

Is There A Relationship Between Motivational Components in Foreign Language Learning?

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Abstract

Motivation is the main determining factor to ensure successful achievement in foreign language acquisition. Ever since influential Canadian Psychologists, Gardner and Lambert introduced the term motivation in foreign and second language learning in 1959, numerous researchers investigated the nature of motivation, however, the area on relationships between motivational components is still understudied until now, especially in foreign language acquisition area. A random sampling of 131 participants from a public university in Malaysia responded to the survey. This quantitative study attempted to explore the relationships between motivational components, which have been identified as value components, expectancy components and affective components. Motivational scale by Pintrich & De Groot (1990) is used to compose the questionnaire, which examined the students' motives in learning foreign language. The learners answered four sections, consist of Demographic Profile, Value Components, Expectancy Components and Affective Components by using a 5-point Likert scale survey. Analysis by using SPSS has been done to discover results in the form of mean scores and correlations scores. The findings revealed that the three motivational components have strong relations with students' motivation. Additionally, the correlation analyses revealed interesting discoveries; Value and expectancy components showed favourable correlations, whereas there were negative correlations between expectancy and affective components and also between value and affective components. These findings are useful for teachers and curriculum writers since contribution of this study will clearly provide teachers and curriculum writers the foundation ideas to design and produce authentic lesson plans. The implementation of ideas from this study will

motivate the students to learn foreign language skills based on value and expectancy components.

Keywords: Motivation, Relationships of Motivation Components, Value, Expectancy, Affective

Introduction

Background of Study

Foreign language acquisition is a long and arduous journey. It takes dedication and perseverance to be able to communicate orally and in written form. Learners would go through lesson of writing, speaking, reading, and writing and for each lesson they need to do practices from beginner level to intermediate level and finally to advance level. The prominent Canadian psychologists and researchers, Dr Robert Gardner and Dr Wallace Lambert have identified that motivation is the main reason of second and foreign language acquisition 1959. This breakthrough finding has inspired and stimulated numerous research on motivation in foreign language acquisition.

Studies have shown motivation can be divided on three major components, which are, Value, Expectancy and Affective components (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Pintrich et al, 1994; Khalid & Ahmad, 2011; Gorges & Kandler, 2012; Rosenzweig et al, 2019; Hassan et al., 2021). Value component is a variable that show the learners' extrinsic and intrinsic goal orientations, and also task value beliefs (Hubley et al., 2023; Gan et al., 2023; Wigfield & Eccles, 2020). In other words, value component explains the learners' reasons in learning the foreign language, and most of the time it is for their future employment or getting a placement in reputable higher learning institutions. Expectancy component is the second variable that illustrates learners' perception on self-efficacy and control beliefs for learning (Shi, 2018; Chan & Lay, 2021; Ugwuanyi, 2020). Expectancy component refers to the learners' beliefs on their ability to fulfil or execute the tasks in learning the foreign language. It is also can be considered as the learners' perception that on putting exceptional efforts in learning will cause positive results.

The final motivation component is affective component that describes learners' emotional state during learning process (Cho et al., 2021; Sosin et al., 2023; Cocca & Cocca, 2019). Affective component relates to the learners' attitude and feelings when learning takes place. Learners' positive emotional states will lead to favourable outcomes at the end of learning sessions. Finding the relationship between the motivational components is necessary for foreign language classroom in Malaysia as it will be the gateways to finding solutions for better learning experiences for the learners. Curriculum writers can design ideal syllabus and teachers can produce relevant lesson plans and materials for their teaching lessons based on the findings.

Statement of Problem

Concerns about students' motivation when learning a foreign language have been raised in recent studies. The teaching and learning process is not just about delivering content but about understanding and influencing the beliefs and behaviors of students, which could eventually motivate them when learning a foreign language. Ramírez (2014) mentioned that being able to consider the students' attitudes and interests in the classroom is vital to ensure active participation and maximise motivation. Recognizing the reciprocal nature of this

relationship and considering the role of motivation and past learning experiences can contribute to a more holistic and effective educational experience (Seven, 2020).

While the traditional model of teaching, which involves the transfer of information through questions and answers, can be effective for certain types of content, it's important to recognize that motivation still plays a crucial role even in this context. Mulalić and Obralic (2016) emphasised that teachers are lacking elements of curiosity, relevance, and real-world application into their instructional approach, especially when learning a foreign language. They, then, may not be able to recognise the role and dynamics of motivation in the students' educational experience.

Hence, there is a need to identify the relationship between motivational components (value, expectancy and affective) among students in foreign language learning. Hongbin et al (2020), who studied the relationship between motivation and academic performance among medical students, discovered that investigating these motivational components would allow the educators to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how motivation influences students' practical task performance, such as diagnostic accuracy and efficiency, beyond traditional academic achievements.

The complex interplay of motivational components in language learning is also supported by (Marszalek et al., 2022). The researchers pointed that other motivational factors like societal pressures and cultural influences could also affect the flow of students' language acquisition. Lacking a culturally sensitive approach and other extrinsic motivation to acknowledge the individual within the foreign learning population could weaken the students' self-concept and their intrinsic motivation. Thus, there is an important gap in research that could potentially contribute significantly to the understanding of motivational strategies in foreign language learning.

Objective of the Study and Research Questions

This study is carried out to explore perception of learners on their use of learning strategies. Specifically, this study is done to answer the following questions.

- How do value components influence learners' motivation to learn a foreign language?
- How do expectancy components influence learners' motivation to learn a foreign language?
- How do affective components influence learners' motivation to learn a foreign language?
- Is there a relationship between all motivational components?

