# Motivating Factors as an Investigate Framework among Students in the Field of English Language Teaching

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## Abstract

This study aimed to find out the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that motivate English language students in the field of English language teaching. In order to collect the necessary data for the study, a mixed methods approach was employed by using both quantitative and qualitative methods. A questionnaire consisting of 80 close-ended questions was administered to 80 English language students in the field of English language teaching. Besides, semi-structured interviews with 20 students were carried out. At the end of the study, both intrinsic and extrinsic factors were founded to be motivation sources for English language students in the field of English language teaching. Imparting knowledge as an intrinsic factor and good relationships with other students and teachers as extrinsic factors were defined as the major motivation sources for the ELT students.

**Keywords:** ELT students, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation

## INTRODUCTION

Motivation in education has been a widely studied topic among researchers, especially in the area of learner motivation for several decades (Coleman, Galaczi & Astruc, 2007; Dornyei & Chan, 2013; Isiguzel, 2014; Lamb, 2011; Masgoret & Gardner, 2002; Nikoopour, 2012; Sun, 2010).

Knowing a foreign language in order to carry forward international relations in social, political and economic fields has become a necessity for individuals all around the world. Within this respect, English, as a second language is widely taught in many countries for cultural, commercial and social reasons (Eskicumalı & Turedi, 2010).

There is a growing agreement that second/foreign language motivation (L2 motivation) plays a key role in the L2 language learning process. L2 motivation is needed to help learners expend and persist in their effort in an L2 learning process which might extend over a long period of time. It is believed that "without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals, and neither are appropriate curricula and good teaching enough on their own to ensure student achievement" (Dornyei, 2005, p. 65). There has been a great deal of research exploring L2 motivation, examining its complex nature and the way in which it affects

the L2 learning process (e.g., Clement, 1980; Gardner, 1979; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Ushioda, 2009). As Dornyei & Csizér (2013) discussed an important aspect of L2 motivation research is studying the motivational strategies used by English as foreign language (EFL) teachers to enhance students' motivation.

This study aims to determine the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that motivate the English language students in the field of English language teaching.

## REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

## Motivation

Motivation is described as 'the enthusiasm for doing something' 'in the dictionary of Cambridge online (http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/program). One of the most prominent motivation researchers Dornyei defines motivation as "the choice of a particular action, the persistence with it and the effort expended on it" (2001, p.4). In other words motivation is the reason for people to decide to do something, the desire for sustaining the activity for some time and the effort they spend for doing the activity (Dornyei, 2001).

As the above descriptions suggest, motivation is a term which is extensively used in everyday life, in psychology, in various areas of social sciences, in the studies of education and in applied linguistics (Dornyei, Csizer & Nemeth, 2006). In the current study, the focus is on the motivation in educational settings, particularly on military forces pursuing a degree in the field of English language teaching. Motivation has been the subject of a great number of researches and it has been investigated in different contexts by many researchers for several decades (Addison & Brundrett, 2008; Arıogul, 2009; Butz, Peterson & Majerus, 2014; Chemolli & Marylène, 2014; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Pegler, 2012; Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011; Gardner, 1968; Sullivan, 2001). Many theories of motivation have been proposed since its being studied widely. Early theories of motivation were under the effect of Behaviorism and in behaviorist theories the influence of outside factors on motivation such as punishment and rewards constituted a significant role (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011). According to Dornyei and Ushioda (2011) this need for success and fear of failure become a part of an individual's personality and influences the person's behavior in his whole life, including education. Attribution theory is another cognitive theory which asserts that people try to find the causes of their successes or failures and try to determine whether the cause was internal or external. Additionally, individual's influence on the causes that determine the outcome of an event and whether the cause of an event is permanent or not are also analyzed in the attribution theory (Carless & Waterworth, 2012). Self-efficacy theory which has been developed by Albert Bandura refers to people's notions about their capabilities for carrying out certain activities. According to this theory people with a sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) believes in themselves and they are motivated to succeed in fulfilling their goals (Bumann & Younkin, 2012). Having similar features with self-efficacy theory, Covington's self-worth theory asserts that people can be really motivated to show a sense of personal value and worth in competitive contexts or when they face with failure or negative feedback (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011). Unlike self-

efficacy and self-worth theories, goal-setting theory primarily focuses on the impact of conscious goals on actions and the relationship between the level of task performance and those goals (Sullivan & Strode, 2010).

