

Exploring Motivation and Self-Regulation from The Social Cognitive View

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i1/20476>

DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i1/20476

Published Date: 29 January 2024

Abstract

One positive thing that the covid era has left behind in the education world is the flexibility of learning. Post covid times have encouraged many to embark on a more flexible way to gain knowledge. Interestingly, this flexibility has pushed many learners to gain independence in learning. This study explores motivation and self-regulated learning for foreign language learning. A purposive sample of 142 participants responded to the survey. The instrument used has 4 sections. Section A has items on demographic profile. Part two has 22 items on motivation. Part three has 13 items on cognition and part four has 9 items on behaviour. Findings showed interesting information on foreign language learning. Learning a foreign language requires the learner to depend on his/her motivation. This motivation can trigger the cognition of the learner to focus on the main goal of learning by exhibiting self-regulated behaviour. Statistical analysis also showed that there is also a strong positive relationship between motivation and cognition. There is also a strong positive relationship between cognition and behaviour. Finally, there is also a strong positive relationship between behaviour and motivation. Results in this study bear interesting implications in exploring motivation among foreign language learners and how to push them to become self-regulated learners.

Keywords: Foreign Language Learning, Motivation, Cognition, Behaviour , Self-Regulated Learning.

Introduction

One positive thing that the covid era has left behind in the education world is the flexibility of learning. Post covid times have encouraged many to embark on a more flexible way to gain knowledge. Interestingly, this flexibility has pushed many learners to gain independence in learning.

Language learning was once taught well only through the traditional classrooms where students get the opportunity to engage with the instructor and fellow classmates. Now, with

flexible learning, language learning has also joined the bandwagon of non-face-to-face lessons. What makes these language learners motivated to continue to learn the language? What are the factors that push them to become self-regulated learners? This study is done to explore perception of learners on their use of learning strategies. Specifically, this study is done to answer the following questions

- How do learners perceive motivation in learning?
- How do learners perceive cognition in learning?
- How do learners perceive behaviour in learning?
- Is there a relationship between motivation, cognition and behaviour in learning?

Literature Review

Motivation to learn a Foreign Language

Motivation to learn among students can stem from several factors. According to Pintrich & De Groot (1990), motivation comes from value components, expectancy components and also affective components. Value components can be sub-categorised into (i) intrinsic goal orientation, (ii) extrinsic goal orientation and also (iii) task value. Next, expectancy components are measured by (i) control of learning beliefs and (ii) self-efficacy for learning and performance. Lastly, affective components refer to test anxiety of the learners.

Pintrich & De Groot (1990) also categorised learning into (a) cognitive and metacognitive strategies and resource management strategies. Additionally, cognitive and metacognitive strategies are sub-categorised into (i) rehearsal, (ii) elaboration, (iii) organization, (iv) critical thinking and (v) metacognitive self-regulation. Resource management strategies can be sub-categorised into (i) time and study environment, (ii) effort regulation, (iii) peer learning and (v) help-seeking.

Self-Regulated Learning Strategies

Self-regulated learning is when learners are able to control their learning environment to maximise their learning behaviour. According to Zimmerman (2002), self-regulated learning is a cyclical process. The student plans to (a) complete a task by (b) monitor their performance and then (c) to reflect on the outcome. Figure 1 shows self-regulated learning (SRL) strategy through the eyes of Pander (2017). He presented SRL strategy as a cyclical process. The process begins with the (i) performance phase. This is the phase where the learners has self-control and makes his/her own self-observation. Next is the (ii) self-reflection phase. This is the phase where the learner makes self-judgement and self-reflection on his/her learning so far. The third phase is the (iii) forethought phase. This is the phase where the learner makes task analysis and forms his/her self-motivation beliefs.

