

The Relationship Between English Learning Motivation and Academic Achievement

Karem Ali Haidarah Qasem Alsayagh¹ and Prof. Sunil Raosaheb Raut²

¹Abyan University, Yemen

²Professor, Baburaoji Adaskar Mahavidyalaya, Kaij, Tq. Kaij, Dist. Beed

Department of English, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad

Abstract: Motivation is a key psychological factor affecting L2 learning and success. This study focuses on the relationship between English learning motivation and English students' academic achievement in English as foreign language (EFL) and English as second language (ESL) settings. Motivation is viewed as a multidimensional construct that involves intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience. The quantitative correlational research design is suggested, with the instrument of the structured English Learning Motivation Questionnaire and the students' English examination scores or academic records which are obtained from the students' standardized examination. A descriptive statistics, a Pearson's correlation and a multiple regression analysis will be conducted to analyse the data. The study assumes that there is a positive correlation between English learning motivation and academic achievement, but the strength of the correlation is different in terms of learning motivation dimensions. The results can assist teachers and schools to enhance the motivation of learners by identifying meaningful activities, constructive feedback, goal setting and authentic use of English language in teaching and learning.

Keywords: English learning motivation, academic achievement, EFL, ESL, L2 motivation, language learning

I. INTRODUCTION

English is now one of the primary languages used in international communication, higher education, science and technology, commerce, tourism and digital interaction. Therefore, second language acquisition of English, which is taught as a second language (ESL) or foreign language (EFL), is an important objective of education in countries where English is taught. Although the students' classroom learning is the same, there are significant differences between them in their English proficiency and academic performance. These differences could be due to differences in cognition, social, environmental, institutional and psychological factors.

Psychological factors are important in second-language learning with motivation being one of them. It affects students' eagerness to learn English, effort put into learning, perseverance in case of failure, involvement in classroom activity, and practice outside the class. English learning also involves lifelong practice of listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary and grammar skills, so the sustained motivation can have a significant role in the achievement of English learning.

In recent studies, English learning motivation is regarded as a multi-dimensional concept. Students can be learning English for a variety of reasons: for personal interest, for academic needs, for job-related reasons, for social reasons, or to become competent future English users. These motives are very often manifested in intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and the factors of L2 Motivational Self System. Thus, the present study investigates the relationship between English learning motivation and academic achievement and how the various dimensions of learning motivation may be related to students' performance in English.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The principal objective of the study is to examine the relationship between English learning motivation and academic achievement.

The specific objectives are:

1. To determine the level of English learning motivation among students.
2. To assess the academic achievement of students in English.
3. To examine the relationship between overall English learning motivation and academic achievement.
4. To investigate the relationship between intrinsic motivation and academic achievement.
5. To examine the relationship between extrinsic motivation and academic achievement.

III. RECENT LITERATURE REVIEW

Aung and Nikolov (2025)¹ have conducted a systematic review of 46 research articles dealing with tertiary learners' English-learning motivation from 2014 to 2024. Based on the review, the two most prominent frameworks were Self-Determination Theory, and the L2 Motivational Self System. It highlighted intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, future L2 selves, and contextual learning experiences as key elements that impact English learning and attainment.

Alamer, Saeedy Robat, Elahi Shirvan and Ryan (2025)² performed a multilevel meta-analysis on the Sdt in language learning. Their results showed that there are different relationships between different types of motivation and learners' language learning achievement. The study revealed autonomous motivation, defined by interest and personally-important goals, as being important, and led to the separation of the dimensions of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in achievement research.

Wu (2024)³ studied 335 EFL learners in China and looked into their motivational factors. The results revealed that motivated behaviour was significantly predicted by the findings of the ideal L2 self, emotional dimension of L2 learning experience, and foreign-language enjoyment. The present study emphasizes the need to consider the future language identity of learners, as well as positive classroom experiences, when studying English-learning motivation.

The author of this study, **Loan (2023)⁴**, investigated the correlation between the L2 Motivational Self System with achievement of Vietnamese EFL learners. The motivational dimensions were also consistently associated with intended learning effort but not to actual achievement. The results prove that motivation cannot always be correlated to examination achievement, and provide evidence for the application of objective achievement measures in motivation research.

The authors of this study, **Yousefi and Mahmoodi (2022)⁵**, performed a meta-analysis on 17 studies with a sample of 18,832 language learners. They discovered a strong correlation between L2 motivation and language-learning outcomes. The nature of this relationship varied, however, depending on the age, educational level, learning context, geographical location, and outcome measures used in the research, showing the need for the context-dependent motivational study.