Concerning all the above mentioned theories of motivation, one of the most general and well-known distinctions is that of intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011). This distinction is the basis of self-determination theory of Deci and Ryan (1985, 2000) which also guides the current study by providing the theoretical framework. According to this theory people can be intrinsically or extrinsically motivated based on their different goals or reasons that make them to perform certain acts. Intrinsic motivation refers to the internal desire of the person to do something and to pursue doing it for some time as the activity itself is inherently interesting or enjoyable. The self-determination theory states that intrinsically motivated behaviors stem from the innate psychological needs which are the needs for competence (feeling of self-efficacy), relatedness (feeling connected to the outside setting) and autonomy (feeling of control) (Deci & Ryan, 2000). When a person feels competent himself/herself for performing an activity, which is also emphasized in self-efficacy theory, s/he may have the internal desire more and get intrinsically motivated. This motivation is also observed when the person has the control of his/her activities and freedom of choice. The feeling of relatedness also influences individuals' motivation intrinsically if they make a connection to the outside setting in fulfilling the activity and have the chance to become a part of a group and share. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation involves performing an activity in order to reach a certain outcome. The expectation of an external consequence makes the person to perform the activity. Therefore, activities which are not interesting for the person should present extrinsic outcomes in order for the person to be motivated (Eyal & Roth, 2010).

## Work Motivation

The influence of motivation on human beings can be observed every place where people perform activities and when people care about the consequences of their activities. One of the contexts in which motivation constitutes vital importance is work context. Supporting this view, motivation has been regarded as one of the major contributors to the satisfaction and effectiveness of an individual carrying out a job by the industrial/organizational psychologists. The factors that affect the employees' motivation are the major concern of these fields and through the theories.

There are two dominant theories in the field of work motivation one of which is Locke and Latham's goal setting theory (Locke & Latham, 2002). According to this theory goals influence performance by means of four mechanisms. First, goals have a "directive function", goal-relevant activities are directed attention and effort by the goals whereas goal-irrelevant activities are not. Second, goals serve an "energizing function". Greater effort is performed to high goals than low goals. Third, goals "affect persistency". When the control of time spending on a task is left to the participants, they are observed to spend more time and effort on hard goals. Fourth, goals "affect action indirectly by leading to the arousal, discovery and/or use of task-relevant knowledge and strategies" (Locke & Latham, 2002, p. 706,707).

The other dominant theory is self-determination theory and the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is also applied in the context of work motivation. To illustrate, employees can be intrinsically motivated and show better performance in their jobs if their psychological needs, namely competency, autonomy and relatedness needs, are satisfied (Deci & Ryan, 2000). On the other hand, employees are also motivated to work through the reinforcement of external factors such as rewards or praise which are counted as the extrinsic motivational constituents.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study is designed as a descriptive research which defines the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that motivate the English language students in the field of English language teaching. A mixed methods approach was employed by using both quantitative and qualitative methods. A questionnaire consisting of 80 close-ended questions was administered to 80 English language students in the field of English language teaching. Besides, semi-structured interviews with 20 students were carried out.

In order to probe the research questions, the following null hypotheses are formulated:

*H1*: There aren't any intrinsic factors that English language students in the field of English language teaching.

*H2*: There aren't any extrinsic factors that motivate English language students in the field of English language teaching.

## Procedures

In order to collect the necessary data for the current study, one instrument which used was semi-structured interviews.

### *Interviews*

Semi-structured interviews carried out with 20 ELT students. Semi-structured interview chosen as the most appropriate model for the conduction of the interviews in the present study as "this interview approach has the advantage of providing reasonably standard data across respondents, but of greater depth than can be obtained from a structured interview" (Borg, Gall & Gall, 2007; p.246). In this context, in the present study, the interviewees were free to share what come in to their minds related to questions during the interview and the interviewer had the chance to ask additional questions according to the answers of the interviewees.

The interview questions were also adapted from the open- ended and interview questions of the studies of Kassabgy et al. (2001) and Yau (2010). The interview in the present study included 10 questions in total which mainly seek for the positive and negative factors that influence the motivation of the English language students in the field of English language teaching.

## RESULTS

## Data Analysis

The qualitative data included 20 interviews carried out with the ELT students. As the first step of the qualitative analysis, the interviews were transcribed verbatim. Content analysis was believed to be appropriate for the analysis of the qualitative data of this study. The system of content analyses is summarized by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) as follows:

> Content analysis takes texts and analyses, reduces and interrogates them into summary form through the use of both pre-existing categories and emergent themes in order to generate or test a theory. It uses systematic, replicable, observable and rule-governed forms of analysis in a theory-dependent system for the application of those categories (p.564).

