



## Students' English Language Proficiency and their Academic Motivation

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**Received:** 06 October 2022, **Published:** 17 December 2022

### Abstract

There have been a great number of empirical studies undertaken on student academic motivation and its potential antecedents; However, in the context of studying English as a second language (ESL), the significance that English Language Proficiency plays in academic motivation is largely ignored. As a result, the purpose of this study was to investigate the impact that ESL students' level of English Language Proficiency had on their level of academic motivation. This study involved the participation of 311 students from secondary schools in Multan city. By employing a quantitative research method, the findings indicated that English Language Proficiency plays a significant role in enhancing students' academic motivation. The findings further followed by the discussion, implications and the constraints of the study.

### Keywords

English Language Proficiency, Academic Motivation, ESL Learners, Quantitative Study.

**DOI Number:** 10.47067/jlcc.v4i4.144

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## Introduction

The academic motivation of students is widely recognized as a critical factor in the effectiveness of their learning. That is to say, a significant number of educators are firmly of the opinion that kids who exhibit higher levels of academic motivation are more likely to achieve success in educational settings (Bond & Bedenlier, 2019). This is the reason why teachers in any kind of instructional-learning setting always try to boost their students' academic motivation and learning satisfaction (Abdelrady & Akram, 2022; Kahu et al., 2020), as low interest of students hinders them in attaining desired learning goals (Akram et al., 2021). To a vast number of educators, especially those who teach English as a foreign language (EFL), the ways in which students' academic motivation can be boosted have, nevertheless, remained a mystery (Wang, 2022). According to Dornyei and Ushioda (2013), academic motivation refers to the beliefs, aspirations, and values that students hold that decide which academic or school-related activities they will pursue and remain engaged in. Academic motivation is defined as "the enjoyment of school learning characterized by a mastery orientation; curiosity; tenacity; task endogeneity; and the learning of tough, complex, and innovative tasks," as stated by Wentzel and Wigfield (2009). Through the methods that they employ in the classroom, educators play a critical part in creating academic drive in preteens and teenagers (Gasiewski et al., 2012) and in ensuring that middle schools are able to meet the needs of their students (Hughes & Chen, 2011). Engaging in methods that create respectful and loving interactions, encouraging and challenging students, and implementing real learning activities are some of the ways in which teachers can take into consideration the particular qualities of young adolescents (Meece et al., 2003). According to Dotterer and Lowe (2011), students who are able to devote a greater amount of time and energy to the successful completion of their educational tasks often perform better than their classmates who are unable to spend an adequate amount of time to the successful completion of their responsibilities. This finding was based on a comparison of the academic performance of the two groups, which pertains to the significance of academic motivation in an English language learning environment. Yin and Wang (2016) came to a similar conclusion, proposing that students who actively participate in the various activities and assignments that take place in the classroom have a greater chance of achieving success.

There have been a great number of empirical studies undertaken on student academic motivation and its potential antecedents, such as elements associated to the classroom instructor (Pawlak et al., 2021; Nguyen et al., 2022), context-related factors (Virtanen et al., 2015), and students' personal factors in promoting students' academic Motivation. This can be seen as a response to the fact that there have been many empirical investigations into student Academic Motivation (Chen et al., 2021). However, the impact that students' level of English language Proficiency has on their level of academic motivation within an ESL context has very seldom been investigated. While students' English language proficiency has been determined as a key influence in enhancing their academic performance (Martirosyan, Hwang, & Wanjohi, 2015) adjustment into the educational institutions (Andrade, 2009) academic skills and motivation (Rose et al., 2020).

Research have revealed that students show dissatisfaction with their level of academic engagement for a number of reasons, including incompetent teachers (Akram, 2020) and a

lack of resources (Akram & Yang, 2021). When it comes to studying a foreign language, students frequently struggle with feelings of fear when it comes time to speak in class (Akram et al., 2019). Therefore, students' level of English language Proficiency plays a significant role to which those students are motivated to learn.

In relation to the explanation, A person's capacity to use language for a variety of communicative objectives is what is meant by the term "language competence." Users who are considered proficient are said to have a good command of the language. This means that they are able to understand the language without any problems, communicate a variety of concepts clearly both verbally and in writing, and converse with other speakers without any problems. Language competence is typically measured using five performance indicators: accuracy, fluency, complexity, appropriateness, and capacity (Richards, 2018).

