

A Study of Learners' Perception of Affective, Value and Expectancy Components in the Learning of ESL

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Abstract

Motivation to learn is undoubtedly pivotal to determine success in learning. It can be driven by various internal and external factors. Hence, this quantitative study aims to explore motivational factors in learning among undergraduates. The instrument used is a survey, which is adapted from Pintrinch & De Groot (1990). The survey consists of four sections, which are Demographic Profiles, Value Components, Expectancy Components and Affective Components. A total of 24 items are tested for this study with a 5-Likert scale rating ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). 132 undergraduates majoring in Business and Science & Technology fields from two universities in Malaysia completed the survey, which was administered online. Generally, the findings revealed that ESL learners' motivation in learning ESL were derived from diverse intrinsic and external factors, with higher mean scores for external factors. The results of the study indicate interesting implications for educators in assisting learners to achieve success, as well as the learners themselves to be aware of their own motivational factors.

Keywords: Motivation, Learning, Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation, ESL

Introduction

Background of Study

Motivation, either extrinsically or intrinsically; is crucial to drive learners to success. Learners who are intrinsically motivated usually are driven by genuine interests within the learners themselves and they could feel a sense of satisfaction and enjoyment throughout the process (Ryan & Deci, 2020). In contrast, extrinsic motivation is commonly driven by external factors

such as rewards, incentives or punishments. Without the right motivation to learn, the learning process can be daunting to learners.

Researchers have long explored the potential benefits of motivation in learning. For example, Anuar et al (2023) posit that when learners have positive beliefs and are intrinsically motivated, it will positively influence their academic performance. Not only that, motivation also provides an aim and sense of direction to learners towards success. Thus, motivation is deemed as a key role in learning.

Statement of Problem

Previous studies have yielded compelling results on learning motivation. Some current studies (Bagheri Nevisi and Farhani, 2022; Dang, Le and Ha, 2021) have revealed that learners were both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated to learn English. The intrinsically-driven motivational factors were related to personal enjoyment, social prestige and being challenged, while the extrinsic motivational factors included getting jobs, earning money, travelling, pursuing education and a supportive environment. On the other hand, Mahmud et al (2023) found that their participants were more intrinsically motivated to learn English as compared to extrinsic motivation factors. Thus, it is pertinent to bear in mind that these factors that affect students' motivation might vary according to various issues including university and learners themselves. As suggested by Ekiz and Kulmatov (2016) and Anam et al. (2019), further research should be conducted in other universities with different learner backgrounds to explore other factors that motivate learners in learning ESL, which can possibly yield distinctive findings. Therefore, the present study attempts to investigate the factors which affect ESL undergraduates' motivation in learning ESL in Malaysian universities.

Objective of the Study and Research Questions

- RQ1- How do learners perceive affective components in their learning?
- RQ2- How do learners perceive value components in their learning?
- RQ3- How do learners perceive expectancy components in their learning?

Literature Review

Learning Strategies

As stated by Wegner et al (2013), learning strategies are specialised techniques to achieve several elements; accomplishing tasks, achieving goals, and manipulating and regulating information, in order to facilitate learning. Students, according to these researchers, must employ effective strategies to become proficient in the language. Form of strategy also includes plans, blueprints, and methodical methods that are normally used during the teaching and learning process.

Past Studies on Learning Strategies

There have been a few studies pertaining to motivation. Ajmal et. al (2021) has conducted a study to examine the function of motivation in English language learning and instruction. It draws attention to the question of whether intrinsic motivation has a greater influence on a student's learning process than extrinsic incentive, or if both motivational styles are important for the process. The report also emphasises how important it is for teachers to create an atmosphere that encourages healthy competition while teaching second languages. Using Google Forms, the survey was distributed to undergraduate students at two universities. For this research population, a sample size of 60 was used. There were 41 (68.3%)

female responders and 19 (31.7%) male respondents in total. The findings indicate that parents/guardians have a big part to play in their children's language learning. For the majority of pupils, watching television and watching films was the main way they learned the language. The opinions of others served as a powerful source of motivation for the kids. Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation showed a somewhat positive association with each other [$r=.345$, $n = 60$, $p <.0005$]. This demonstrates that the two motivational kinds can co-exist and are not mutually exclusive.