¹Aung, M. M., & Nikolov, M. (2025). Tertiary students' English language learning motivation: A systematic review. *Acta Psychologica*, 261, 105854. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2025.105854>

²Alamer, A., Saeedy Robat, E., Elahi Shirvan, M., & Ryan, R. (2025). Self-determination theory and language learning: A multilevel meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*, 37, Article 59.

³Wu, L. (2024). L2 motivational self system, foreign language enjoyment as predictors of motivated behavior. *Acta Psychologica*, 251, 104585. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2024.104585>

⁴Loan, T. T. T. (2023). The L2 Motivational Self System and L2 achievement: A study of DNTU's students. *International Journal of English Language Studies*, 5(2), 103–107. <https://doi.org/10.32996/ijels.2023.5.2.10>

⁵Yousefi, M., & Mahmoodi, M. H. (2022). The L2 motivational self-system: A meta-analysis approach. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 32(2), 274–294. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijal.12416>

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design

It is recommended to use quantitative, descriptive and correlational research design. The levels of the students' motivation and academic achievement will be determined by the descriptive component while whether there are statistically significant relationships between motivational variables and achievement will be determined by the correlational component.

The study is not experimental because the researcher cannot manipulate students' motivation, nor can he randomly assign students to treatment conditions.

4.2 Population

The target population should be students who are taking English language courses in the chosen educational institution/institutions. The subjects of study could be secondary-school, senior-secondary, undergraduate or postgraduate students depending on the type of research conducted.⁶

4.3 Sample and Sampling

A complete sampling frame may be used and an appropriate probability sampling procedure (e.g. stratified random sampling) can be taken. Stratification should provide adequate representation by grade, programme, gender, institution or other academically meaningful category.

Ideally, the number of participants (N) should be determined in an a priori manner through a power analysis. The number of participants (N) should be determined a priori based on a power analysis, ideally.

4.4 Research Instrument

The questionnaire can be split for two parts:

Section A is Demographic Information

This section may collect:

- Age
- Gender
- Grade/year of study
- Medium of instruction
- Years of English study
- Previous English achievement
- Exposure to English outside the classroom⁷

Section B: English Learning Motivation Scale

Items may measure:

- Intrinsic motivation
- Extrinsic motivation
- Ideal L2 self
- Ought-to L2 self
- L2 learning experience

Responses may be recorded on a five-point Likert scale:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Agree

⁶Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (2021). *Teaching and researching motivation* (3rd ed.). Routledge.

⁷ Lee, J. (2019). Second language (L2) motivational self-system and L2 achievement: A study of Korean high school learners. *Modern English Education*, 20(3), 26–35. <https://doi.org/10.18095/meeso.2019.20.3.26>

5 = Strongly Agree⁸

4.5 Academic Achievement Measure

Academic achievement should be obtained from an objective and standardized source wherever possible.

Appropriate measures include:

- final English examination marks;
- standardized English-language test scores;
- semester English grades; or
- institutionally administered English achievement tests.

Using official academic records requires participant consent and appropriate institutional authorization.⁹

4.6 Validity

The content validity should be determined by the experts. The English language education experts, educational psychology specialists and research methodology specialists can be used to determine if all the items in each questionnaire cover all the constructs.

If an adapted scale is used in a different cultural or linguistic context, examine Construct Validity also. Depending on the instrument, the sample size and the nature of the research, exploratory factor analysis or confirmatory factor analysis might be used.¹⁰

4.7 Reliability

Cronbach's alpha and McDonald's omega can be employed for internal consistency. Estimates of reliability should be made for each motivational subscale and not based on one overall coefficient for a full questionnaire.¹¹

4.8 Data Collection Procedure

Permission should be obtained from institutions in the first place. The participants need to be informed what the study is about, that they can participate in the study, that their information will be treated confidentially, that the study will last for a certain period of time, and that they can withdraw from the study.

With informed consent, questionnaires may be completed by electronic or paper means. Academic achievement scores should then be matched by using participant codes which are not their names.¹²

4.9 Statistical Analysis

SPSS, R, Jamovi, or similar statistical software can be used for data analysis.

Descriptive data will be presented as frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations.

Pearson's product-moment correlation can be used to analyse bivariate relationships if the assumptions are fulfilled. Then with multiple linear regression, the unique contribution of each motivational dimension on academic achievement can be estimated.