### **Accuracy**

The ability to produce language in a manner that is correct in terms of its pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar is referred to as accuracy. If neither our spoken nor written communication has any grammatical mistakes, we will receive a high grade for this metric.

### **Fluency**

The ability to smoothly articulate ideas and to make effective use of linguistic resources in order to maintain the flow of our communication and prevent communication breakdowns is what we mean when we talk about fluency. When we are able to organize our thoughts in such a way that they are consistent with one another and flow beautifully together, we have displayed fluency in our writing.

### **Complexity**

The term "complexity" refers to our capacity to use intricate language; more specifically, it asks whether or not we are able to draw from an extensive lexicon and grammar. A beginner level speaker's speech is characterized by the use of simpler language, in contrast to an advanced level speaker's speech, which is characterized by the use of a wider variety of vocabulary and sentence structures.

### **Appropriateness**

Appropriateness refers to determining if the language we use is pertinent to the issue at hand, as well as appropriate for the audience and the goal we are addressing.

### **Capacity**

Capacity refers to the amount of what we know that can be used to debate and write about a wide variety of subjects in a variety of contexts (formal or informal) and with varying degrees of sophistication (superficial or deep). Capacity, in the context of language instruction, refers to the degree to which a teacher is able to draw on their level of proficiency in the target language to explain concepts, give examples, choose appropriate teaching materials, model proper language use, and give useful feedback on student progress.

In addition, one of the most essential aspects of a student's academic performance has been demonstrated to be language proficiency. Izatullah, Nasir, & Gul (2022) also identified a positive influence of English language proficiency on students' academic achievement. For example, the scores on IELTS (that serve as an indicator of language proficiency) serve as an

indicator of a student's performance at the university level (Feast, 2002). In a similar vein, Othman and Chuah (2021) recognized that the fluency of English as a second language functions as an activating feeling that encourages language learners' engagement. This is due to the fact that students who take pleasure in acquiring a second language are more likely to remain actively engaged in learning activities.

Because English language proficiency and academic motivation are so valuable and important in learning environments, a huge number of studies have been done on these emotional factors and their effects on learning (e.g., Rose et al., 2020; Azar & Sahar, 2021). Yet, it has been hard to figure out how these factors might affect students' academic motivation in English language learning environments. To fill in these gaps, the purpose of this study was to look at the following goals.

- To investigate students' academic motivation in English language learning environments.
- To examine the relationship between students' English language Proficiency and academic motivation.

### **Theoretical Framework**

One of the most important foundations of effective teaching is fostering students' intrinsic motivation to learn (Kim & Frick, 2011). Learners who are intrinsically interested in participating in and benefiting from their educational experiences have high levels of motivation (Garavan et al., 2010). Within the framework of the theory of planned behavior (TPB), the term "motivation to learn" refers to a variable that represents an attitude. Students' motivation can be divided into two categories: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic incentive. Both of these categories are common. When a student is motivated from within, they are said to be intrinsically motivated. Intrinsic motivation can take many forms. Students who are strongly involved in their own education for reasons such as uniqueness, interest, or gratification, or for the purpose of achieving their own academic and personal goals, are said to be intrinsically motivated. Students who are motivated by their intrinsic interests prefer to utilize tactics that require more effort from them and that permit them to assimilate information in a more intense manner. Students who are driven by things outside of themselves have a tendency to do the least amount of effort required to achieve the greatest benefit (Afzal et al., 2010). The following hypothesis was developed as a result of the findings of this study on the measurement of intrinsic motivation:

There is a positive relationship between students' English language proficiency and academic motivation.

### **Research Method**

#### **Research Design and Instrumentation**

In order to investigate whether or not there is a correlation between Classroom Enjoyment and the Students' academic Motivation among secondary school students, a quantitative design was selected because it was the most suitable framework to represent results via numerical representation (Osborne, 2008).

The information was gathered from the pupils by means of a questionnaire comprised of two scales namely English language Proficiency scale (ELP) and Intrinsic Motivation Inventory scale (IMI).

Students' English language Proficiency was assessed by using a scale developed on the prescribed indicators by Richards (2018). The ELP scale was comprised of five items by utilizing a Likert scale with five points, with responses ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree".

Students' academic motivation on the other hand was assessed by 11 items adapted from the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory scale (IMI), which was developed by McAuley, Duncan and Tammen (1989). The (IMI) use a Likert scale with five points, with the first point being "Strongly disagree" and the fifth point being "Strongly agree."