Literature Review

Demotivating and Motivating factors for Learning a Foreign Language

Generally, foreign language learning is facilitated by various motivational factors including learners' characteristics including learners' ability, interest, enjoyment, and perceived usefulness (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Bagheri & Farhani, 2022) and their learning environment such as the teachers and their teaching methods, peers, and tasks (Ebata, 2008; Zhang et al., 2021; Miao & Wang, 2023), to name a few. In certain cases, these very factors can be the demotivating factors that impede one's learning motivation, as indicated by (Zhang

et al., 2021). One important take that ought to be understood is that one's learning does not depend entirely on one's cognition but also their motivation (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990). This is sustained by Gardner and Wallace (1959) who regarded motivation as key in language learning, as mentioned in the previous section.

Past Studies on Motivation to learn a foreign language

One of the earliest scholarly work that noticeably sparked interest in learning motivation was Pintrich and De Groot's (1990) which claimed that classroom academic performance is not only governed by one's cognition but also their motivation and efforts. Three motivational components of (i) learners' perceived ability to do a task (or expectancy component), (ii) learners' goals and perceived importance and interest of the task (or value component), and (iii) their emotional reactions to the task (also known as affective component) (which have been elaborated at length in the Background of the Study) were proposed and tested through a questionnaire involving 173 elementary school students. Their findings indicated the expectancy and value component to positively correlate with learners' academic performance.

Pintrich and De Groot's (1990) study has, since then, set out other follow-up studies that looked into learning motivation and its other possible factors. Apart from sampling bigger and different groups of respondents, other studies have been found to include the environment as another motivational factor while maintaining the inclusion of learners' own characteristics. One of these studies was Ebata's (2008) investigation of the motivation among English as foreign language (EFL) learners from the Digital Hollywood University in Japan. Echoing the same expectancy and affective components, she expanded her work to include other factors on learners' relationships with fellow students and teachers. Since then, a number of scholars have taken a similar approach.

This includes Miao and Wang's (2023) study on the learning motivation among Arabic as foreign language (AFL) learners and Zhang et al.'s (2021) research on Chinese language learning among British learners. Interestingly, Zhang et al (2021) included other aspects in their investigation of the learning environment by incorporating the subject, tasks, and examinations (not just learners' peers, and teachers and their teaching methods).

Despite the insights that the factor on learners' environment has rendered in the study of learning motivation, this factor remains underexplored as compared to those proposed by Pintrich and De Groot's (1990) which have been verified by many previous studies including Bagheri and Farhani's (2022) study involving Iranian EFL learners. Nonetheless, further investigation on learning environment as another motivational factor is one of the areas that future research can venture into

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study. This study is rooted from Pintrich & De Groot 's (1990) motivational constructs in learning. In order to stay motivated, learners need to have three types of motivations, which are called value components, expectancy components and affective components. Value components are sub-divided into (i)intrinsic goal orientation, (ii) extrinsic goal orientation and (iii) task value belief. Next, learners need expectancy components. Learners' motivation should come from themselves

(Rahmat et al, 2021). Expectancy components refer to (i) students' perception of self- efficacy and (ii) control beliefs for teaching.

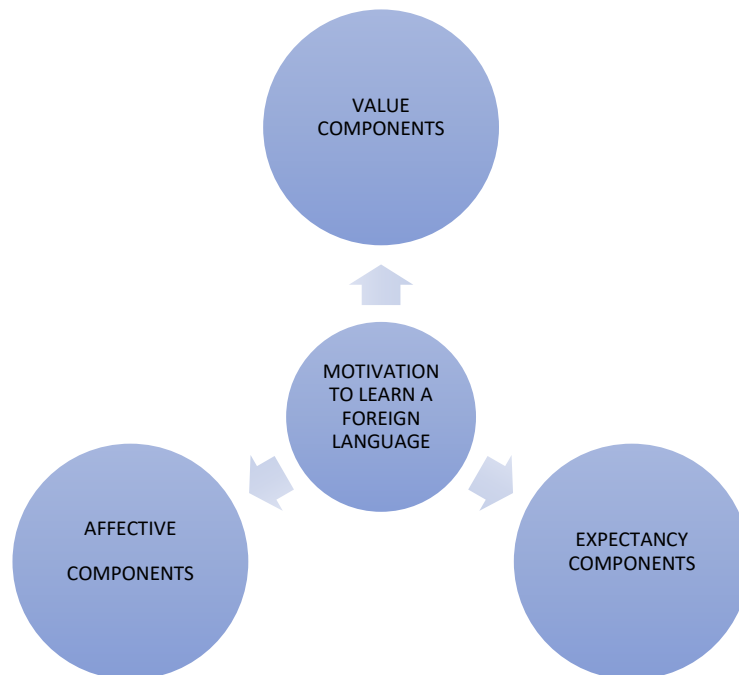


Figure 1- Conceptual Framework of the Study- Motivational Components in Foreign language Learning

Methodology

This quantitative study is carried out to explore motivation factors for learning among undergraduates. A purposive sample of 131 participants responded to the survey. The instrument used is a 5 Likert-scale survey and is rooted from motivational scale by Pintrich & De Groot (1990) to reveal the scales as shown in table 1 below. Section A has 3 items on demographic profile. Section B, which is Value Components has three variables: intrinsic goal orientation, extrinsic goal orientation and task value beliefs. This section has 12 items. Next is section C, Expectancy Components is divided into two variables: Students' perception of Self Efficacy and Control Beliefs for learning. There are 7 items in this section. The last section, section D is called Affective Components, which has 5 items.

