

## *Language Learning Motivation Among Vietnamese EFL Students*

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### **Abstract**

This study investigated the degrees of language learning motivation among Vietnamese EFL full-time and part-time students, focusing on their instrumental and integrative motivations. The study's results, involving 271 students from a public higher education institution, revealed that Vietnamese students have high levels of language learning motivation. Full-time students, particularly, have higher levels of integrative motivation, whereas part-time students have higher levels of instrumental motivation. Furthermore, the current study's qualitative data reveals EFL students' intuitive understanding of the term 'language learning motivation' was rather close to that of the literature. Upon their consideration of the importance of English, EFL students in Vietnam have positive attitudes toward learning a second language and disclose numerous approaches to sustain their learning process. Finally, based on the study's findings, suggestions and recommendations for teachers have been highlighted.

Keywords: Language Learning Motivation, Instrumental Motivation, Integrative Motivation, Vietnamese Students

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## Introduction

Upon the effects of ongoing globalization worldwide, the need for the cultivation of English as a global language has been rising, especially when it is believed that undergraduate students should enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century's workforce with the 4Cs (Critical thinking, Collaboration, Creativity, and Communication) (Halvorsen, 2018). As commonly recognized as a lingua franca, English plays a significant role in the promotion of the process of globalization and internationalization (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Duong & Chua, 2016) occurring in most of the world's corners, including developing nations (Hoang, 2013; Q. A. Le, 2016; T. T. N. Le, 2016). Having been considered one of the most dynamically emerging economies (Tung, 2018), Vietnam has a rising demand for high-quality human resources (Kieu, 2010; Van & Phuong, 2021), and proficiency in English is one of the necessary requirements (Nguyen, 2016) because of its importance in promoting the country's economy (Vu & Peters, 2021). In this context, EFL graduates who possess a good command of English can have advantages in future employment. Since exchanging ideas and information is the main purpose of language (Deveci et al., 2021; Koch & Takashima, 2021; Vieluf & Göbel, 2019), the main goal of English language teaching (ELT) is evidently to assist students in improving their language skills and competence. Motivation to learn English, in this case, seems to be the key to any possible success or failure (Brown, 2000) of difficult tasks, including acquiring language content (e.g. grammar, structure, vocabulary), or language skills (e.g. listening comprehension, pronunciation), developing some degree of fluency, and so forth (Guan, 2019; Pinillos, 2021; Rost, 2013). Also, other aspects of the language (e.g. intercultural communication) should be cultivated to achieve higher levels of competence so that the effectiveness of communication across cultures can be facilitated (Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Byram, 2021; Deardorff, 2014). Nonetheless, it is widely agreed that learning a foreign language is a difficult, time-consuming process (Robert C Gardner, 2001), and the success of second language (L2) learners depends on the extent of their desire and efforts in goal achievement (Gilakjani et al., 2012). Therefore, it is believed that motivation is responsible for the determination of human behavior as it helps energize and give concentrated directions during the learning process (Dörnyei, 1998). In this context, the focal point of the present study, therefore, is to quantitatively and qualitatively explore Vietnamese EFL students' language learning motivation and pertinent approaches EFL students have been strategizing to sustain their learning aspirations.

## Research Questions

Based on the research aims, this study sought answers to the following research questions:

