

ASSESSING THE MOTIVATIONAL LEVEL OF PAKISTANI LEARNERS TOWARDS ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Abstract

This research investigates the motivation of higher secondary school students to determine whether they are motivated by instrumental, integrative, leaning environment or the personality of teachers. The study's unique hypothesis posits that Pakistani students exhibit instrumental motivation in their pursuit of English proficiency. The results support this hypothesis, indicating that the students are predominantly instrumentally motivated, aligning with similar studies in the Arab world. Integrative motivation, related to cultural immersion, was found to be low. However, the students demonstrated a high overall motivation to learn English, reflecting its cultural importance in Pakistan. The study did not strongly support teacher-related demotivating factors.

Key word: Motivation; English language learning; Instrumental motivation;

Integrative motivation: Teacher role.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of "motivation" appears deceptively straightforward on the surface, yet it proves to be an elusive and multifaceted phenomenon when one attempts to define it precisely. Martin Covington (1998) astutely observes that, akin to gravity, motivation is often easier to comprehend in terms of its tangible effects rather than encapsulating it within a concise definition. Nevertheless, scholars and thinkers have diligently endeavored to provide clarity amidst the inherent complexity of this concept. As a testament to the intricacy surrounding motivation, various definitions have emerged throughout the course of scholarly exploration. According to Macmillan's Dictionary (1979), motivation is the impetus that propels individuals towards action or endeavor. Gardner (1985), on the other hand, presents a more nuanced perspective, delineating motivation as a construct encompassing four interrelated facets: effort, goal-setting, aspiration towards goal attainment, and the cultivation of an ideal disposition conducive to pursuing these objectives. Ames and Ames (1989) further illuminate the multifaceted nature of motivation by characterizing it as the driving force that initiates and sustains the inclination towards setting and pursuing intentions and goals. In this context, motivation emerges as the key driver behind purposeful and goal-oriented behavior, offering a profound insight into the intricacies of human motivation.

1.1 Background of the study

Learning a second language, particularly English as a foreign language, is a complex task that heavily relies on motivation. For low-motivated students, this can pose a significant challenge. Dornyei (1994) emphasizes that motivation is a fundamental determinant of second or foreign language acquisition. Furthermore, motivation has been identified as a dynamic factor that can influence and shape language learning outcomes (Dornyei, 2001). Dornyei also contends that an initially motivated individual can lose their motivation due to negative external factors associated with the learning environment, such as the classroom and school setting. This indicates that the learning environment, including factors like the quality of teaching, the content of instruction, and pedagogical methods, can have a substantial impact on language acquisition and achievement (Nikolov, 1999; Dornyei, 2001). Understanding the goals and motivations of students to learn English is crucial not only for educators but also for policy makers and curriculum planners. Several studies (Krusdenier, 1985; Dornyei, 1994) have demonstrated a strong correlation between students' motivational characteristics and their proficiency in a second language. Corria (1999) argues that to maximize positive outcomes in English language learning, students need a comprehensive understanding of their motivations. Neglecting to address students' needs and direction can lead to disengagement and a reluctance to learn English, especially when the materials and content seem irrelevant or uninteresting. Motivation in language learning can be attributed to various sources. Fisher (1990) identifies three main

sources of learning motivation: the teacher or employment-related motivation, success in the task, and the learner's intrinsic interest in the subject matter. Intrinsic motivation involves the desire to participate in activities for their inherent satisfaction rather than for external rewards, such as grades or job prospects. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is driven by external rewards or the avoidance of punishment, which can serve as a reason for demotivation among students (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Examining motivation in second language learning requires considering it as a multifaceted construct rather than a single, isolated entity. Researchers like Oxford and Shearin (1994) have analyzed various motivational theories and models, encompassing social psychology, cognitive development, and socio-cultural psychology. They have identified six key factors that influence learning motivation:

- Attitudes: Emotions about learning environments and the target language.
- Beliefs about Self: Attitudes toward success, self-efficacy expectations, and anxiety.
- Goals: Clarity and relevance of learning objectives.
- Interest: Actively and consciously engaging in language learning.
- External Support: Instructor and peer support, as well as social and external support integrated into the learning experience.
- Personal Characteristics: Factors such as aptitude, age, gender, and previous language learning experience.