Table 1

Distribution of Items in the Survey

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

Table 2

*Reliability of Survey***Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.867	24

Table 2 shows the reliability of the survey. The analysis shows a Cronbach alpha of .867, 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

Q1. Gender

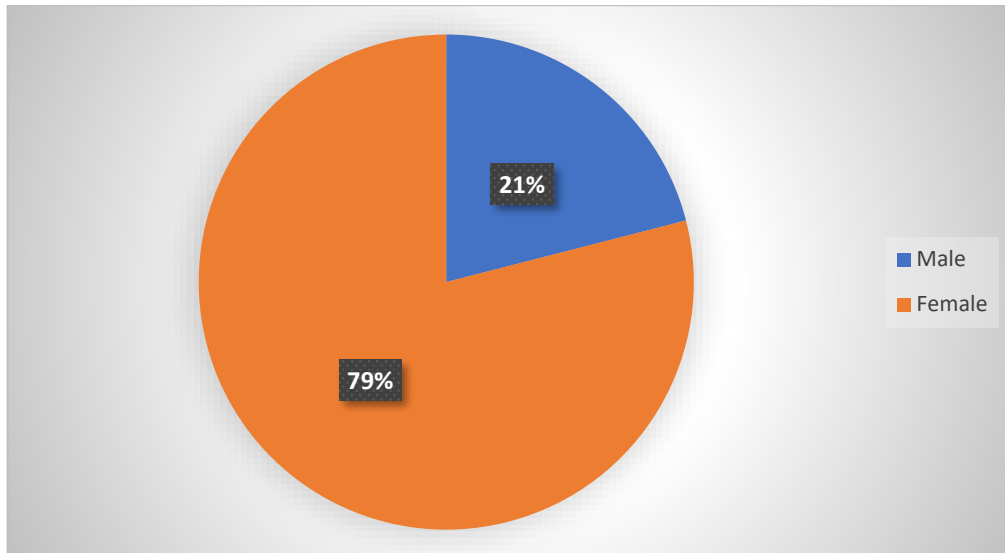


Figure 2 - Percentage for Gender

Figure 2 presents the percentage for gender. From the total number of 131 of participants, 21% of the participants were male students and 79% were female students.

Q2 Age

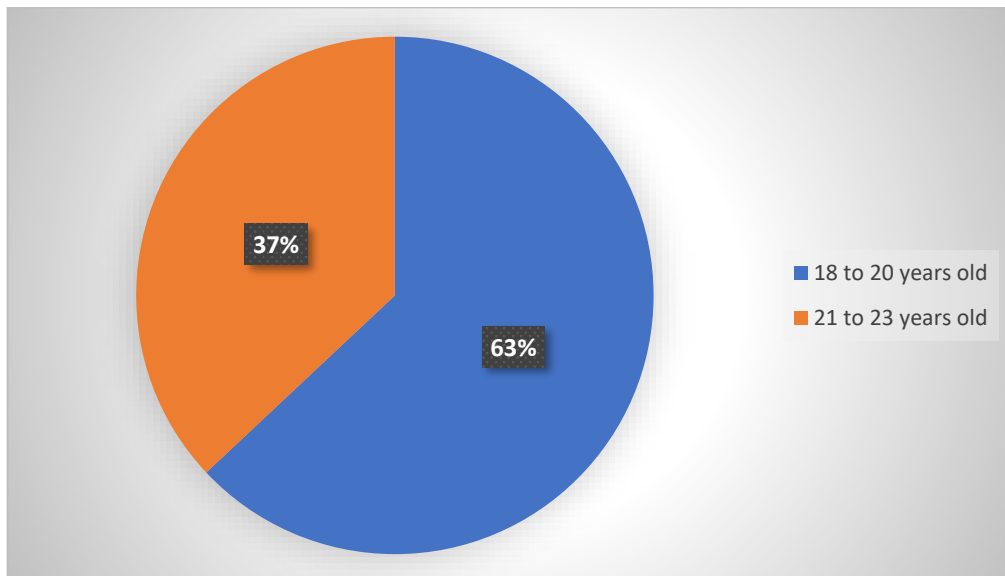


Figure 3 - Percentage for Age

Figure 3 displays the percentage of age for the participants. Majority of the participants or 63% of them were between 18 to 20 years old learners, while the remaining 37% of the participants were between 21 to 23 years old learners.