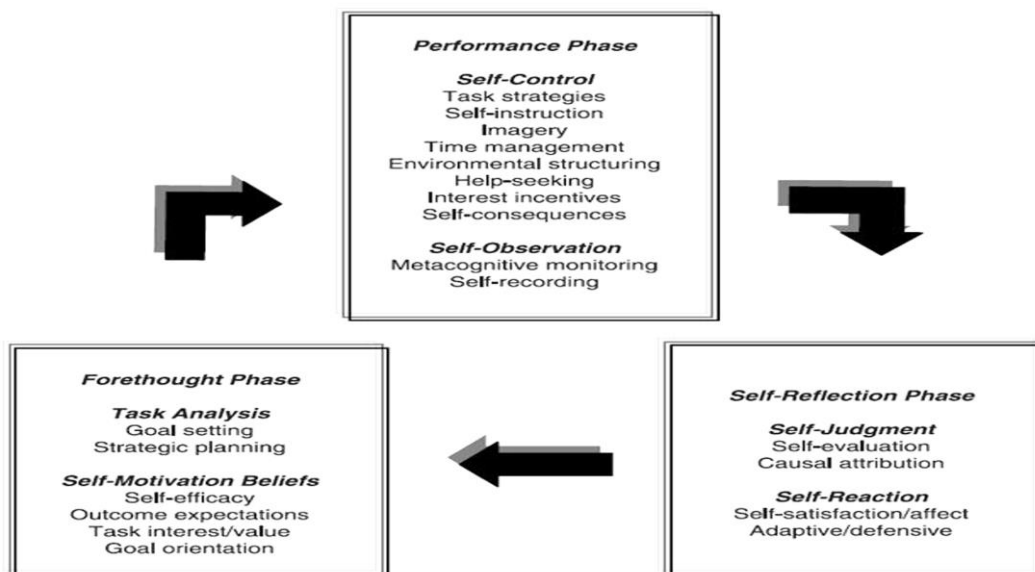


Figure 1- Pandero's (2017) SRL

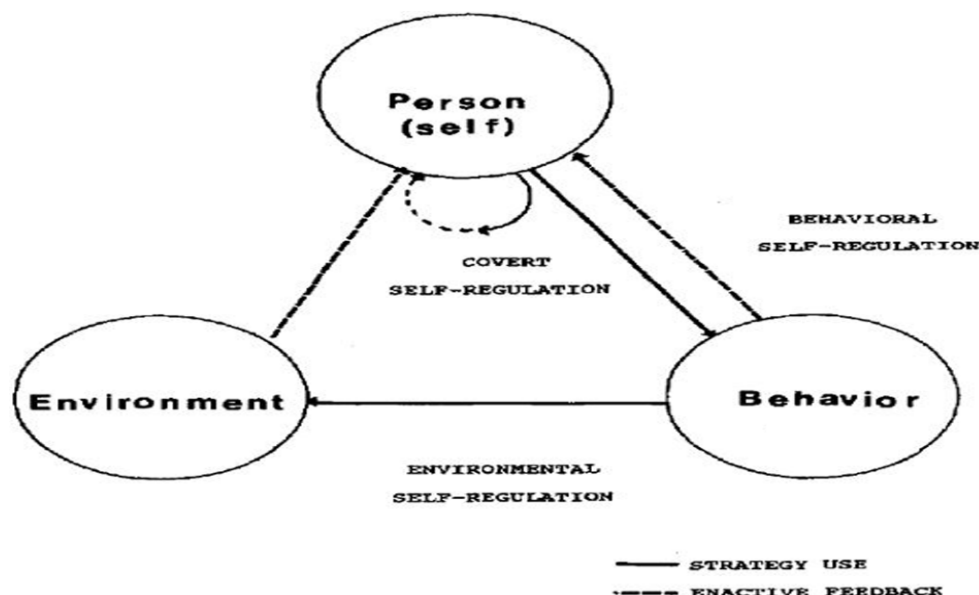


Figure 2- Self-Regulation (SR) by Zimmerman (1998)

Figure 2 above shows self-regulation by Zimmerman (1989). According to Zimmerman (1989), SR is activated through three main factors. The first factor is the self. This refers to the learner's need to be self-regulated. The second factor is the behaviour. The last factor is the environment. These three factors are combined to push the learners to become self-regulated.

Past Studies on Motivation

The study by Ramirez (2014) investigates motivational strategies used by students. In addition to that, the study looks at what extent other factors affect their motivation and their performance in the learning of a foreign language. The participants were 20 students learning at the intermediate level trade course. Findings revealed that group work and speaking

activities were good ways to encourage students to communicate in the target foreign language.

The study by Marszalek,et.al (2022) looked at the relationship between intrinsic motivation and one relevant factor, dispositional flow in the learning of a foreign language. The participants were 116 foreign language learners . The instrument used was a questionnaire containing L2 motivational self-scale and the dispositional Scale—2. Self- scale is indicated by the participants describing their current and future plans. Flow is indicated by balance, merging, clear goals, feedback , concentration, control, self-consciousness, time, autotelic (of an activity or a creative work), and having an end or purpose in itself. Findings showed that there was a significant positive correlation between constructs using confirmatory factor analysis. Findings also showed that dispositional flow is an important factor to consider as a way to increase intrinsic motivation in foreign language learners.

Aljuaid (2021) conducted a study to evaluate the motivation to learn English as a foreign language (EFL). The participants were 157 university students in Saudi Arabia. The instrument used was modified from Wen (1997) on motivation. The six sub-scales measured were integrative, instrumental, effort, valence, expectation, and ability. In addition to that, students' motivation was compared among students with different English language levels using multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). Findings revealed there was no significant difference among students of different levels of English knowledge when each level was compared separately. However, a comparison of merged group of students with English level knowledge of 1st to 3rd with the group of 4th level showed that the latter group showed statistically significant score. In summary, the study concluded that instrumental and integrative motivations could be the main pushing factor for students' motivation to learn a foreign language.

Past Studies on Self-Regulated Learning

Fukuda (2022) conducted a study to develop a Self-Regulated Second Language Self-Study Questionnaire that particularly addresses the self-regulated learning skills that foreign language learners (English) used in a self-study setting. 112 students participated in this study. They were students from a Japanese university Findings from exploratory factor revealed three factors (self-efficacy, learner values and test anxiety) were prominent for the motivation section. In addition to that from the learning strategy section, four factors (metacognitive strategies, problem solving, learning maintenance, and learning effort) were extracted.