Keeping in view the above background the objective of this study is to investigate the motivation levels of Pakistani

learners towards English by collecting data from secondary school students in Multan city. Understanding the factors influencing motivation can help educators and policymakers tailor language learning programs to better meet students' needs and enhance their proficiency in English as a second language.

The research questions of this study are given below:

1. What are the main objectives of the students for learning English?
2. Are the students inspired through integrative or instrumental learning methods?
3. What are the demotivating factors for the students for learning English?
4. Do students think teachers are the most demotivating factor?

In the light of the above four research questions the following hypotheses have been formulated to test them by collecting data from real life.

Hypothesis 1: The primary objectives of students for learning English include both instrumental motivations, such as improving job prospects, and integrative motivations, such as cultural immersion and social integration.

Hypothesis 2: The majority of students are primarily inspired by instrumental learning methods, emphasizing practical goals like job opportunities and business proficiency, while integrative motivations play a secondary role in motivating English language learning.

Hypothesis 3: Demotivating factors for students learning English include difficulties related to vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension, and English language structure and spelling.

Hypothesis 4: Students do not perceive teachers as the most significant demotivating factor in their English language learning journey. Other factors may contribute more substantially to demotivation.

These hypotheses serve as testable propositions that can guide your research in investigating the motivations and demotivating factors among students learning English. The contribution of this study is that it provides a comprehensive perspective on the motivations of Pakistani English learners, especially in the context of the EFL field. By employing both quantitative and qualitative tools, the study captures the intricate dynamics of student motivation, bridging the gap between real-world educational challenges and theoretical frameworks.

3. Data and Methods

The participants in this study comprised a total of 120 students, who were enrolled in various government secondary and higher secondary schools in Multan City. Additionally, the sample included twelve teachers from public schools and universities, as well as four English supervisors. The inclusion of teachers and English supervisors allowed for interviews to gain deeper insights into the phenomenon under investigation. The study included both male and female students within the age range of 16 to 18. All student participants had studied school subjects in English for a minimum of six years. To assess their English proficiency, a 5-point Likert scale was employed, with the following options: (1 = very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = average, 4 = good, 5 = very good). The distribution of English skill levels among the student participants was as follows: 5 students rated as very poor, 16 as poor, 46 as average, 35 as good, and 18 as very good.

This study employed a mixed-methods design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative research approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing English language learning motivation among Pakistani secondary school students. The study utilized the following instruments for data collection: A structured survey questionnaire was administered to the participants to gather quantitative data regarding the factors that negatively impact motivation to learn English and the reasons why Pakistani secondary school students choose to learn English. In-depth interviews were conducted to expand the comprehension and interpretation of the results obtained from the quantitative data. Before commencing the study, approval was sought and obtained from the relevant school authorities, including principals and headteachers of the participating schools. To ensure the participants' willingness to engage in the study, they were assured that their responses would remain confidential and that there was no need to disclose their names at any stage of the research process. The survey questionnaire was administered by the researcher to 120 students participating in the survey during their English class. Participants were selected evenly from the arts and sciences streams. During the survey, students were asked to explain their primary motivations for learning English and to identify aspects of English classes they disliked. They were explicitly informed that their responses and opinions would not impact their grades or the perception of their teachers. Additionally, they were encouraged to seek clarification and ask questions throughout the research process, emphasizing that their participation would assist educators in better understanding their needs and challenges. In

conjunction with the survey, in-depth interviews were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the factors influencing motivation among students. Twenty-six participants were selected based on their English language proficiency (13 proficient in English, 13 struggling learners). The interviews were conducted by experienced teachers who also provided insights into the factors affecting English language learning. The data collected from both the survey and interviews were analyzed comprehensively to draw conclusions regarding the motivation levels of the learners. The survey results were statistically analyzed, and the interview transcripts were examined for qualitative insights into the factors influencing motivation.