Q3-Discipline

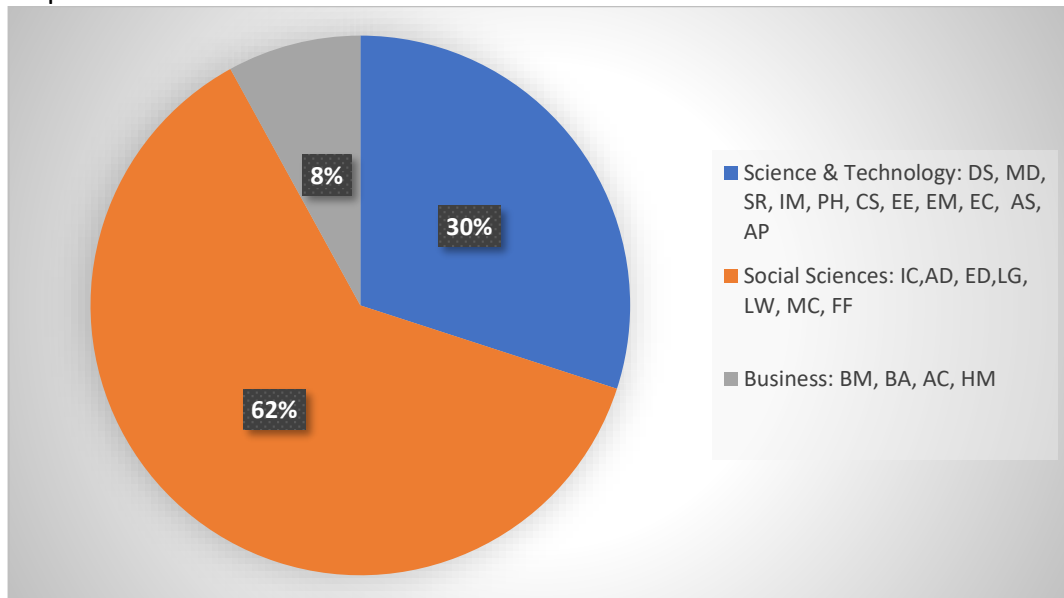


Figure 4 - Percentage for Discipline

Figure 4 illustrates the participants' type of discipline. More than half of the participants or 62% of the participants were from Social Sciences disciplines and 30% of the participants were from Science & Technology discipline. Only 8% of the participants were from Business disciplines.

Findings for Value component

This section presents data to answer research question 1- How do value components influence learners' motivation to learn a foreign language? Value components are categorised into (i) intrinsic goal orientation, (ii) extrinsic goal orientation and (iii) task value beliefs.

(i) Intrinsic Goal Orientation (4 items)

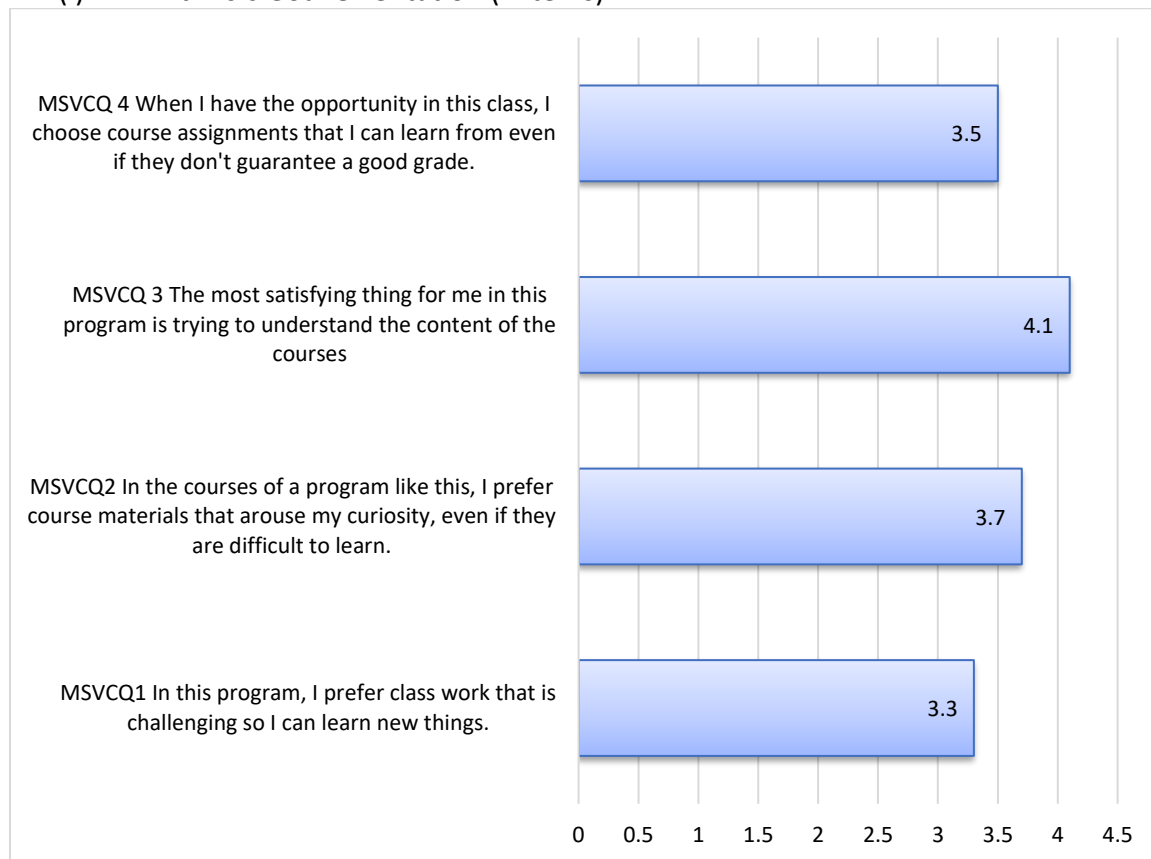


Figure 5 - Mean for Intrinsic Goal Orientation

Figure 5 indicates the mean score for Value Component, specifically on Intrinsic Goal Orientation. The highest mean score is 4.1 represents that the participants believed that the most satisfying thing for them in the program was trying to understand the content of the courses. The second highest mean score is 3.7 denotes that the participants claimed in the courses of a program like this, they preferred course materials that arouse their curiosity, even if they were difficult to learn. The next finding with the mean score of 3.5. the participants thought that when they had the opportunity in the class, they chose course assignments that they can learn from even if they were not sure getting a good grade. The lowest mean score, which is 3.3 illustrates that the participants considered that in the program, they preferred challenging class work so they can learn new things.