Finally, the study by An,et. al (2021) explored how Chinese students' use technology-assisted self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies. The study also looked at whether there is an association between SRL strategies used and English language self-efficacy. 525 undergraduates participated in this study. The instrument is a self-reported questionnaire and their performance of an English language proficiency test. Findings revealed an overall moderate level of SRL strategies used. Findings also showed that there was a statistically significant positive relationship between the use of technology based SRL strategies and students' learning outcomes.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 3 shows the conceptual framework of the study. This study explores learners' motivation and self-regulation through the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1989). According to Bandura (1989), learners' motivation to learn is influenced by their cognition and also behaviour. In general, motivation is derived from attitudes, learning situation and also the drive (Rahmat, 2022). The three main factors in social cognitive theory is scaffolded to support the scales by Pintrich and De Groot (1990) to reveal the framework presented in figure 1 below. Motivation is measured by Pintrich and De Groot's (1990) self-efficacy, intrinsic value and test anxiety. Learners' cognition is measured by cognitive strategy use. Finally, behaviour is measured by learners' self-regulation.

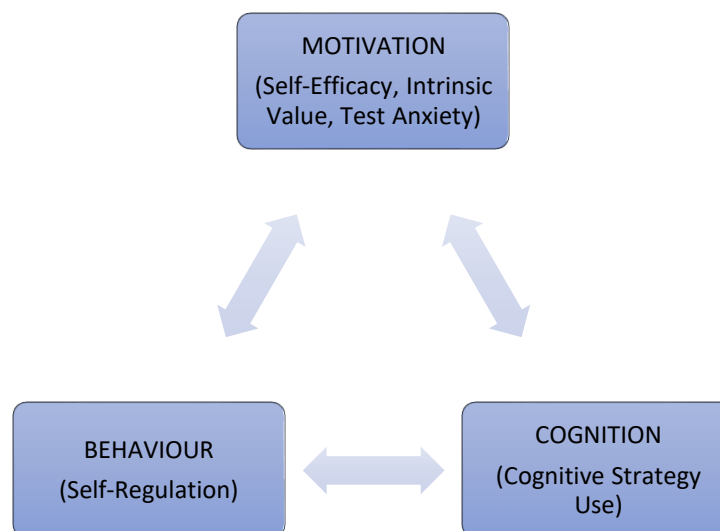


Figure 3- Conceptual Framework of the Study-
Motivation and self-regulation from the social cognitive view

Methodology

This quantitative study is done to explore motivation factors for learning among undergraduates. A purposive sample of 142 participants responded to the survey. The instrument used is a 5 Likert-scale survey and is rooted from Bandura (1989) and Pintrich and De Groot (1990) to reveal the variables in table 1 below. The survey has 4 sections. Section A has items on demographic profile. Part two has 22 items on motivation. Part three has 13 items on cognition and part four has 9 items on behaviour.

Table 1

Distribution of Items in the Survey

PART	SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORY (Bandura, 1989)		SCALE Pintrich & De Groot (1990)	No Items	Total Items	Cronbach Alpha
TWO	MOTIVATION	A	SELF-EFFICACY (MBSE)	9	22	.903
		B	INTRINSIC VALUE (MBIV)	9		
		C	TEST ANXIETY (MBTA)	4		
THREE	COGNITION	D	COGNITIVE STRATEGY USE (SRLSCSU)	13	13	.891
FOUR	BEHAVIOUR	E	SELF-REGULATION (SRLSSR)	9	9	.747
					44	.945

Table 1 also shows the reliability of the survey. The analysis shows a Cronbach alpha of .903 for motivation component. It has a Cronbach alpha of .891 for cognition, and a Cronbach alpha of .747 for behaviour. These thus reveal 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 2

Findings for Demographic Profile

		Male	Female	
1	Gender	26%	74%	
		Science & Technology	Humanities	Business & Management
2	Discipline	33%	51%	16%
		Weak	Average	Good
3	Self-Rated English Proficiency	9%	82%	9%
4	Country of Study	Thailand	Malaysia	
		78%	22%	

Table 2 above shows the findings for demographic profile of the participants. To begin with, 26% of the participants are male while 74% are female students. Next, 33% of the respondents are from the science and technology discipline. 51% of them are from humanities while 16% are from business & management. The participants also self-rated themselves on their English proficiency. 9% perceived themselves as weak, 82% perceived themselves as average while only 9% perceived themselves as good. Finally, 78% of the participants are from Thailand while 22% are from Malaysia.

Findings for Motivation

This section presents data to answer research question 1- How do learners perceive motivation in learning? In the context of this study, motivation is measured by Pintrich and De Groot's (1990) motivational constructs such as (i) self-efficacy, (ii) intrinsic value and (iii) test anxiety.

