

MOTIVATION IN LEARNING ENGLISH AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract: Although learning a foreign language can be difficult, it continues to be a key focus for university students around the world. This study aims to examine how students' motivation influences their English learning outcomes. A quantitative comparative survey was conducted among 15 second-year university students. Participants were divided into high- and low-motivation groups based on their median motivation score. The findings revealed that highly motivated students demonstrated greater engagement in learning behaviors, including independent study, use of additional resources, and classroom participation. They also reported higher levels of perceived achievement in English. In contrast, less motivated students showed lower engagement and weaker self-assessed progress. The results suggest that motivation plays a significant role in shaping students' learning behavior and perceived success in English language learning.

Keywords: *english language learning, motivation, university students, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation*

Introduction.

Despite the difficulties involved, foreign language learning attracts considerable interest among university students worldwide. This leads to the question of what motivates them to learn languages, particularly English, which is widely considered the primary international language for communication. Previous studies have already examined motivation in English learning; however, this research work is aimed at comparing the learning behavior and success in English between highly motivated and less motivated university students. The study will be conducted by classifying students according to their level of motivation and comparing their learning behavior and perceived English achievements.

Literature Review.

Motivation is widely recognized as a critical factor in learning English, particularly in contexts where exposure to the language outside the classroom is limited. Students with higher motivation are more likely to invest effort, persist through difficulties, and achieve better outcomes (Riyanti, 2019).

A key distinction in motivation research is between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation arises from personal interest or enjoyment in learning, while extrinsic motivation is influenced by external factors such as rewards, academic requirements, or social expectations (Thohir, 2017). Although intrinsic motivation is often considered more sustainable, empirical evidence shows that extrinsic factors can have a stronger impact on students' engagement. For instance, Pranawengtias (2022) found that rewards, punishments, and lecturer quality were the main drivers of university students' motivation in English learning, exceeding the influence of personal goals. Social and environmental factors also play an important role. Parental support, teacher behavior, and classroom conditions significantly affect learners' motivation. Students reported higher motivation when parents encouraged them and emphasized the importance of English (Ekiz & Kulmetov, 2016). Teacher strategies

such as providing clear explanations, giving positive feedback, and maintaining a supportive classroom atmosphere were linked to increased student motivation (Ekiz & Kulmetov, 2016). Conversely, aggressive teacher behavior, constant error correction, and poor learning environments negatively affected students’ engagement (Thohir, 2017).

Moreover, motivation is not static and can be nurtured through intentional strategies. Teachers can enhance learners’ engagement by setting clear goals and promoting autonomous learning (Riyanti, 2019). Additionally, creating stimulating classroom experiences and providing constructive feedback were found to further support student motivation (Thohir, 2017).

Overall, previous studies indicate that both internal desires and external influences shape students’ motivation to learn English. However, while many studies examine motivational factors themselves, fewer explore how these motivations are reflected in students’ study habits and learning behavior, highlighting the gap that this study seeks to address.

Methodology.

This study employed a quantitative, comparative survey design. The hypothesis was that highly motivated students demonstrate greater learning engagement and higher achievement in English learning than less motivated students.

The research was conducted among 15 second-year students of Fergana State University, aged 18–20, enrolled in the Faculty of Foreign Languages. All participants were studying English as part of their academic program. Participants were selected using a convenience sampling method. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed via Google Forms in a Telegram group. Participation was voluntary and anonymous.

The questionnaire consisted of three sections: motivation level, learning behaviors, and perceived achievement. Motivation level was measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). An average motivation score was calculated for each participant based on five items. The median value of the motivation scores (Mdn = 3.8) was used as a cut-off point to divide participants into two groups: students with high motivation (scores equal to or above the median) and students with low motivation (scores below the median).

Learning behaviors were measured using Likert-scale items (1–5) and a categorical item on weekly independent study time. The items assessed the frequency of using additional learning resources, participation in English classes, and completion of homework without reminders. Perceived achievement was measured through self-assessment statements using a binary Agree/Disagree scale.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency and percentage distributions, to compare learning behaviors and perceived achievement between the two groups.

Results

Table 1. Motivation scores and group classification

Student	Score	Group
1	3.8	High
2	4.2	High
3	4.0	High

4	4.0	High
5	4.4	High
6	3.8	High
7	2.8	Low
8	3.8	High
9	3.8	High
10	5.0	High
11	3.4	Low
12	1.0	Low
13	3.8	High
14	3.8	High
15	3.6	Low

Table 2. Group distribution

Group	n	%
High motivation (≥ 3.8)	11	73.3%
Low motivation (<3.8)	4	26.7%

Table 3. Independent study hours

Hours	High motivation	Low motivation
Less than 1 hour	1 (9.1%)	0
1-3 hours	5 (45.5%)	3 (75%)
4-6 hours	3 (27.3%)	1 (25%)
More than 6 hours	2 (18.2%)	0

Table 1 presents the motivation scores of the participants and their classification into high- and low-motivation groups. Based on the median score (Mdn = 3.8), 11 students (73.3%) were categorized as highly motivated, while 4 students (26.7%) were classified as having low motivation (Table 2).

In terms of independent study time, differences were observed between the two groups (Table 3). Most highly motivated students reported studying English independently for more than 3 hours per week, with 27.3% studying 4–6 hours and 18.2% studying more than 6 hours. In contrast, the majority of low-motivation students (75%) reported spending only 1–3 hours per week on independent study, and none of them reported studying more than 6 hours.

Clear differences in learning behavior patterns were observed between the two groups. All highly motivated students (n = 11) reported using additional learning resources and participating actively in English classes, while these behaviors were less common among low-motivation students (n = 3). Similarly, completion of assignments without reminders was reported by most students in the high-motivation group (n = 10), compared to a smaller number in the low-motivation group (n = 2).

Regarding perceived achievement, most highly motivated students reported positive changes in their English learning, including improved confidence and progress (n = 7), while 4 students reported moderate or lower levels of improvement. In the low-motivation group, 3 students reported high perceived improvement, while 1 student reported lower levels of progress.

Discussion.

The results of this study show that students with higher motivation demonstrate more active learning behaviors and report higher levels of perceived English achievement compared to less motivated students. These differences were observed in independent study time, use of additional learning resources, and classroom participation.

Highly motivated students were more likely to study English outside the classroom and use supplementary materials, which suggests that motivation supports self-directed learning. This finding is consistent with Riyanti (2019), who emphasized that motivated learners tend to invest more effort and persist in learning activities.

The results also showed that highly motivated students participated more actively in class. This supports the findings of Thohir (2017), who noted that motivation influences students' engagement in classroom interaction.

In terms of perceived achievement, students with higher motivation reported greater confidence and improvement in their English skills. This aligns with previous studies indicating that motivation is closely related to learning success.

Overall, the findings confirm that motivation plays a key role in shaping both learning behavior and perceived outcomes in English language learning.

Conclusion.

This study examined the role of motivation in English language learning among university students. The findings showed that highly motivated students demonstrated greater engagement in learning activities and reported higher levels of perceived achievement. These results highlight the importance of motivation in shaping both learning behavior and outcomes. However, the small sample size ($n = 15$) limits the statistical reliability of the findings. Future research should involve larger samples and more diverse contexts to provide more comprehensive insights into the relationship between motivation and language learning.

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