(ii) Extrinsic Goal Orientation (3 items)

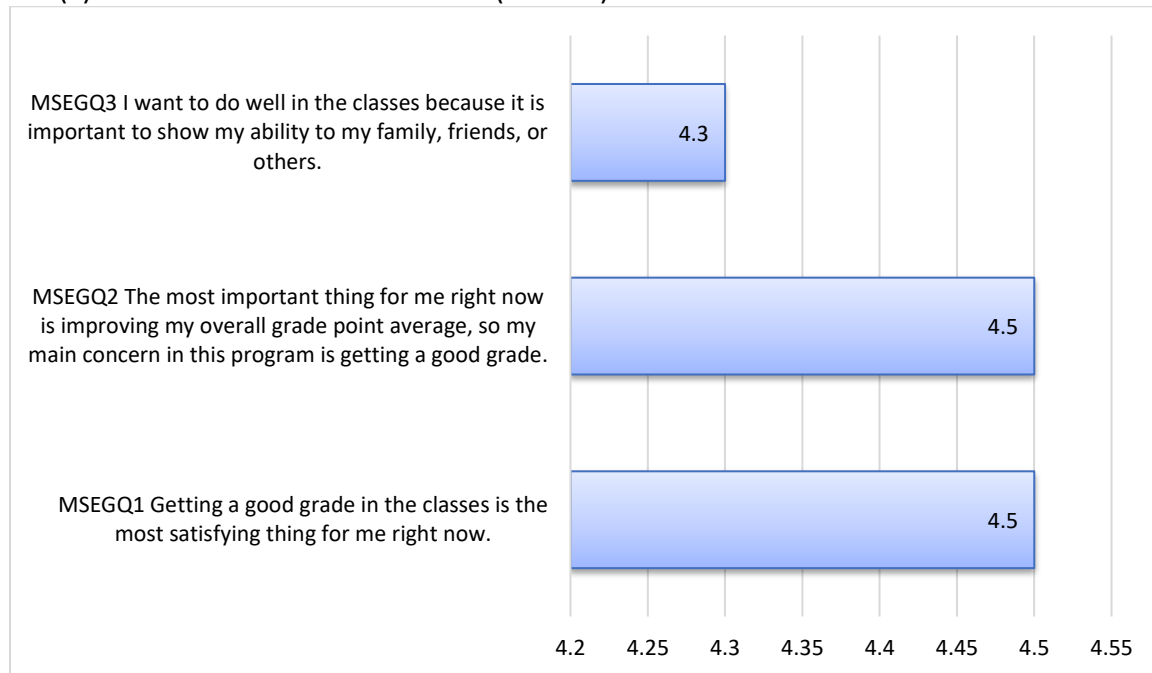


Figure 6 - Mean for Extrinsic Goal Orientation

Figure 6 shows the mean scores for Extrinsic Goal Orientation. There are two items that share the highest mean score (4.5). The first one is participants believed that getting a good grade in the classes is the most satisfying thing for them. The second one is participants believed that getting a good grade is the most important thing so that their overall grade point average could be achieved. The lowest mean score from the finding is 4.3, which shows that the participants wanted to do well in classes because it is important to display their ability to their friends and family.

(iii) Task Value Beliefs (5 items)