**Research question 1:** What is the language learning motivation level of EFL students?

**Research question 2:** How is language learning motivation defined by Vietnamese EFL students?

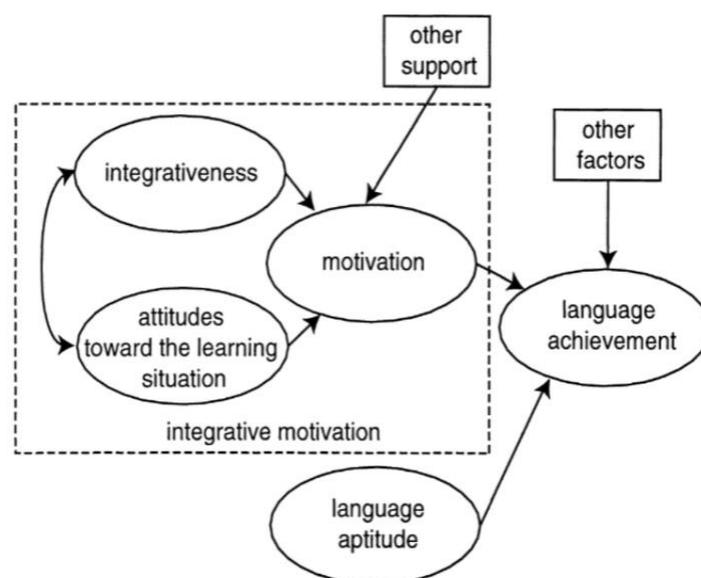
**Research question 3:** At what level do students evaluate their language learning motivation? Why?

**Research question 4:** How do EFL students think about the importance of language learning motivation?

**Research question 5:** How does EFL students' language learning motivation develop?

## Literature Review

There are a variety of studies and experiments that support the importance of motivation in learning and teaching a second language, such as Alizadeh (2016), Mirzaei and Forouzandeh (2013), Oga-Baldwin et al. (2017), Peng and Fu (2021), Tsai (2012), or Vaezi (2008); and theories and models are also offered to investigate motivation in the second language acquisition, e.g. Clément et al. (1994), Dörnyei (1998), or Gardner (2004). Researchers and teachers seem to agree that motivation plays a crucial factor as it influences the degrees of rate and success of L2 learners. Gardner (2001, p. 2) defines that “motivation is a central element along with language aptitude in determining success in learning another language in the classroom setting”. In consideration of the emotions of L2 learners, Dörnyei (1998) states that motivation plays the primary impetus to initiate the learning of L2, and becomes the driving force to sustain the long and tedious process. Such perspectives place a significant emphasis on the important role of motivation to any L2 learner. An individual, accordingly, who only has language aptitude, might not become a successful learner without sufficient motivation regardless of her/his remarkable abilities (Dörnyei, 2001). In contrast, a learner who has language deficiencies can still manage to be successful thanks to high levels of motivation. Being considered a socio-cultural aspect involved in the process of language learning (Gardner, 2001), studies attempted to explore motivation in numerous constructs, of which the integrative motivation and instrumental motivation appear to be mostly analyzed. The two types of motivation were offered by Robert Gardner and Wallace Lambert in 1972, categorizing L2 learners into two groups (Mehrpour & Vojdani, 2012). L2 learners with the instrumental motivation acquire a language to obtain specific goals, such as advancing professions or careers, reading technical documents, having job promotion, or earning higher salary, and so forth, whereas ones with the integrative motivation would like to integrate into a (new) culture “of a second language group and become involved in social interchange in that group” (Brown 2000, p. 162). Accordingly, an instrumentally motivated L2 learner has pragmatic considerations, while an integratively motivated learner is more interested in learning and understanding the target language’s culture and people (Vaezi, 2008).



**Figure 1: A simple representation of the socio-educational model**

Source: Gardner (2001)

The socio-psychological model divides students' language learning purposes into two categories: integrative and instrumental (Vakilifard & Khaleghizadeh, 2021). Similarly, Gardner (2001) explained that the variable 'Integrativeness' shows the reflection of L2 learners' interest to get closer to an alien community. In other words, students may have a positive attitude toward the target language speakers and culture when having integrative orientation; this orientation, in reality, encourages L2 learners to seek culture-oriented resources, such as movies, songs, and literature, or stimulates them to communicate in the target language with people from the target community; all these goals are considered invisible (Robert C Gardner, 2001; Vakilifard & Khaleghizadeh, 2021). To illustrate the connection between the two variables *integrativeness* and *attitude* of L2 learners, Gardner (2001, p. 5) explained that it involves "emotional identification with another cultural group", which means that L2 learners' favorable attitude toward the community can be established, resulting in an integrative orientation toward learning the second language. The instrumental orientation, nevertheless, encourages learners to be proficient in the target language, aiming to achieve their visible purposes, such as completion of academic results or accomplishment of professional career. The variable Attitudes Toward the Learning Situation involve affects and attitudes toward "any aspect of the situation in which the language is learned" (Gardner 2001, p. 5). The variable Motivation, which is a result of integrativeness and attitudes toward the learning situation, refers to the driving force in any situation and has three elements: efforts to learn the language, achievement of the goal, and enjoyment of the L2 learning task (Gardner, 2001).