Another study relating to motivation has been done by (Nadeem and Moin, 2023). The study used a mixed method design, with the primary objectives of highlighting the reading comprehension outcomes of ESL students at the university level in connection to several extrinsic and intrinsic motivational factors. A customised questionnaire with 24 items was used for the quantitative component of the study to gather pertinent data from a sample of 121 undergraduate students. For the qualitative part, eight students from various social science departments were interviewed. The two main sources of motivation for reading proficiency are intrinsic (derived from internal factors such as curiosity, involvement, and a preference for challenge) and extrinsic (derived from external factors such as recognition, grades, social reading, competition, and compliance). Furthermore, the main concern was figuring out how various motivational constructions affected the students' reading comprehension. The presence of strong competition and high regard for students in L2 are among the factors that, according to the results, moderately extrinsically motivate students to read at this time. Intrinsic motivation is also evident in the reading comprehension abilities of ESL and EFL learners.

Allum (2020) examines the discrepancies between the statements made by students at a South Korean institution about what inspires them and those made by lecturers. It was found that both teachers and students believe that teacher qualities are the most essential factor motivating students, even more important than the students' own intrinsic motivation, using motivational theories created by Bandura and Maslow in prior motivation studies. Teachers want to encourage students' creative thinking and assist them in solving real-world problems; students, on the other hand, prefer to learn through digital media, presentations, and quizzes. However, there was no consensus among students and teachers about what this meant specifically in the classroom. With the understanding that some students arrive at class lacking intrinsic drive, both the teacher and the students hold the belief that students are highly intrinsically motivated. This paper is noteworthy because students believe that instructional strategies and teacher qualities are more important than a student's internal drive. This study shows that educators frequently exaggerate the impact of their methods and qualities on students' motivation.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 provides a conceptual framework of the study, comprising three motivational components for learning ESL: value, expectancy, and affect. Value components refer to the significance learners place on learning ESL. This can be influenced by a number of factors, such as personal goals, the perceived benefits of learning ESL, and the social and cultural value of ESL in the learner's community. Expectancy components, on the other hand, revolve around learners' self-assessment of their potential for success in ESL, covering their confidence in language proficiency, their capacity to overcome obstacles, and the expected support from their social network. Affective components delve into the emotional dimension

of ESL learning, encompassing sentiments of interest, enjoyment, anxiety, and frustration experienced by the learners.