Self-Efficacy (9 items)

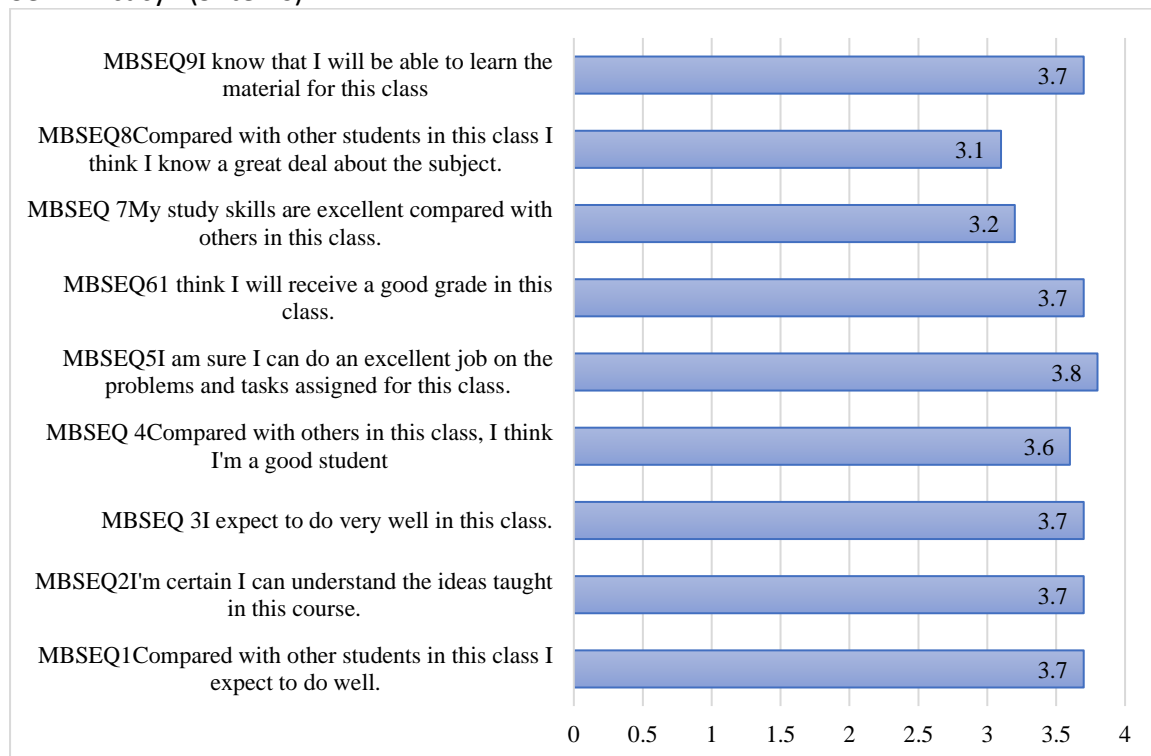


Figure 4- Mean for Self-Efficacy

Figure 4 shows the mean for self-efficacy. The highest mean is 3.8 for the item "MBSEQ5I am sure I can do an excellent job on the problems and tasks assigned for this class". Next, five items share the same mean of 3.7 and they are "MBSEQ1Compared with other students in this class I expect to do well", "MBSEQ2I'm certain I can understand the ideas taught in this course", "MBSEQ 3I expect to do very well in this class", "MBSEQ6I think I will receive a good grade in this class" and "MBSEQ9I know that I will be able to learn the material for this class". The lowest mean is "3.1 for the item "MBSEQ8Compared with other students in this class I think I know a great deal about the subject".

Intrinsic Value (9 items)