In other words, content analysis comprises categorizing, that is generating categories which can cover the units of analysis such as sentences, phrases, words, etc., coding, comparing which means making connections between categories and concluding which refers to drawing theoretical conclusions out of the text (Cohen, et al., 2011).

With this in mind, all the transcribed data were content analysed in this study. Depending on the perceptions of each interviewee, the transcribed data were divided as positive and negative motivational factors based on the perceptions of the ELT students by adapting the division of Yau (2010) in his study. Following this, the positive and negative motivational factors were categorized according to the codes under the two themes, namely intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors as stated in the previous data analysis section. Then, intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors were divided into sub-codes such as job happiness and professional achievement or challenge or growth and relations with parents as Yau (2010) did in his study. The content of each sub-code was also defined. After the coding, the frequency of each code was counted with respect to their being mentioned as a positive motivational factor or as a negative one. Following Tables indicate an example of this coding system of the present study.

| Intrinsic Factors | Positive (f) | Negative (f) |
|---|---|---|
| Imparting Knowledge | Total: 16 | Total: 4 |
| -  Students' understanding the lesson content | 8 | 2 |
| -  Students' success in English | 8 | 2 |
| Professional achievement | Total: 05 | Total: 0 |
| - Students' creativity for producing  activities | 2 | 0 |
| - Trying to do one's  job well | 2 | 0 |
| - Being prepared for the lesson | 1 | 0 |
| **Extrinsic Factors** | **Positive (f)** | **Negative (f)** |
| Relation with students | Total: 12 | Total: 1 |
| -  Team work with other students | 3 | 1 |
| -  Having good relation with other students | 4 | 1 |
| - Support of the other students | 2 | 0 |
| - Students' feedback | 2 | 1 |

To sum up, the qualitative data analysis was carried out through content analysis which involves the coding and the categorization of the data according to the previously described codes adapted for the present study.

## DISCUSSION

The first research question of the study sought for the intrinsic factors that motivate the English language students in the field of English language teaching. In order to address this question, the quantitative data gathered through the second section of questionnaire which consists of 30 value items were analysed. Among these items, the motivating factor items were analysed by calculating the mean scores of each value item referring to intrinsic factors. The quantitative data findings were also expanded with the findings of the qualitative data collected via the interviews.

| Extrinsic Items | Means | SD |
|---|---|---|
| Helping other students to learn English | 4.72 | .32 |
| Having a job in which I can perform to the best of my ability | 4.54 | .59 |
| Having a job that is enjoyable | 4.41 | .73 |
| Having a job that I can learn and improve my abilities | 4.23 | .86 |

As it is indicated in the table above "Helping my students to learn English" topped this group with a mean 4.72. Some of the qualitative data findings also support the findings of the quantitative data above. Imparting knowledge which included students' understanding the lesson content and students' success in English was the most mentioned intrinsic factors.

The second research question of the study sought for the extrinsic factors for the English language students in the field of English language teaching. In order to address this question, the quantitative data gathered through the second section of questionnaire which consists of 30 value items were analysed. In this section of the questionnaire, the participants determined the items which are very important, important and the least important for them. Among them, the motivating extrinsic factor items were analysed by calculating the mean scores of each value item referring to extrinsic factors. The quantitative data findings were also expanded with the findings of the qualitative data collected through the interviews.

| Extrinsic Items | Means | SD |
|---|---|---|
| Job security | 4.61 | .39 |
| Having a friendly relationship with other students | 4.61 | .39 |
| Having a teacher who gives clear guidance | 4.58 | .43 |
| Having effective course guidelines | 4.42 | .56 |

As it is clear from the table above, 'Job security' and 'Having a friendly relationship with other students' were founded to be the very important items reflecting extrinsic factors. At this point, it was interesting to note that although 'job security' was one of the very important items referring to extrinsic factors for the ELT students, in the qualitative data.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysed data, the findings of research question one and two which focused on the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that motivate the English language students in the field of English language teaching revealed that most of the factors reflecting intrinsic and extrinsic factors were regarded as very important or important by the ELT students. 'Imparting knowledge', namely helping students to learn English and making contributions to their academic and personal growth was founded to be the most important factor among all the intrinsic and extrinsic factors which affect the motivation of the ELT students. The other intrinsic item which was regarded as very important or important was about 'professional achievement. Extrinsic factors including 'job security',' relationship with other students' also played an important role in influencing ELT students' motivation.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study focused on the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that motivate the English language students in the field of English language teaching. Further studies might also focus on the impact of various demographic factors on the motivation of ELT students such as age, gender, tenure, year of teaching experience and the educational background.

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