⁸Moskovsky, C., Assulaimani, T., Racheva, S., & Harkins, J. (2016). The L2 motivational self system and L2 achievement: A study of Saudi EFL learners. *The Modern Language Journal*, 100(3), 641–654.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12340>

⁹Shurovi, M., Yahaya, M. F., Hajimia, H., & Hasan, M. K. (2024). Five decades of achievement motivation research in ELT: A systematic literature review. *Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction*, 21(1), 285–318.
<https://doi.org/10.32890/mjli2024.21.1.10>

¹⁰Subekti, A. S. (2018). L2 motivational self system and L2 achievement: A study of Indonesian EAP learners. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 8(1).

¹¹Yang, Y., Li, W., Hu, Y., & Yang, H. (2026). The "pressure trap": A mixed-methods study of the L2 motivational self system and academic achievement in a Chinese border region. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/ijal.70312>

¹²Zhang, Y., Mohd Saad, M. R. B., & Zhang, H. (2026). The impact of the production-oriented approach on L2 Motivational Self System and academic achievement among Chinese English majors. *Language Teaching Research*.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688251414688>

The model of regression can be given as:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \varepsilon$$

Where:

Y = Academic Achievement

X₁ = Intrinsic Motivation

X₂ = Extrinsic Motivation

X₃ = Ideal L2 Self

X₄ = Ought-to L2 Self

X₅ = L2 Learning Experience

β₀ = Intercept

β₁-β₅ = Regression coefficients

ε = Error term

A p-value of < .05 can be considered statistically significant, with effect size and confidence intervals.

Result

Table 4.1: Proposed Distribution of English Learning Motivation Questionnaire Items

Motivational Dimension	Number of Items	Percentage (%)
Intrinsic Motivation	6	20.0
Extrinsic Motivation	6	20.0
Ideal L2 Self	6	20.0
Ought-to L2 Self	6	20.0
L2 Learning Experience	6	20.0
Total	30	100.0

Interpretation

The proposed distribution of items from the English Learning Motivation Questionnaire is shown in the table 4.1. It has 30 items distributed equally among the five motivational dimensions, which are intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience. 6 items are included in each dimension, which compose 20% of the whole questionnaire. This balance in distribution provides equal sampling of each motivational construct in the measurement instrument. It also allows for a systematic comparison of different aspects of English learning motivation. The proposed structure is likely to yield a thorough motivational orientations profile of students, and then will be correlated with and regressed against academic achievement.¹³

¹³ Ye, X., & Hu, G. (2026). Effects of motivational interventions on EFL learners' learning effort and achievement: An L2 motivational self system perspective. *TESOL Quarterly*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.70178>

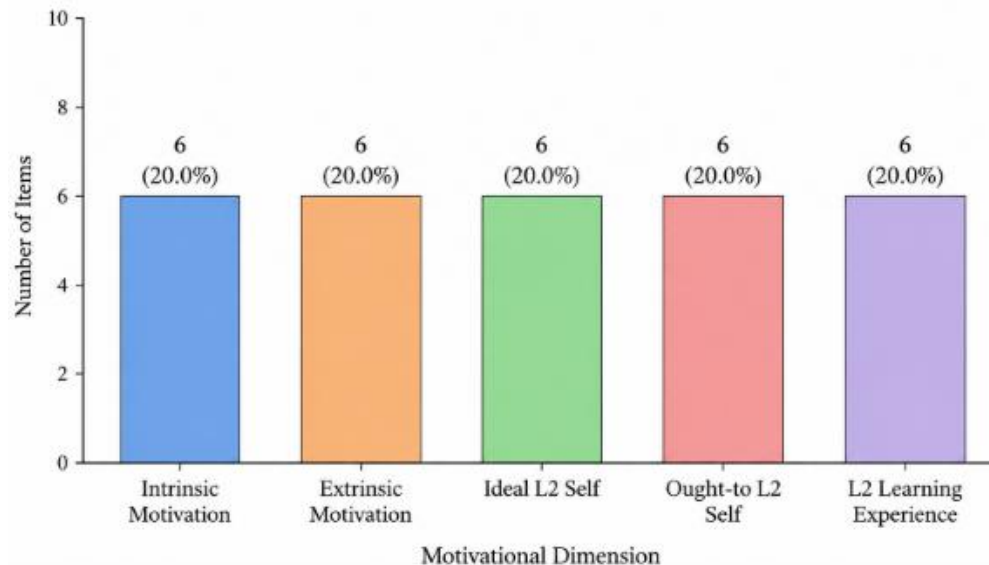


Figure 4.1: Proposed Distribution of English Learning Motivation Questionnaire Items

V. EXPECTED FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Given the literature reviewed, there is a reasonable assumption that overall, there is a positive correlation between motivation to learn English and academic achievement. When students have higher motivation, they tend to invest more in learning, practise English more often, and to be more active in learning activities, and to persist in learning even if they encounter linguistic difficulties.