In the field of education, there is a seemingly common agreement that students who do not have motivation are not willing to learn. It is metaphorically described that one can lead a horse to water, but cannot make it drink. In foreign language learning, motivation is a critical variable as it can help to bring driving forces to learners, and make them become self-motivation (Nunan & Lamb, 1996). Discussing the role of motivation, Kikuchi (2009) stated that it is crucial and necessary for a learner to acquire and be proficient in a second or foreign language. Therefore, there have been a variety of scholarly studies on motivation, which reveal that demotivation is an attribute to learners' lack of success in L2 acquisition (Badrkoochi, 2018; Kim, 2009). As a result, many scholars and researchers conducted studies on demotivation and language learning motivation among learners such as Alizadeh (2016), Ebata (2008), and Wu (2003). It is believed that if learners' motivation can be measured and understood, the motivational aspects could be encouraged. This study, therefore, explores the degree of L2 learners' motivation, inclines of their motivation types during the learning process, and investigate students' perceptions of motivation.

It seems an uneasy task to decide which one is more important, the instrumental motivation or the integrative motivation, because both are obviously significant to L2 learning. According to Vaezi (2008), because the success of L2 learning can be foreseen, integrative motivation is somehow considered superior to instrumental motivation. Accordingly, when students appreciate culture of the target language, they have dynamics to acquire and practice the language on daily basis to learn the language and its culture. On the other hand, instrumental motivation is important and meaningful to learners who do not have much access to the L2 culture or native settings. Vaezi (2008) points out the opposition between Gardner and Lambert's research versus Dörnyei's study. The former places emphasis on importance of integrative motivation other than instrumental motivation in a formal learning environment, whereas the latter claimed that what learners could achieve for what they need is more meaningful and significant than the integrative motivation.

According to Dörnyei (1998), there are two main motivation components: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation refers to the enjoyable engagement, which drives an individual into doing an action, whereas extrinsic motivation refers to a force that makes one take an action because there are external rewards of doing so, such as possessing a bachelor's degree, or getting promotion at work. Brown (2000) considered intrinsically motivated behaviors are aimed at bringing about "internally rewarding consequences" (p. 164), such as feelings of competence, achievement, and self-determination. Extrinsically motivated behaviors, on the other hand, are conducted with anticipation of a reward from outside (Brown, 2000), such as bonus, prizes and positive feedback.

Brown (2000) also analyzes to show the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation by arguing which one is more superior. An intrinsic motivation may be integrative motivation when one learns a foreign language because of integrative purposes, whereas an extrinsic motivation becomes instrumental motivation if an individual would like to achieve external rewards. It is seemingly agreed that intrinsic motivation is more powerful than extrinsic motivation, because one can still succeed even without existence of any external rewards. Instead, that individual strives for self-esteem and fulfilment (Brown, 2000). According to Bruner (1966, as cited by Brown, 2000), the "autonomy of self-reward" should be promoted, being free from the control of rewards and punishments is considered the most effective approach to young and adult learners.

The construct of motivation types, however, are not entirely similar, intrinsic motivation is not the same of integrative motivation, and extrinsic motivation cannot be another word for instrumental motivation. Brown (2000) highlights the difference between the intrinsic-extrinsic construct from Gardner's integrative-instrumental orientation. For instance, one could learn a foreign language with intrinsic purposes so that future career (such as becoming an interpreter) can possibly be advanced and earn good incomes. Similarly, a prize gained from a foreign language contest can become a powerful force that develops an L2 learner's positive affect toward speakers of a second language. Bailey (1986, as cited by Brown, 2000) produces a diagram to show the relationship between the four components of motivation.