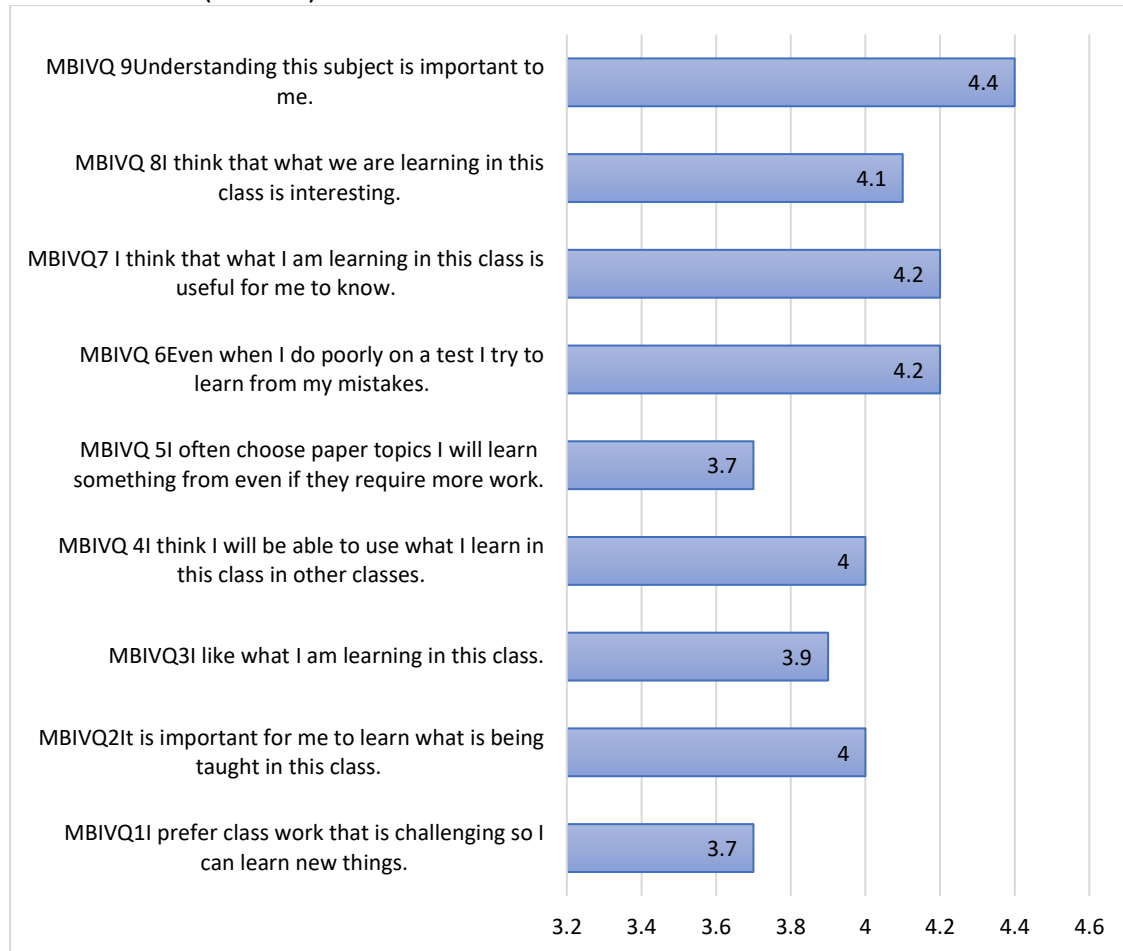


Figure 5- Mean for Intrinsic Value

Figure 5 shows the mean for intrinsic value. The highest mean is 4.4 for the item “MBIVQ 9 Understanding this subject is important to me”. Two items share the same mean of 4.2 and they are “MBIVQ 6 Even when I do poorly on a test I try to learn from my mistakes” and “MBIVQ 7 I think that what I am learning in this class is useful for me to know”. Next, two items share the lowest mean of 3.7 and they are “MBIVQ 1 I prefer class work that is challenging so I can learn new things” and “MBIVQ 5 I often choose paper topics I will learn something from even if they require more work”.

Test Anxiety (4 Items)

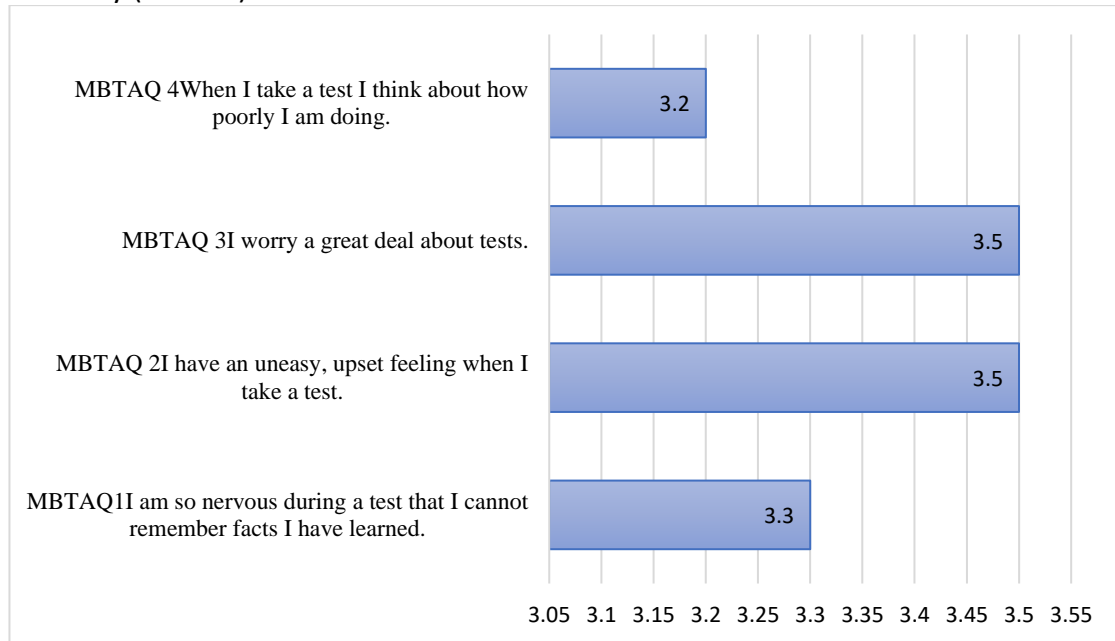


Figure 6- Mean for Test Anxiety

Figure 6 shows the mean for test anxiety. Two items share the highest mean of 3.5 and they are “MBTAQ 2 I have an uneasy, upset feeling when I take a test” and “MBTAQ 3 I worry a great deal about tests”. Next the item “MBTAQ 1 I am so nervous during a test that I cannot remember facts I have learned” had a mean of 3.3. The lowest mean is 3.2 for the item “MBTAQ 4 When I take a test I think about how poorly I am doing”.