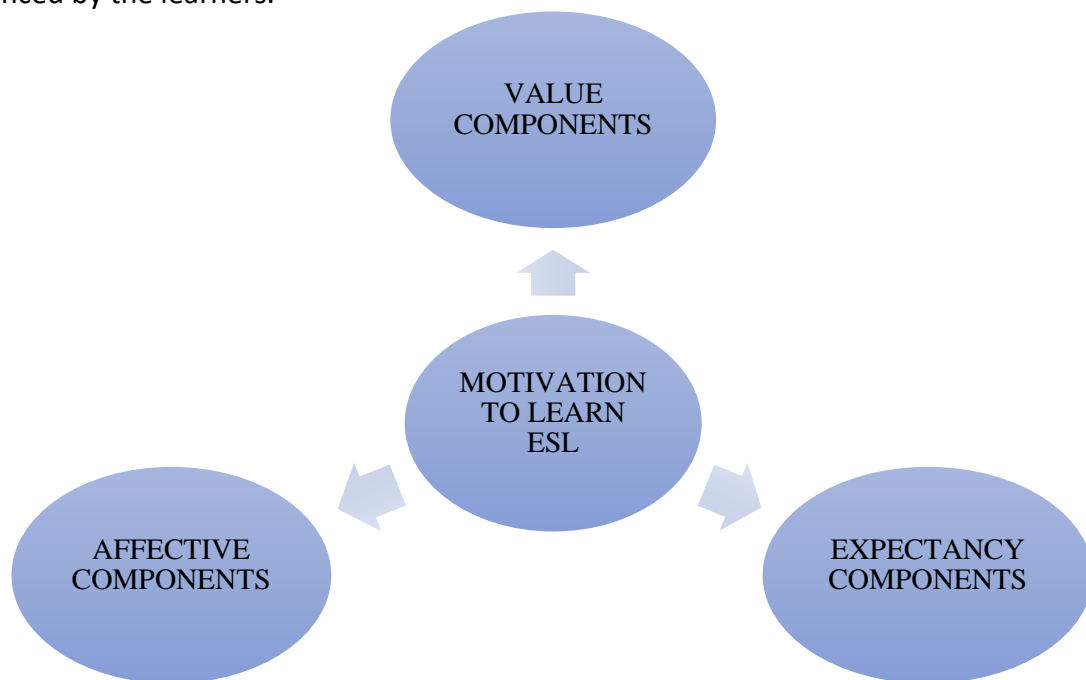


Figure 1-Conceptual Framework of the Study- Motivational Components to Learn ESL

Methodology

This quantitative study is done to explore motivation factors for learning among undergraduates. A purposive sample of 132 participants responded to the survey. The instrument used is a 5 Likert-scale survey and is rooted from Pintrich & De Groot (1990) to reveal the variables in table 1 below. The survey comprises four distinct sections. The initial section serves to gather participants' demographic information. Subsequently, Section A includes a set of 12 items pertaining to Value Components, followed by Sections B and C, which explores Expectancy and Affective Components through 7 and 5 items, respectively. A total of 24 items are gathered as components of the survey instrument.

Table 1

Distribution of Items in the Survey
Pintrich & De Groot (1990)

SECT	CONSTRUCT		VARIABLE	No Of Items	Total Items
A	VALUE COMPONENTS	(a)	Intrinsic Goal Orientation	4	12
		(b)	Extrinsic Goal Orientation	3	
		(c)	Task Value Beliefs	5	
B	EXPECTANCY COMPONENT	(a)	Students' Perception of Self- Efficacy	5	7
		(b)	Control Beliefs for Learning	2	
C	AFFECTIVE COMPONENTS				5
	TOTAL NO OF ITEMS				24

Table 2

Reliability of Survey

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.941	24

Table 2 shows the reliability of the survey. The analysis shows a Cronbach alpha of .941, thus, revealing a good reliability of the instrument chosen/used. Further analysis using SPSS is done to present findings to answer the research questions for this study.

Findings

Findings for Demographic Profile

Table 3 demonstrates a slight female preponderance in the study sample, reflecting a 6% higher representation of females compared to males. In contrast, Table 4 delineates the distribution of participants across diverse academic disciplines, where a notable majority (72%) of participants were from the business discipline, while the remaining 28% are enrolled in science and technology discipline. Table 5 reveals that a significant proportion of participants attended public universities as opposed to private ones.

Q1.Gender

Table 3

Percentage for Gender

1	Male	47%
2	Female	53%

Q2 Discipline

Table 4

Percentage for Discipline

1	Business	72%
2	Science & Technology	28%

Q3 Type of University

Table 5

Percentage for Type of University

1	Public University	86%
2	Private	14%

Findings for Affective Components

This section presents data to answer research question RQ1- How do learners perceive affective components in their learning?

AFFECTIVE COMPONENT -reversing (5 items)

Table 6

Mean for Affective Components

		Mean
	ACQ1 When I take a test, I think about how poorly I am doing compared with other students.	3.7
	ACQ2 When I take a test, I think about items on other parts of the test I can't answer	3.8
	ACQ3 When I take tests I think of the consequences of failing.	3.8
	ACQ4I have an uneasy, upset feeling when I take an exam.	3.3
	ACQ5I feel my heart beating fast when I take an exam.	3.8

Table 6 shows the average scores for the five affective components of learning ESL, as measured by the survey. All five components had average scores above 3.0, which suggests that learners generally experience these emotions when taking tests. The highest average scores were for ACQ2, ACQ3, and ACQ5 (3.8), followed by ACQ1 (3.7) and ACQ4 (3.3).

Findings for Value Components

This section presents data to answer research question RQ2- How do learners perceive value components in their learning?