4. Results

In this section, we present the results of our study, which aimed to explore the motivations of High secondary school students in Pakistan for learning English, as well as the factors that may discourage them from doing so. We analyzed the responses of 120 participants to items related to their integrative and instrumental motivations for learning English.

4.1 Integrative-ness and Instrumentality Motivation

Table 1 below provides a summary of the participants' responses to eight items designed to assess their integrative and instrumental motivation levels. Frequency distributions, mean scores, and standard deviations were calculated for both integrative and instrumental motivation.

Table 1:*Integrative and Instrumental Motivations*

Statements	S.D	D	U	A	S.A	M	S.D
Integrative Motivation							
(1). I study English to be more at ease with English speakers.	1	11	9	45	34	4.00	0.97
(2). I study English to meet and converse with varied people.	9	8	10	33	40	3.87	1.57
(3).I study English to understand British & American arts and literature.	8	18	33	35	18	3.31	1.13
(4).I study English to participate more freely in the activities of other cultural groups.	8	30	37	33		3.91	1.01
Overall Mean Score						3.77	
Instrumental Motivation							
(5). I study English as I need it for my future career.	0	7	34	59		4.58	0.85
(6). I study English to become more knowledgeable.	5	15	43	40		4.18	0.89
(7). I study English as it helps Me to get a good job.	0	7	40	51		4.40	0.70

Statements	S.D	D	U	A	S.A	M	S.D
(8). I study English as the others respect me more.	7	10	38	37		3.53	1.15
Overall Mean Score						4.15	

The frequency distribution of the items related to integrative and instrumental motivation indicates that the participants displayed a generally positive and high level of motivation, with an average score close to four for most items (except item 3). Participants' responses suggest that they are motivated to learn English to interact with English speakers, meet diverse people, and gain a better understanding of British and American arts and literature. However, item 3, "I study English to understand British & American arts and literature," received a lower average score of 3.31, indicating some variability in participants' motivation regarding this aspect of English language learning. To further explore these findings, we conducted t-tests to examine the statistical differences between the scores of the third integrative motivation item (item 3) and the scores of the other items. The results revealed significant differences between item 1 ($M_1 = 4.00$) and item 3 ($M_3 = 3.31$) ($t = 4.71$, $p = 0.001$), as well as between item 2 ($M_2 = 3.87$) and item 3 ($M_3 = 3.31$), indicating that learning English for understanding British and American arts and literature may not be as strong a motivator for the participants.

Overall, the data suggests that the students have a generally positive attitude and motivation towards learning English, with a consensus-based social orientation towards English language learning, including interactions with English speakers and diverse cultural groups. However, there is some variability in their motivation regarding the appreciation of British and American arts and literature.

As shown in Fig 1, when comparing the general normal score (3.77) of the four integrative-ness and (4.15) and four items of the instrumentality, the respondents can infer that they are to some degree integrative spurred yet, at the same time, have an abnormal state of devices boost.