Findings for Cognition

This section presents data to answer research question 2- How do learners perceive cognition in learning? In the context of this study, cognition refers to cognitive strategy use .

Cognitive Strategy Use (13 items)

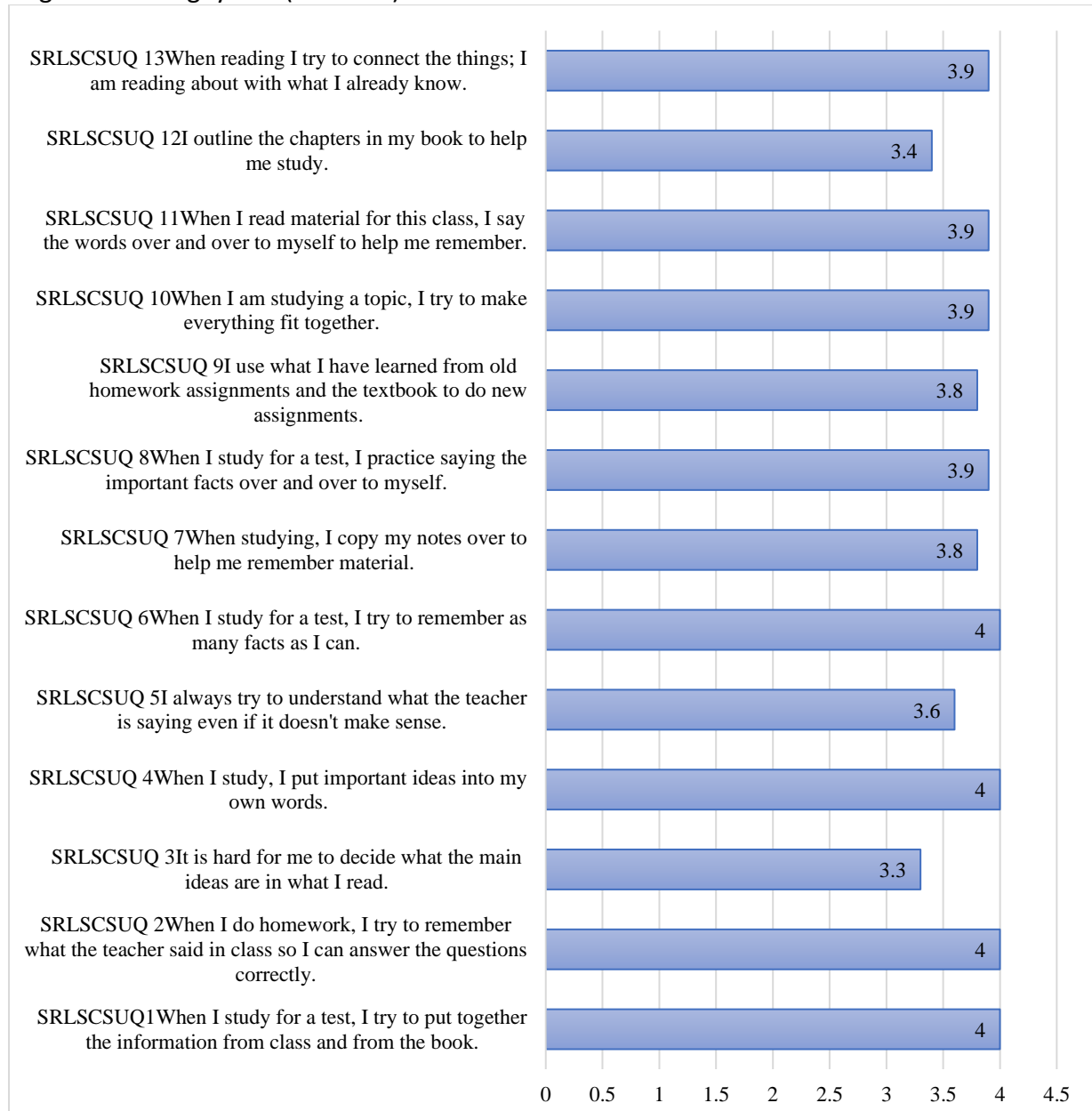


Figure 7- Mean for Cognitive Strategy

Figure 7 presents the mean for cognitive strategy. Four items share the highest mean of 4 and they are “SRLSCSUQ1 When I study for a test, I try to put together the information from class and from the book”, “SRLSCSUQ 2 When I do homework, I try to remember what the teacher said in class so I can answer the questions correctly”, “SRLSCSUQ 4 When I study, I put important ideas into my own words”, and “SRLSCSUQ 6 When I study for a test, I try to remember as many facts as I can”. Next, four items share the same mean of 3.9 and they are “SRLSCSUQ 8 When I study for a test, I practice saying the important facts over and over to myself”, “SRLSCSUQ 10 When I am studying a topic, I try to make everything fit together”, “SRLSCSUQ 11 When I read material for this class, I say the words over and over to myself to help me remember”, and “SRLSCSUQ 13 When reading I try to connect the things; I am reading about with what I already know”.