Value Component

INTRINSIC GOAL ORIENTATION (4 items)

Table 7

Mean for Intrinsic Goal orientation

		Mean
1	MSVC Q1 In this program, I prefer class work that is challenging so I can learn new things.	3.6
2	MSVCQ2 In the courses of a program like this, I prefer course materials that arouse my curiosity, even if they are difficult to learn.	3.7
3	MSVCQ 3 The most satisfying thing for me in this program is trying to understand the content of the courses	3.9
4	MSVCQ 4 When I have the opportunity in this class, I choose course assignments that I can learn from even if they don't guarantee a good grade.	3.7

Table 7 provides the mean score for intrinsic goal orientation (IGO). This score surpasses the mean score of 3.0 as the affective component (Table 6), signifying those learners, on the whole, exhibit a strong intrinsic goal orientation in their pursuit of ESL learning. Notably, the highest mean scores were associated with items MSVCQ3 (3.9), while both MSVCQ2 and MSVCQ4 had mean scores of 3.7. Conversely, the lowest score was associated with MSVCQ1 (3.6).

(a) Extrinsic Goal Orientation (3 items)

Table 8

Mean for Extrinsic Goal Orientation

		Mean
1	MSEGQ1 Getting a good grade in the classes is the most satisfying thing for me right now.	4.4
2	MSEGQ2 The most important thing for me right now is improving my overall grade point average, so my main concern in this program is getting a good grade.	4.4
3	MSEGQ3 I want to do well in the classes because it is important to show my ability to my family, friends, or others.	4.3

Table 8 presents the mean values for extrinsic goal orientation (EGO). The EGO scale, comprising three items, assesses learners' motivation in ESL learning driven by external incentives like favorable grades or external approval. The most notable mean scores were associated with items MSEGQ1 and MSEGQ2, both registering at 4.4, closely followed by MSEGQ3 with a mean score of 4.3.

(b) Task Value Beliefs (5 items)

Table 9

Mean for Task Value Beliefs

		Mean
1	MSTVQ1 I think I will be able to transfer what I learn from one course to other courses in this program.	3.6
2	MSTVQ2 It is important for me to learn the course materials in the courses.	4
3	MSTVQ3 I think the course material in the courses of this program is useful for me to learn	4
4	MSTVQ4 I like the subject matter of the courses.	3.9
5	MSTVQ5 Understanding the subject matter of the courses is very important to me.	4.1

Table 9 presents the mean values pertaining to the task value beliefs held by the study participants. The highest mean score is attributed to item MSTVQ5 (4.1), while MSTVQ2 and MSTVQ3 both attain a mean score of 4, and the comparatively lower scores are associated with items MSTVQ4 (3.9) and MSTVQ1 (3.6). These scores collectively suggest a diverse spectrum of beliefs within the participant group.

Findings for Expectancy Components

This section presents data to answer research question RQ3- How do learners perceive expectancy components in their learning?

Students' Perception of Self-Efficacy (5 Items)

Table 10

Mean for Students' perception of Self-Efficacy

		Mean
1	ECSEQ1 I believe I will receive excellent grades in the classes.	3.7
2	ECSEQ2 I'm confident I can understand the most complex materials presented by the instructors in the courses.	3.5
3	ECSEQ3 I'm confident I can do an excellent job on the assignments and tests in this program.	3.6
4	ECSEQ4 I'm certain I can master the skills being taught in the classes.	3.6
5	ECSEQ5 Considering the difficulty of the courses, the teachers, and my skills, I think I will do well in the classes.	3.7

Table 10 displays the mean scores reflecting students' assessments of their self-efficacy. The most elevated mean score can be ascribed to items ECSEQ1 and ECSEQ5, both registering at 3.7. Meanwhile, ECSEQ3 and ECSEQ4 exhibit mean scores of 3.6, and the lowest score is associated with item ECSEQ2, which stands at 3.5.

Control Beliefs For Learning (2 items)

Table 11

Mean for Control Beliefs for Learning

	Mean
ECCBQ1 If I study in appropriate ways, then I will be able to learn the material in the courses of this program	4
ECCBQ 2 If I try hard enough, then I will understand the course materials.	4.1

On the contrary, in Table 11, the average scores for control beliefs related to learning is presented. Notably, item ECCBQ2 demonstrates a marginally higher mean score, surpassing ECCBQ1 by 0.1 points.

Conclusion

Summary of Findings and Discussions

In relation to the way in which learners perceive affective components in ESL learning (RQ1), the research demonstrates that cognitive responses and emotional experiences are consistent throughout assessments. The study found that learners had significant worries about unanswered questions, pondering of potential negative outcomes, and experiencing an increased heart rate. These emotional aspects highlight the importance of recognizing and dealing with these feelings to make ESL learning better.