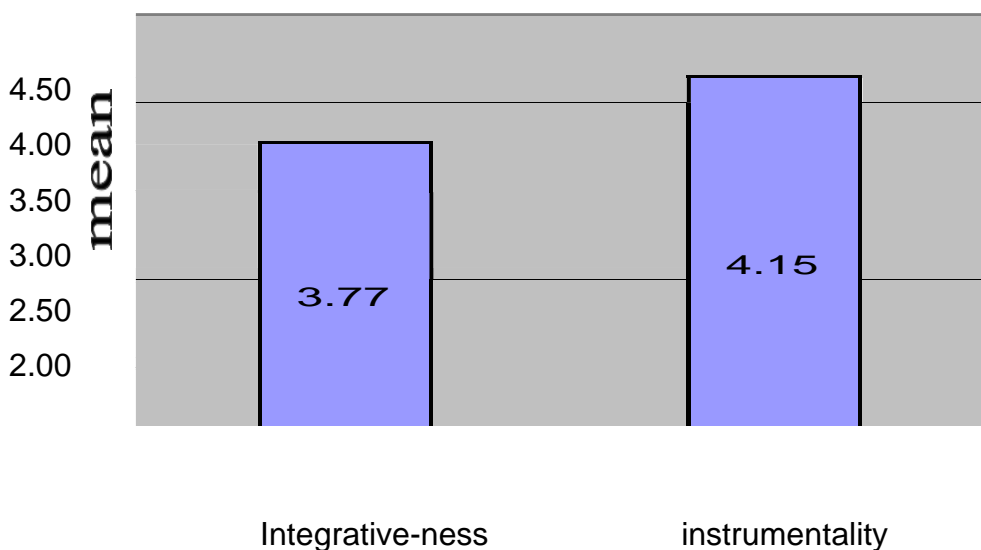


Fig 1: The overall means score of students' integrative-ness and instrumentality. In addition, there was a statistically significant difference between the total score of the integrated motivational items ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 0.60$) and instrumental items ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 0.51$). The difference between

the two scores was statistically significant ($t = -5.68$, $p = 0.001$) when the T test was used. With regard to student tools and comprehensive interviews, all respondents stated that they like to learn English because of various practical reasons, such as obtaining a good job, refining future occupations, and continuing higher education.

The second part of the survey was to examine the factors that restricts the understudies to learn English. The. The participants were chance to pick at least one element. The response of participants was calculated through statistical techniques such as frequency distribution and percentage The frequency distribution and percentages of the demotivating factors facing students when studying English are presented in Table 2. Total number of participants were 120.

Table 2.

Demotivating factors of English learning

Rank	Item No.	Demotivating factor	Frequency	percentag
1	7	Vocabulary load	58	58%
2	8	Difficulty in	54	54%
3	9	Listening skill difficulties	51	51%
4	10	Spelling errors	41	41%
5	6	Textbooks	39	39%
6	4	Rare use of technology	35	35%
7	3	Teacher's personality	30	30%
8	13	Friends' discouragement	27	27%
9	14	Social &religious	24	24%

10	2	Rare use of Urdu	22	22%
11	1	Teachers' rapid speech	20	20%
12	5	Evaluation system	17	17%
13	11	Effect of English on Urdu	5	5%
14	12	Parents'	3	3%

As shown in Table 2, the most demotivating factor that students faced was the English subject at school level. The major demotivating factor was "vocabulary load, which was 58%, difficulty in understanding of English was 54%, difficulty in listening was 51%, spelling errors were 41%. Text books was 39%, rare use of technology in learning English was 35%, Teacher's personality in learning English language was 30%, friends' discouragement was 27%, social and religious demotivating was 34%, Teacher's rapid speed during lecture delivery was 20%, the role of evaluation system was 17% while parents' discouragement was only 3%

4. Discussion

The purpose of this research was to investigate the motivation of middle school students in Multan, Pakistan, for learning English. The study aimed to determine whether students were primarily instrumentally motivated and whether their learning environments, particularly the role of teachers, played a significant role in either motivating or demotivating them in their English language learning path. The study's unique hypothesis suggested that Pakistani students were more instrumentally motivated in their pursuit of English language

proficiency. The results of the investigation supported this hypothesis, revealing that Pakistani students in Multan were indeed more instrumentally motivated than integrative motivated when it came to learning English. This finding is in line with similar studies conducted in the Arab world, which also reported a prevalence of instrumental motivation among students (Al Mutawa, 1994; Alam, 1988; Zughoul and Taminian, 1984). In this context, instrumental motivation refers to the motivation to learn a language for practical, utilitarian purposes, such as getting better jobs or conducting business. The study also found that the integration among Arab students, which pertains to motivation based on a desire for social integration or cultural immersion, was low among the Multan students. This suggests that the students were not primarily motivated by a desire to connect with English-speaking cultures or communities. The overall motivation of Multan students to learn English was relatively high, with an average motivation score of 3.77. This result aligns with the cultural emphasis placed on English language skills in Pakistan, where English is considered valuable for educational and professional opportunities. Therefore, it is not surprising that students in Multan were motivated to improve their English language skills. However, the study's findings did not strongly support the hypothesis that demotivating factors related to teachers played a significant role in hindering English language learning in Multan middle schools. While the role of teachers in language education is critical, the study did not find conclusive evidence that teacher-related factors were the most prominent sources of demotivation among the students. The key findings of the study are

