions as the predictor/independent variable, whereas English achievement functions as the outcome/dependent variable. However, this arrow should not be interpreted as proof of causation. A correlational study can identify whether variables are related but cannot establish conclusively that motivation causes achievement. This distinction is particularly important because longitudinal research suggests that achievement may also subsequently influence motivation. For an actual implementation, the population should consist of students enrolled in English language courses at the selected educational institution. A suitable sample could be selected using simple random sampling, stratified sampling, or convenience sampling depending on institutional access. For example, the proposed study could involve 200 students enrolled in secondary or undergraduate English courses. Participants should represent the relevant student population and should be informed about the purpose of the study before data collection. If the study is conducted in a particular school, college,

university, city, or country, those details should be inserted into this section. The sample size should also be changed to the actual number of participants. Two principal instruments are proposed.

The first instrument is a structured questionnaire designed to measure students' motivation toward learning English. Items may be presented using a five-point Liker scale. A higher overall score would indicate a higher level of motivation. The second instrument is an English language achievement measure. The researcher could use a standardized English test or an achievement test developed according to the course curriculum. The assessment may measure reading, writing, listening, grammar, vocabulary, and speaking, depending on the educational context. Achievement scores should be converted into a consistent numerical scale so that they can be compared with motivation scores. Content validity should be established by asking English language teaching and educational research experts to review the questionnaire and achievement test. Experts can evaluate whether the instruments appropriately represent the concepts being measured.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data would be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. First, descriptive statistics would be calculated to determine the overall levels of motivation and English achievement. These statistics would include frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. For example, motivation scores could be categorized into low, moderate, and high levels according to predetermined cut-off points. English achievement could similarly be categorized according to the grading system used by the institution. Second, Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) would be used to examine the relationship between motivation and English achievement. Pearson's correlation is appropriate when both variables are measured numerically and the relevant statistical assumptions are reasonably satisfied. The correlation coefficient ranges from -1 to +1. A positive value would indicate that higher motivation tends to be associated with higher English achievement. A negative value would indicate an inverse relationship, while a value close to zero would indicate little linear association. The following interpretation could be used. Third, simple linear regression could be used to determine whether motivation significantly predicts English achievement. Regression analysis would provide additional information about the extent to which variation in English achievement can statistically be associated with students' motivation .The statistical significance level could be set at $\mathbf{p < .05}$. Before inferential analysis, assumptions such as linearity, normality, independence, and the absence of extreme outliers should be assessed. If assumptions are seriously violated, an alternative such as Spearman's rank-order correlation may be more appropriate.

FINDINGS

The illustrative analysis indicates that students demonstrate a moderate-to-high overall level of motivation toward learning English. Students generally report that English is important for their academic and professional futures. Many students also indicate that they are willing to invest effort in English learning and recognize the importance of improving their communication skills. The pattern suggests that both intrinsic and extrinsic reasons contribute to students' motivation. Some students report enjoying English and being interested in

improving their communication abilities, while others emphasize external benefits such as examinations, university education, employment, and career development. The findings indicate that motivation is not represented by a single reason. Rather, students may possess multiple reasons for learning English simultaneously. The illustrative achievement results show that students demonstrate varying levels of English language performance. Some students achieve high scores, while others demonstrate moderate or relatively low achievement. This variation is consistent with the idea that English achievement is influenced by several factors, including prior exposure to English, learning strategies, classroom participation, self-efficacy, teacher support, access to English resources, and motivation. This hypothetical result would mean that students with higher motivation tend to obtain higher English achievement scores. However, the correlation should not be interpreted as evidence that motivation is the only or direct cause of achievement. A hypothetical regression analysis could also indicate that motivation significantly predicts English achievement The remaining variation could be related to other factors such as self-efficacy, learning strategies, prior proficiency, teaching quality, language exposure, socioeconomic circumstances, and individual differences.

These illustrative findings are broadly consistent with studies reporting positive relationships between motivation and English achievement. Research on online EFL learners, for example, reported a moderate positive correlation and found motivation to be a significant predictor of grades ERIC Research on undergraduate English learners has likewise found positive relationships involving motivation, self-efficacy, learning strategies, and achievement At the same time, the findings should be interpreted cautiously because previous research has not always found positive effects. One university-level study, for example, reported no positive effect of motivation and interest on English learning outcomes. ERIC Therefore, motivational effects may depend on the nature of motivation, the learning environment, instructional methods, student characteristics, and the way achievement is measured.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between students' motivation and English language achievement. The study was based on the recognition that successful English language learning requires sustained effort, persistence, participation, and practice, all of which may be influenced by students' motivational characteristics. The literature indicates that motivation is an important factor in second-language learning. Students may be motivated by enjoyment and personal interest, future career goals, academic requirements, social communication, examination success, or other internal and external reasons. Contemporary research also demonstrates that motivation is multidimensional and dynamic rather than a fixed characteristic. The proposed findings indicate a positive relationship between students' motivation and English language achievement. Students with higher motivation tend to demonstrate stronger English performance. This finding is consistent with several studies reporting positive associations between motivation, English achievement, self-efficacy, and learning strategies. Nevertheless, motivation should not be considered the only determinant of achievement. English language performance is influenced by numerous factors, including teaching quality, learning strategies, self-efficacy, previous language experience, exposure to English, classroom environment, resources, and individual differences. Furthermore, achievement may itself influence subsequent motivation, meaning

that the relationship can be reciprocal and dynamic. The study has several practical implications. English teachers should develop classroom environments that promote students' interest, autonomy, confidence, and sense of progress. Teachers can provide meaningful communicative activities, connect English learning with students' personal and professional goals, give constructive feedback, and encourage students to use effective learning strategies. Educational institutions should also provide students with sufficient opportunities to practice English inside and outside the classroom. Students can benefit from establishing realistic language-learning goals, monitoring their progress, practicing English regularly, and developing effective learning strategies. Rather than viewing mistakes as evidence of failure, learners should be encouraged to view them as a normal component of language development. Future researchers should investigate the relationship between motivation and English achievement using longitudinal and mixed-method approaches

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