The study focused on exploring learners' perception of value components in ESL learning (RQ2), specifically examining intrinsic goal orientation (IGO). Significantly, the participants showed a clear inclination towards intrinsic goal orientation (IGO), which was evident from their strong emphasis on challenging coursework to gain new knowledge, their preference for interactive course materials, their satisfaction derived from understanding the course material, and their intentional selection of assignments for the purpose of learning rather than solely focusing on grades. These findings offer a deep insight into the intricate dynamics of learners' values in the context of ESL education. Furthermore, the study also explored extrinsic goal orientation (EGO). The participants' strong motivation became evident through the importance placed on external rewards like grades and recognition. Achieving high grades and improving one's overall GPA stood out as the primary source of fulfilment, closely followed by the desire to showcase one's abilities to family, friends, or others. These observations clarify the influence of external factors on the formation of learners' values and motivations in ESL education. The study also investigated the beliefs regarding the importance of the task. Significantly, the participants expressed a range of beliefs, with a greater focus on the importance of comprehending the subject matter of the course (highest emphasis), followed by the significance of acquiring knowledge of the course materials. Nevertheless, there were relatively fewer indications of affinity towards the course subject and the transferability of knowledge across courses. These findings highlight the diverse viewpoints among the participants regarding the inherent value of ESL education.

The study examined learners' perspectives on the elements of anticipation in the context of learning English as a second language (RQ3), with a specific emphasis on self-efficacy. Participants had a favourable perspective, displaying utmost assurance in their anticipation of outstanding grades and expecting triumph despite the challenging nature of the course. Assignments and assessments exhibited a little decrease in confidence, however

comprehension of complex materials had the lowest level of confidence. In general, the results indicate that participants have a positive belief in their abilities to learn English as a second language. This demonstrates a detailed understanding of the particular difficulties involved in the learning process. The study investigated control beliefs as part of evaluating RQ3, which focused on learners' anticipation components in ESL learning. Participants exhibited self-assurance in their learning endeavours by employing effective study techniques and exerting diligent effort to comprehend the course materials. Significantly, the latter notion exhibited a somewhat elevated degree, highlighting the perceived efficacy of exertion in understanding course material.

This research delves into the multifaceted realm of ESL learners' motivation, providing theoretical contributions and contextual insights. This study is theoretically significant due to its comprehensive analysis of affective, personal, and anticipatory elements that contribute to established motivational frameworks. In the context of ESL learning, the study conducts a comprehensive analysis of intrinsic and extrinsic goal orientations, self-assurance in one's capabilities, and beliefs regarding control. This contributes to an enhanced comprehension of motivational theories. This study investigates in greater depth, within the context of Malaysian universities, the institutional and cultural influences on motivation. This is critical information for policymakers and educators alike to comprehend. Through its examination of the interplay among emotions, values, and expectations, this study not only contributes to the body of theoretical knowledge but also offers educators valuable practical insights. By utilising these insights, practitioners can develop individualised interventions and strategies for ESL learners, thereby enhancing the efficacy and cultural sensitivity of language instruction.

(Pedagogical) Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

Further research should examine the reciprocal influence of learners' self-efficacy and control beliefs in the domain of ESL learning. A comprehensive investigation could clarify the intricate ways in which these elements of anticipation dynamically influence study habits, academic performance, and larger learning results. An empirical investigation of the relationship between increased self-efficacy and the use of self-regulated learning techniques, such as setting goals and managing time, might yield valuable insights.

Furthermore, researchers could evaluate the effectiveness of instructional interventions specifically designed to strengthen these expectancy components. Integrating specific interventions, such as personalised feedback mechanisms or cognitive-behavioral methods, could provide effective approaches to enhance ESL education. Further examination of how these interventions manifest in various cultural contexts and among learners with diverse profiles would enhance the academic discourse.

Ultimately, thoroughly examining the complex connection between learners' views, namely their self-efficacy and control beliefs, and the resulting behavioural adjustments can lead to nuanced insights. Consequently, this could help create effective teaching methods that are tailored to unique contexts and improve the outcomes of English as a Second Language (ESL) learning.

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