given below: -

- The study confirmed that Pakistani middle school students in Multan were primarily instrumentally motivated to learn English. They were motivated by practical considerations such as gaining access to better job opportunities and conducting business with English-speaking countries.
- Integrative motivation, which is based on a desire for social and cultural integration, was found to be low among Multan students. This suggests that cultural immersion or a desire to connect with English-speaking communities was not a significant motivator for these students. The study revealed that Multan students had a high overall motivation to learn English, reflecting the cultural importance placed on English language proficiency in Pakistan. Contrary to the initial hypothesis, the study did not provide strong evidence that teacher-related factors were the primary sources of demotivation factors.
- Vocabulary was identified as a critical aspect of English language learning. Most students faced functional barriers in learning English due to the need to memorize numerous vocabulary items. The traditional approach of rote memorization was prevalent, which may have negatively impacted students' motivation.
- The study highlighted a relatively low use of technology for learning English, with only 40% of respondents utilizing technology for language learning. This finding contrasts with the prevalent use of technology in modern education and suggests room for improvement in integrating technology into language instruction.

5. Conclusions and implications

The study conducted at secondary higher schools reveals that students are primarily instrumentally motivated to learn English. This motivation is geared towards practical outcomes such as securing better job opportunities, which is evident from their inclination to gain skills in interviewing, writing formal letters, and email. While the motivation level towards instrumental tools is high, the integrative motivation is not as pronounced. Furthermore, contrary to many studies on L2 learner motivation, English teachers were not identified as a significant demotivating factor for Pakistani English learners. The study noted that Middle and higher secondary schools' students in Pakistan were primarily instrumentally motivated to learn English, and their overall motivation was high. While vocabulary learning was identified as a challenge, the role of teachers as demotivating factors was not strongly supported. Additionally, there is room for greater integration of technology into English language learning in this context. These findings provide valuable insights for educators and policymakers seeking to enhance English language education in Multan and similar contexts.

The policy implications of this study underscore the importance of aligning the EFL curriculum and examination systems with the students' primary motivations. Policymakers and educators need to: re-evaluate and redesign the EFL curriculum in Pakistan, emphasizing practical skills and real-world applications. It also emphasizes on the revision of English textbooks and examination

systems to cater to the realistic needs of the students. The insight for Administrators of school is that they should focus on the training of educators to be more attuned to the instrumental motivations of the students, adapting their teaching methodologies accordingly.

There are some limitations of this study. For example, although this study provides rich insights into student motivation, it predominantly focuses on instrumental motivations and may not encompass the entirety of the motivational spectrum in English learning. Moreover, while the study incorporates both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, as suggested by Crookes & Schmidt (1991), it primarily reflects the perspectives of students and teachers from higher secondary schools Multan city and might not be universally applicable to all Pakistani English learners. Therefore, it is suggested that:

- Future studies could delve deeper into a more nuanced understanding of integrative motivation among Pakistani English learners.
- Exploring the potential role of "external incentives" in the context of L2 learning, as proposed by Dornyei (2001).
- Comparing and contrasting the motivational dynamics across various schools and regions in Pakistan to draw more generalized conclusions.
- Investigating other potential demotivating factors beyond just the instrumental tools and teacher influences.
- Incorporating a more diverse range of qualitative methodologies, such as case studies or focus groups, to gain deeper insights into student motivations.

Data Statement

The data that supports the finding of this study will be made available on request.

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