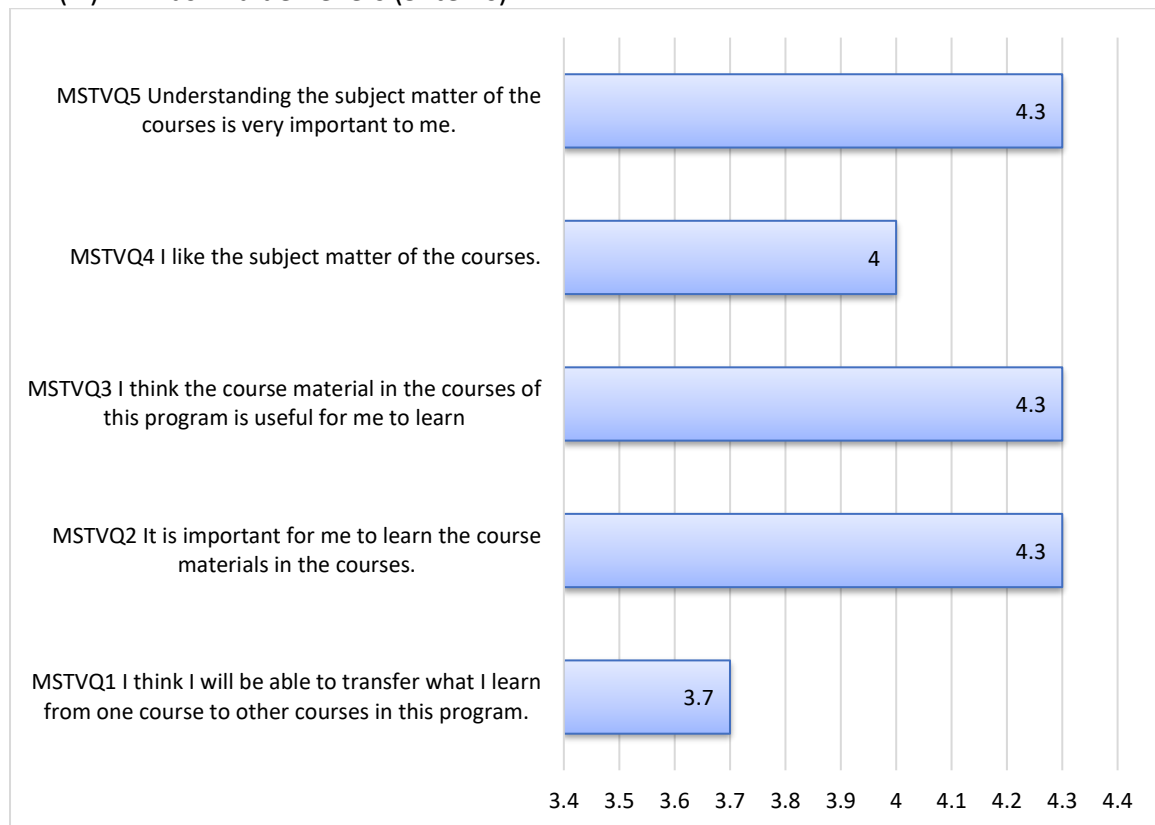


Figure 7 - Mean for Task Value Beliefs

The mean scores for Task Value Beliefs are presented in Figure 7. Three items share the highest mean score (4.3). The first one is participants believed that learning the course materials in the courses is important. The second one is participants found it useful to learn the course materials of their program. The third one is participants believed that understanding the subject matter of the courses is very important to them. The next mean score is 4, which is participants liked the subject matter of the courses. Finally, the lowest mean score is 3.7, which is the participants thought that they would be able to transfer what they had learned from one course to other courses in the program.

Findings for Expectancy

This section presents data to answer research question 2- How do expectancy components influence learners' motivation to learn a foreign language? In the context of this study, expectancy refers to (i) students perception of self-efficacy, and (ii) control beliefs for learning.

(i) Students' Perception of Self-Efficacy (5 items)

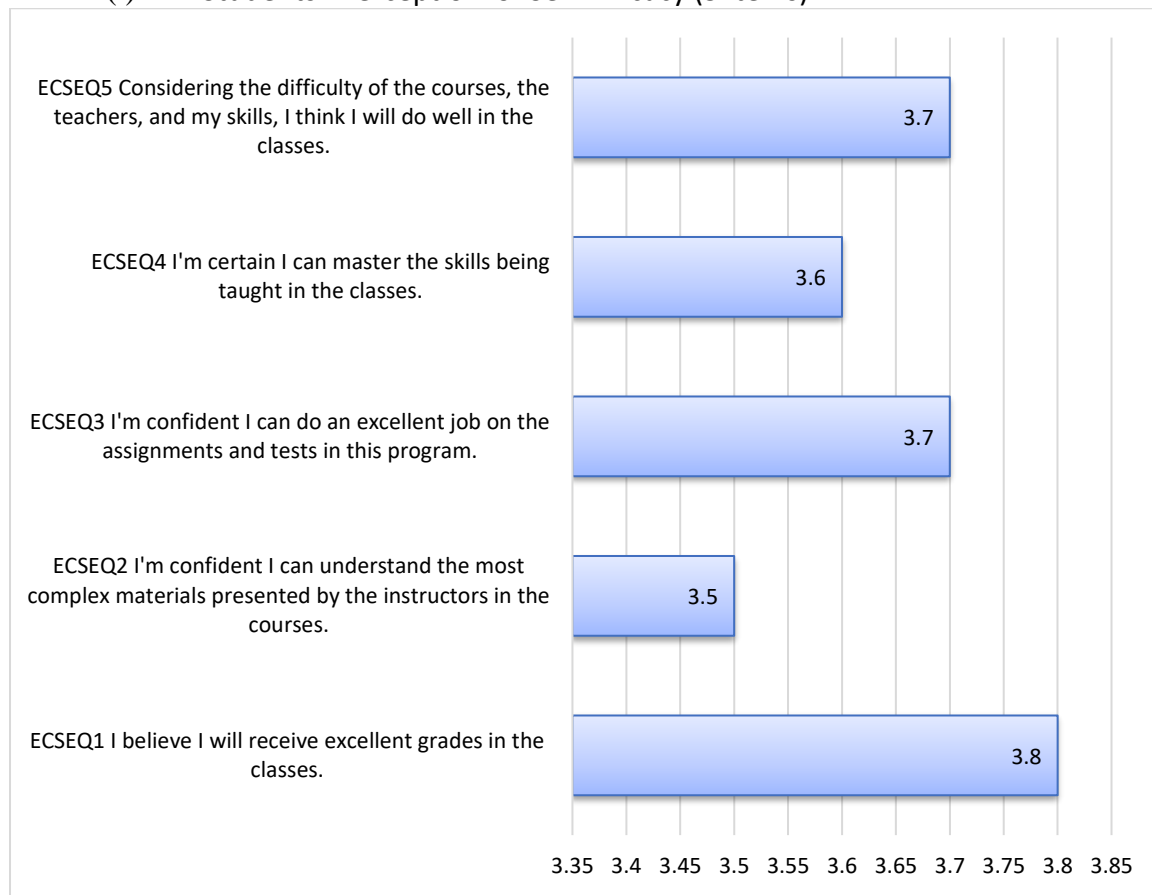


Figure 7 - Mean for Students' Perception of Self-Efficacy

Figure 7 exhibits the mean scores for the first Expectancy Component which is Students' Perception of Self-Efficacy. The highest mean score is 3.8 which is the participants believed that they will receive excellent grades in classes. The second highest mean score (3.7) is shared by two items. The first one is participants were confident that they could do an excellent work on the assignments and tests of their program. The second one is participants believed that they would do well in classes considering the teachers, their own skills and the difficulty of the courses. The next mean score is 3.6 which illustrates that the participants were certain that they could master the skills being taught in classes. Lastly, the lowest mean score (3.5) shows that the participants were confident that they could understand the most complex materials presented by the instructors in the courses.