Findings for Behaviour

This section presents data to answer research question 3- How do learners perceive behaviour in learning? In the context of this study, behaviour is measured by self-regulation

Self-Regulation (9 items)

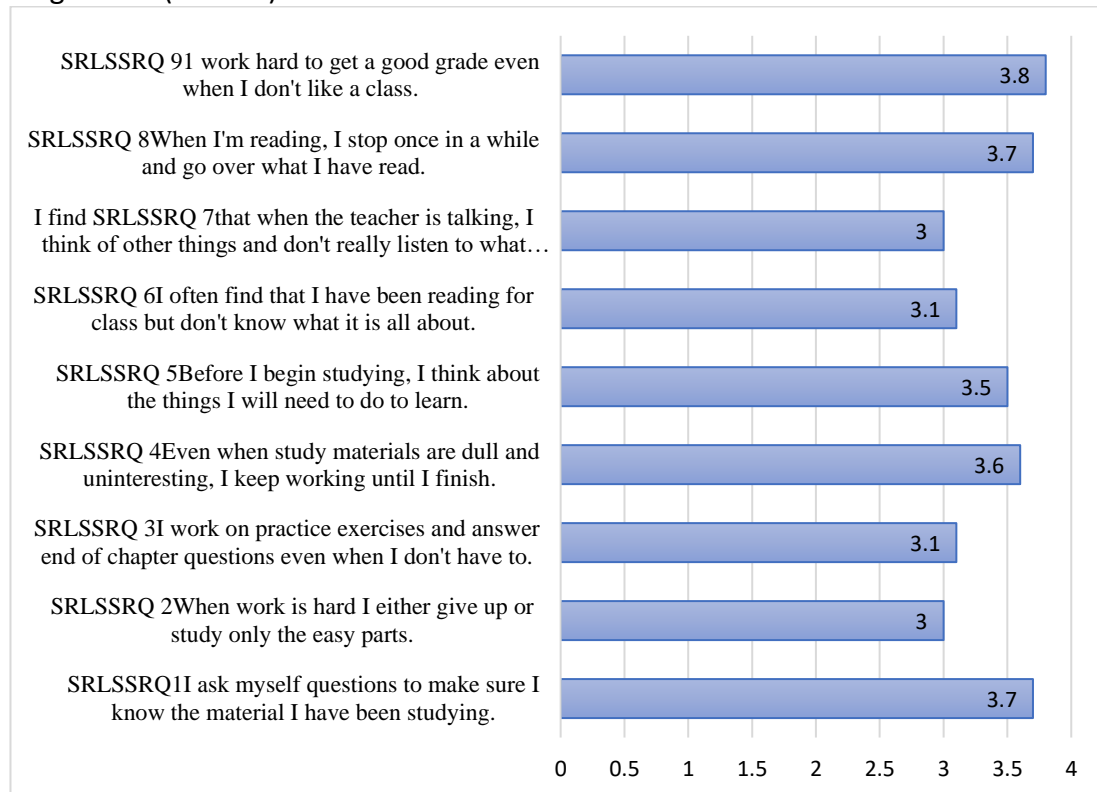


Figure 8- Mean for Self-Regulation

Figure 8 shows the mean for self-regulation. The highest mean is 3.8 for the item “SRLSSRQ 91 work hard to get a good grade even when I don't like a class”. Two items share the same mean of 3.7 and they are “SRLSSRQ 1 I ask myself questions to make sure I know the material I have been studying” and “SRLSSRQ 8 When I'm reading, I stop once in a while and go over what I have read”. The lowest mean is 3 for two items and they are “SRLSSRQ 2 When work is hard I either give up or study only the easy parts” and “I find SRLSSRQ 7 that when the teacher is talking, I think of other things and don't really listen to what is being said”.

Findings for Relationship between

This section presents data to answer research question 4- Is there a relationship between motivation, cognition and behaviour in learning? To determine if there is a significant association in the mean scores between motivation, cognition and behaviour, data is analysed using SPSS for correlations. Results are presented separately in table 3, 4, and 5 below.

Table 3

Correlation between Motivation and Cognition

		MOTIVATION BELIEFS	COGNITIONc ognitive
MOTIVATIONBELIEFS	Pearson Correlation	1	.745**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	141	141
COGNITIONcognitive	Pearson Correlation	.745**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	141	141

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 shows there is an association between motivation and cognition. Correlation analysis shows that there is a high significant association between motivation and cognition ($r=.745^{**}$) and ($p=.000$). According to Jackson (2015), coefficient is significant at the .05 level and positive correlation is measured on a 0.1 to 1.0 scale. Weak positive correlation would be in the range of 0.1 to 0.3, moderate positive correlation from 0.3 to 0.5, and strong positive correlation from 0.5 to 1.0. This means that there is also a strong positive relationship between motivation and cognition.