But the strength of the relationships between the various motivational dimensions and achievement can be different.

There may be a positive relationship between intrinsic motivation and this as students who like the language learning process are more willing to do so voluntarily. It is the ideal L2 self that can also promote achievement, by offering a student a meaningful future goal.

The L2 learning experience can become significant since students are able to interact with their teachers, peers, instructional activities, assessments, and classroom environment. Positive learning experiences can help to consolidate learners' experiences of competence and motivate further engagement.

Extrinsic motivation can also be a factor in achieving success, particularly when achievement and success in exams is linked to further education, higher education or scholarship and employment. However, tightly controlled external pressures may not lead to lasting engagement.

The ought-to L2 self needs special consideration. There is recent evidence that its link with achievement can vary significantly across contexts. For instance, positive predictive relationships were identified between ideal L2 self and L2 learning experience, but between ought-to L2 self and academic performance, it was only a modest negative relationship that was identified in the specific population in the above study.

Thus, the results of the study proposed should be understood in a context of the study, and not in the context of the superiority of one motivational profile.

VI. CONCLUSION

The motivation of learning English is one of the important and complicated factors in the success of language education. Students have their own sets of learning goals, motivations, interests/expectations, pressures, and classroom experiences that may affect their intentions to put in long term effort for learning English.

The present study aims to be a quantitative investigation on the relationship between English learning motivation and academic achievement in terms of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self and L2 learning experience. The framework acknowledges that there may be different forms of motivation that exhibit different relations with observable achievement.

The study is hoped to provide the insights that will help the implementation of English language teaching to find out the motivational dimensions which are related to students' performance well. These evidences can help educators create learning spaces where students are motivated towards setting meaningful goals, establishing positive future language identities, actively participating in learning, being independent, confident, and engaged for longer periods.

Finally, motivation should not be seen as something that is fixed in every student that is present or absent. It is shaped by the objectives and learning experiences of students, their relationships, their expectations, the learning context, and their notion of learning progress. Hence, approaches to education that can reinforce these may help not only to increase motivation but to enhance English-language outcomes.

REFERENCES

1. Dörnyei, Z., & Ushioda, E. (2021). *Teaching and researching motivation* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
2. Lee, J. (2019). Second language (L2) motivational self-system and L2 achievement: A study of Korean high school learners. *Modern English Education*, 20(3), 26–35. <https://doi.org/10.18095/meeso.2019.20.3.26>
3. Moskovsky, C., Assulaimani, T., Racheva, S., & Harkins, J. (2016). The L2 motivational self system and L2 achievement: A study of Saudi EFL learners. *The Modern Language Journal*, 100(3), 641–654. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12340>
4. Shurovi, M., Yahaya, M. F., Hajimia, H., & Hasan, M. K. (2024). Five decades of achievement motivation research in ELT: A systematic literature review. *Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction*, 21(1), 285–318. <https://doi.org/10.32890/mjli2024.21.1.10>
5. Subekti, A. S. (2018). L2 motivational self system and L2 achievement: A study of Indonesian EAP learners. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 8(1).
6. Yang, Y., Li, W., Hu, Y., & Yang, H. (2026). The "pressure trap": A mixed-methods study of the L2 motivational self system and academic achievement in a Chinese border region. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijal.70312>
7. Ye, X., & Hu, G. (2026). Effects of motivational interventions on EFL learners' learning effort and achievement: An L2 motivational self system perspective. *TESOL Quarterly*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.70178>
8. Yousefi, M., & Mahmoodi, M. H. (2022). The L2 motivational self-system: A meta-analysis approach. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 32(2), 274–294. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijal.12416>
9. Zhang, Y., Mohd Saad, M. R. B., & Zhang, H. (2026). The impact of the production-oriented approach on L2 Motivational Self System and academic achievement among Chinese English majors. *Language Teaching Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688251414688>
10. Alamer, A., Saeedy Robat, E., Elahi Shirvan, M., & Ryan, R. (2025). Self-determination theory and language learning: A multilevel meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*, 37, Article 59.
11. Aung, M. M., & Nikolov, M. (2025). Tertiary students' English language learning motivation: A systematic review. *Acta Psychologica*, 261, 105854. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2025.105854>
12. Loan, T. T. T. (2023). The L2 Motivational Self System and L2 achievement: A study of DNTU's students. *International Journal of English Language Studies*, 5(2), 103–107. <https://doi.org/10.32996/ijels.2023.5.2.10>
13. Wu, L. (2024). L2 motivational self system, foreign language enjoyment as predictors of motivated behavior. *Acta Psychologica*, 251, 104585. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2024.104585>