### Participants and Data Collection

The population of the study consisted of all of the pupils enrolled in secondary schools in the city of Multan. The researcher handed out questionnaires to each and every school on their own initiative, and then used the technique of purposive sampling to collect data, as this method enables a researcher to select a specific demographic of respondents to survey (Rai & Thapa, 2015). In this regard, questionnaires (as a tool for data collection) were handed out to 589 students in a targeted manner; however, only 311 students filled out the surveys in their whole.

### Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was investigated with the help of the Cronbach Alpha Coefficients scale. The Alpha Coefficients values of all of the items on the questionnaire, were strong enough collectively (Bonett, 2003), meaning that 0.81 was the overall value, to carry the genuine study.

**Table 1: Reliability of the Questionnaire**

Variable	No of Items	Alpha Value
English language Proficiency scale	5	.81
Intrinsic Motivation Inventory scale	11	.82

### Data Analysis

For the purpose of data analysis, the statistical software package known as SPSS (2008) was used. In order to conduct an analysis of the data, descriptive statistics of the sample as well as inferential statistics based on regression analysis were utilized.

Students' academic motivation in English language learning environments was investigated using descriptive analysis via mean and standard deviation. The average mean score of all of the survey items was greater than 3, which signifies an acceptable level of academic motivation (Afifi et al., 2011).

**Table 2: Descriptive Analysis**

Items	Mean	SD
I really like learning English.	3.5	1.2
Learning English is fun.	3.6	1.3

Learning English is something that I would characterize as being really interesting.	3.4	1.4
I think English learning is quite enjoyable.	3.5	1.3
I believe that my English skills are above average.	3.3	1.2
I believe that I am fairly proficient in English.	3.4	1.4
My command of the English language meets all of my expectations.	3.5	1.3
I am proficient in English language learning-related duties.	3.6	1.1
I devote much effort to English language study.	3.7	1.3
I work really hard to improve my English skills.	3.5	1.4
It is essential for me to improve my English language skills.	3.5	1.6
	3.45	1.4

### Research Hypothesis

To investigate the extent to which Students' English language Proficiency explicate their academic motivation, a linear regression analysis was employed. The findings indicated that Students' English language Proficiency was significantly associated with their academic motivation, as the obtained p-value was less than 0.5. On account of this, the hypothesis was accepted successfully.

**Table 3: Linear Regression Analysis**

Academic Motivation			
Independent Variable	$\beta$	P-value	R-Square
English language Proficiency	.21	.00**	.41

### Discussion

This research tried to achieve two different goals at the same time. To begin, we investigated the level of students' academic motivation in English language learning environments. Secondly, the viability of a two-factor hypothetical model was investigated to explain the relation of English language Proficiency with students' academic motivation, as well as to determine the most important aspects of the process and the most effective route forward. The findings of the study provide statistical support for the conceptualization of the academic motivation mechanism that students at the secondary level employ. The findings revealed an acceptable level of academic motivation among students. This result is in consent with the previous studies such as (Jiang, Rosenzweig & Gaspard, 2018; Alkan & Arslan, 2019).

In addition, the hypothesis of the study also affirmed that English language Proficiency positively influences students' academic motivation. The results are also aligned with the theoretical foundations of the study, and signifies the assumption of theory of planned behavior, which posited a relationship between language Proficiency and academic motivation(Afzal et al., 2010).

Based on a finding of the study and literature review, the following recommendations can be presented for future research. Further research can be carried out with larger sample size, to strengthens the findings of the current study. The influence of wide range of demographic variables, such as other subjects, medium of instruction, socioeconomic status and types of schooling should be investigated to acquire clearer picture of the findings.

## Conclusion

The findings of this study broaden our understanding of the significant role English language Proficiency in explaining why kids are academically motivated. These findings should be expanded upon in further research by integrating additional individual difference elements in the explanation of student academic motivation. Some examples of these variables are the learning environment, self-directed learning, self-efficacy, and the desire for cognition. Our study is an important first step toward the important goal of demonstrating a number of significant correlations between personality, intrinsic and extrinsic drive, and importance of English language Proficiency in the learning of a classroom. It provides an excellent framework for additional research on these issues and identifies some potential ways that educators could employ to enhance students' motivation and achievement by taking into account the influences that students' personalities have.

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