(a) Control Beliefs For Learning (2 items)

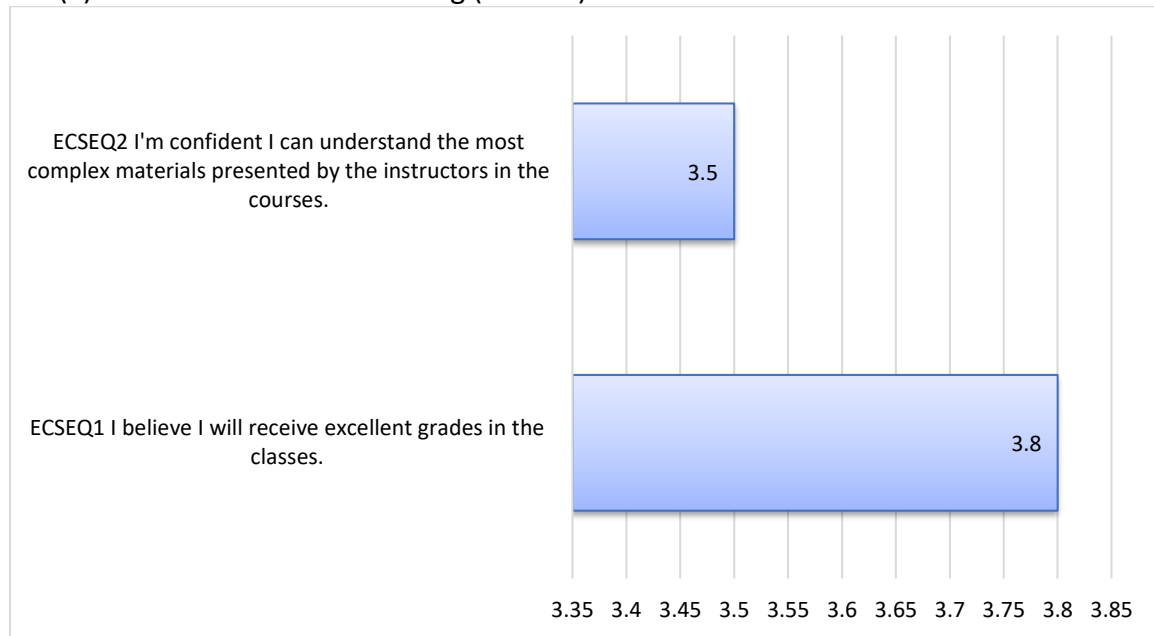


Figure 8 - Mean for Control Beliefs for Learning

Figure 8 shows the mean score of the second variable in Expectancy Component. All items recorded mean scores above 4.00. The highest mean score of 4.4 indicated that the participants believed that with great efforts, they would be able to understand the course materials. While the other item with a mean score of 4.3 indicates that the respondents believed that if done appropriately, they would be able to successfully learn the course materials.

Findings for Affective

This section presents data to answer research question 3- How do affective components influence learners’ motivation to learn a foreign language?

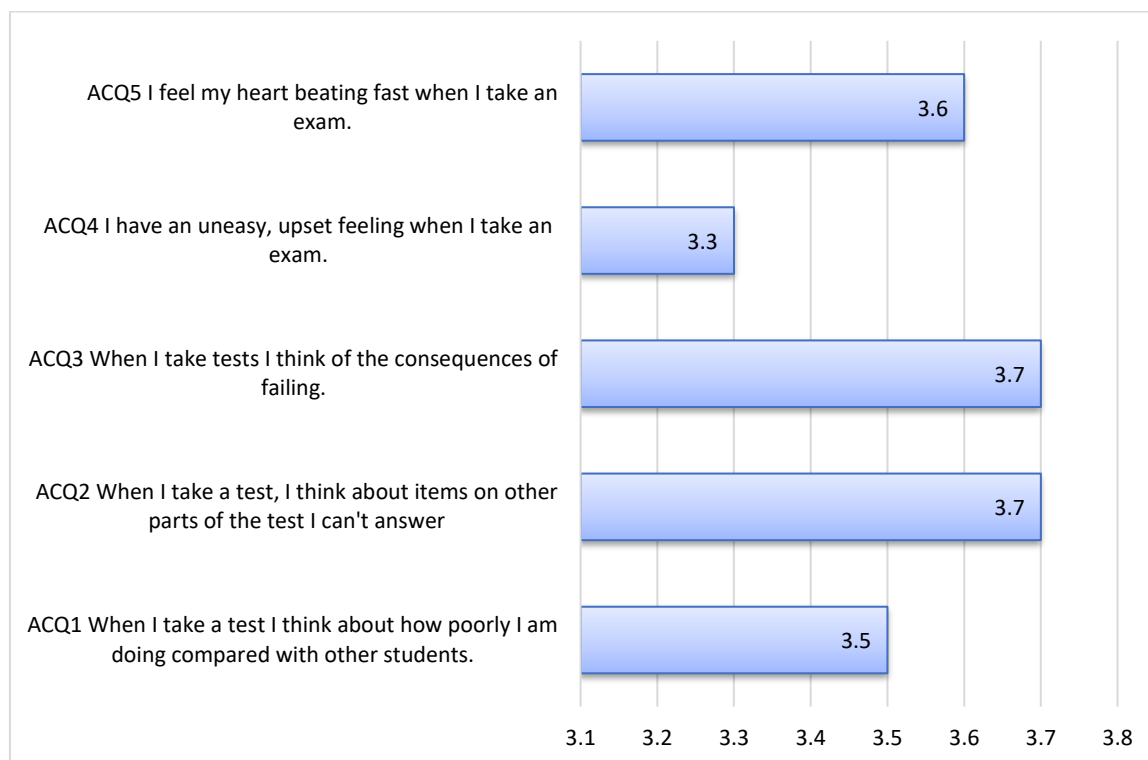


Figure 9- Mean for Affective Components

Figure 9 presents the mean scores for the 5 items for the Affective Component. Generally, the mean scores are similar as they fall within the range between 3.30 and 3.70. Item 2 and 3 recorded the same mean score (M=3.70), indicating that the respondents thought about the parts of the test which they could not answer and the consequences of failing upon taking a test. Item 4- respondents experienced an uneasy and upset feeling when taking an exam, received the lowest mean of 3.5. Other items received mean scores of 3.5 and 3.6, respectively indicating that the respondents thought about how poorly they did compared to other students and that they felt their heart beating fast when taking an exam

Findings for Relationship between the motivational components

This section presents data to answer research question 4- Is there a relationship between all motivational components?