Table 4

Correlation between Cognition and Behaviour

		COGNITIONc ognitive	BEHAVIOURs elfREGULATI ON
COGNITIONcognitive	Pearson Correlation	1	.724**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	141	141
BEHAVIOURselfREGULAT ION	Pearson Correlation	.724**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	141	141

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 shows there is an association between cognition and behaviour. Correlation analysis shows that there is a high significant association between cognition and behaviour ($r=.724^{**}$) and ($p=.000$). According to Jackson (2015), coefficient is significant at the .05 level and positive correlation is measured on a 0.1 to 1.0 scale. Weak positive correlation would be in the range of 0.1 to 0.3, moderate positive correlation from 0.3 to 0.5, and strong positive correlation from 0.5 to 1.0. This means that there is also a strong positive relationship between cognition and behaviour.

Table 5
Correlation between Behaviour and Motivation Beliefs

		BEHAVIOURselfREGULATION	MOTIVATION BELIEFS
BEHAVIOURselfREGULATION	Pearson Correlation	1	.692**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	141	141
MOTIVATIONBELIEFS	Pearson Correlation	.692**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	141	141

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 shows there is an association between behaviour and motivation. Correlation analysis shows that there is a high significant association between behaviour and motivation ($r=.692^{**}$) and ($p=.000$). According to Jackson (2015), coefficient is significant at the .05 level and positive correlation is measured on a 0.1 to 1.0 scale. Weak positive correlation would be in the range of 0.1 to 0.3, moderate positive correlation from 0.3 to 0.5, and strong positive correlation from 0.5 to 1.0. This means that there is also a strong positive relationship between behaviour and motivation.

Conclusion

Summary of Findings and Discussions

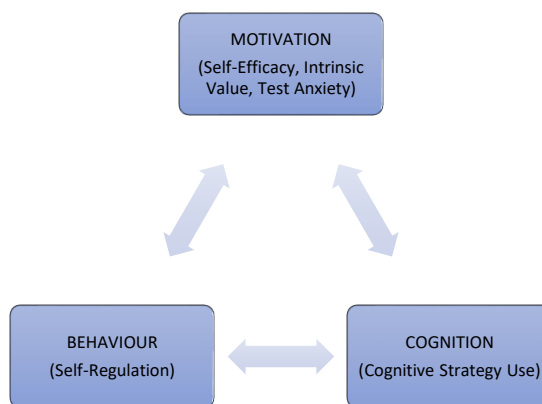


Figure 3- Conceptual Framework of the Study- Motivation and self-regulation from the social cognitive view

To summarise the findings for this study, it is good to make reference to the conceptual framework presented at the start of this paper-figure 3. Just as the figure prescribed earlier, there is also a strong positive relationship between motivation and cognition. There is also a strong positive relationship between cognition and behaviour.

Finally, there is also a strong positive relationship between behaviour and motivation.

Learning a foreign language requires the learner to depend on his/her motivation. This motivation can trigger the cognition of the learner to focus on the main goal of learning by

exhibiting self-regulated behaviour. In the context of this study, motivation is measured by self-efficacy, intrinsic value and test anxiety.

As far as self-efficacy is concerned, this study revealed that participants need to see themselves having the ability to succeed before they begin the assigned tasks. This positive thinking is what keeps the learner focused on succeeding in the learning.

Next, an added aspect of motivation is intrinsic value. Learners need to see the importance of learning to them so that they can stay inspired to want to learn. Finally, test anxiety can surprisingly be a good motivator. This is because when learners fear failure, they will strive to make sure their learning succeeds.

This finding is in accordance to past studies by (Ramirez, 2014; Marszalek et. al., 2022; and Aljuaid, 2021). Ramirez (2014) felt that learners' motivation comes from their surrounding. Their peers and the activities done with the peers kept learners motivated. In addition to that, Marszalek,et.al (2022) also found that there is a significant and positive relationship between factors in motivation in foreign language learning. Aljuaid (2021) also concluded that instrumental and integrative motivations are the main pushing factor for students' motivation to learn a foreign language.

Next, in the context of this study, cognitive component is measured by cognitive strategy use. Learners felt that remembering what was taught and making sense of what they have learnt so far helped them stay focused on successful learning experience. Finally, in the context of this study, behaviour is measured by self-regulation. One interesting factor to succeed in learning is to persevere even if the learners were not very fond of the learning tasks. Findings in this study is also in accordance with past studies. The study by Fukuda (2022) also revealed three factors such as self-efficacy, learner values and test anxiety were prominent for the motivation section. In addition to that, as far as learning strategy is concerned, four factors which include metacognitive strategies, problem solving, learning maintenance, and learning effort were important elements.

Pedagogical Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

Motivation is very important for learners to sustain learning a foreign language. Since learning should not end in the classroom, learners need to be self-regulated to continue learning (a) even if the class has ended, (b) even if the learning tasks get more difficult. Language instructors need to plan classroom activities to keep the learners interest at bay. Language instructors also need to prepare out-of-class activities that is manageable by students so that the outcome of the task would be to improve the target language of the students and at the same time encourage the use of self-regulated strategies. Future researcher could look into more language related tasks that can encourage the use of self-regulated learning strategies for language learners.

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