To determine if there is a significant association in the mean scores between value, expectancy and affective components data is analysed using SPSS for correlations. Results are presented separately in table 3, 4, and 5 below.

Table 3

*Correlation between Value and Expectancy Components***Correlations**

		VALUE	EXPECTANCY
VALUE	Pearson Correlation	1	.678**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	131	131
EXPECTANCY	Pearson Correlation	.678**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	131	131

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

Table 3 shows there is an association between value and expectancy components. Correlation analysis shows that there is a high significant association between value and expectancy components ($r=.678^{**}$) 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 value and expectancy components.

Table 4

*Correlation between Expectancy and Affective Components***Correlations**

		EXPECTANCY	AFFECTIVE
EXPECTANCY	Pearson Correlation	1	-.089
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.310
	N	131	131
AFFECTIVE	Pearson Correlation	-.089	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.310	
	N	131	131

Table 4 shows there is a negative association between expectancy and affective components. Correlation analysis shows that there is a no significant association between expectancy and affective components ($r=-.089$) and ($p=.000$).

Table 5

*Corelation between Affective and Value components***Correlations**

		AFFECTIVE	VALUE
AFFECTIVE	Pearson Correlation	1	.133
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.130
	N	131	131
VALUE	Pearson Correlation	.133	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.130	
	N	131	131

Table 5 shows there is no association between affective and value components. Correlation analysis shows that there is a no significant association between affective and value components. ($r=.133$) and ($p=.000$).

Conclusion*Summary of Findings and Discussions*

The influence of value components to learners' motivation to learn a foreign language.

This study illustrated that value components have appeared as a crucial motivation component in foreign language learning. The learners are more motivated to learn when they are certain that the subject is important for them to reach their future aspirations. The willingness to study hard and positive attitudes in foreign language learning due to intrinsic goal orientation, extrinsic goal orientation and task value beliefs. This discovery supports findings from other studies by (Pintrich and De Groot's, 1990; Miao and Wang's, 2023; Zhang et al., 2021).

The influence of expectancy components to learners' motivation to learn a foreign language

The findings of this study revealed that expectancy components have solid influence in motivating learners of foreign language. It can be said that the learners possessed substantial expectancy components if they have strong expectations of favourable outcome, and they take control on their ways in achieving success in their foreign language learning journey (Nagle, 2021). Students' perception of self-efficacy and control beliefs for learning are the two main variables in expectancy components in motivation. The findings on expectancy components in this study shared similar discoveries with studies from (Ebata, 2008; Pintrich and De Groot's, 1990; Nagle, 2021; Hu & McGeown, 2020).

The influence of affective components to learners' motivation to learn a foreign language.

The final components, which is Affective components refer to learners' feelings or emotional state throughout learning activities. The findings of this study disclosed that affective components did not have important relationship with motivation. This latest discovery has further verified studies that have been conducted by Pintrich and (De Groot's, 1990; Ebata, 2008; Zhang et al., 2021).

The relationship between all motivational components

The findings on the correlation analyses between all the motivational components in this study revealed several interesting discoveries. Firstly, there is a highly positive associations between value and expectancy components. This displays variables such as intrinsic goal orientation, extrinsic goal orientation, task value beliefs, students' perception of self-efficacy and control beliefs for learning are related. The higher the mean scores for these variables show the better the quality of the motivation that the learners have, and these will produce better results in their foreign language studies. Meanwhile, the final two correlation analyses unveiled similar findings; there is a no significant association between expectancy and affective components and there is a no significant relationship between value and affective components. This discovery exhibits that affective component which is the learners' feelings during foreign language learning process will not affect their motivations in achieving success in foreign language learning.

Pedagogical Contributions of the Study

There are several significant pedagogical contributions of the study that can be practiced in foreign language classrooms. First, the curriculum writer could design the relevant syllabus, which focuses on learners' value and expectancy components of motivations. For example, the contents that remind them on their intrinsic and extrinsic goal orientations will push the learners further in their learning process. Curriculum writer should also concentrate on producing authentic materials and related to Malaysian settings, since the learners will be more motivated in learning when they realised that they could use their knowledge in foreign language classroom outside of their classroom. Numerous studies have indicated that authentic materials will make foreign language class more enjoyable because the learners are able to relate the knowledge with their interactions outside of the classroom (Mara & Mohamad, 2021; Elmoisheer & Elsayy, 2022; Gonen & Kizilay, 2022; Beway et al, 2023).

Secondly, the head of the departments of the institution should train the foreign language teachers in adapting the use of authentic materials in the classroom. Furthermore, the materials should be adapted from time to time based on the rapid advancement of technology in the present time. Learners should be familiarised with current terminologies which exist in electronics gadgets and paraphernalia.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study only focused on the relationships between all motivational components in foreign language learning classroom, which occurred in tertiary learning institution in Malaysia. A very limited number of this kind of study, have been conducted worldwide and it would be interesting if some researchers can conduct similar studies with additional variables of motivations and it would definitely improve the learners' learning experiences in foreign language classroom.

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