**Table 1 : Motivation Dichotomies**

	<b>Intrinsic</b>	<b>Extrinsic</b>
<b>Integrative</b>	L2 learner wishes to integrate with the L2 culture (e.g., for immigration or marriage)	Someone else wishes the L2 learner to know the L2 for integrative reasons (e.g., Japanese parents send kids to Japanese-language school).
<b>Instrumental</b>	L2 learner wishes to achieve goals utilizing L2 (e.g., for a career)	External power wants L2 learner to learn L2 (e.g., corporation sends Japanese businessman to U.S. for language training)

Note. From Principles of language learning and teaching (Vol. 4), by H. D. Brown, 2000, Longman.

Overall, there are four main types of motivation: instrumental motivation, integrative motivation, intrinsic motivation, and extrinsic motivation. They are somehow in common, as ones refer to L2 learners' self-determination (integrative and intrinsic motivations) regardless of any rewards, whereas the others refer to learners' specific achievements and purposes. Some researchers may think that the *integrative and intrinsic motivations* are superior because of their attributes to internal forces of learners and develop learners' autonomy; nevertheless, other scholars suppose that the *instrumental and extrinsic motivations* might be more powerful as learners' success can be anticipated. Even so, there is no doubt to affirm

that motivation is crucial to any L2 learners regardless of their language aptitude. Their motivation can be instrumental or integrative, and then be changed into extrinsic or intrinsic.

## Methods

### Research Procedures

The research was conducted at a public higher education institution in Hanoi, Vietnam. The institution has 20 faculties and departments, including the English Department (ED), which offers the four-year full-time and part-time programs of English Studies in two vocational orientations: ELT and Interpreting-Translation. Upon agreement of the Dean of the English Department, Hanoi University, the researcher contacted 550 EFL students studying the second, third, and fourth years and invited them to participate in the study. The questionnaire was completed by 274 participants anonymously and submitted online. The data collected were then analyzed with deployment of the SPSS software.

### Data Collection and Analysis

The present study used the survey questionnaire to collect quantitative data in the first phase to answer the RQ1. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in the second phase, adding depth to the answers of the RQ2, RQ3, RQ4, and RQ5.

The questionnaire included 25 items assessing the level of motivation of EFL students. The Integrative and Instrumental motivation scale were mainly adapted from the previous research instruments (Gardner, 2004; Vaezi, 2008). The measure of the items was scored on a five-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating *strongly disagree* and 5 referring to *strongly agree* (Table 2). The questionnaire had two parts; part I included 25 items that measure L2 learners' motivation. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was 0.931, which means the items are reliable (Cohen et al., 2007). Part II collected participants' background information such as age, gender, educational level, and agreement on interview participation.

*Table 2: Constructs of the Questionnaire*

	Constructs	Items	Total
<b>Language learning motivation</b>	Integrativeness	From 1 to 12	25
	Instrumentality	From 13 to 25	

The quantitative data collected via questionnaire survey were analyzed statistically under the guidelines of Pallant (2013). The procedure included three steps: (1) screening and cleaning the data, (2) preparing the variables for analysis, and (3) choosing and using the statistical techniques for analysis. In order to seek the proper answers to the research questions, descriptive and inferential statistics analysis were employed.

To explore the level of language learning motivation among EFL students, the respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the five-point Likert scale; in details, the highest mean score (=5) indicated the most agreeable items, and the lowest mean score (=1) indicated the least agreeable ones. Paige et al. (2003) noted the Likert scale technique score statement could indicate the degree of agreement. Five-point Likert scale, hence, was adapted and summarized in Table 3:

**Table 3: Interpretation of Five-Point Likert Scale**

Rating	Mean	Agreement level
5	4.51 – 5.00	Very high
4	3.51 – 4.50	High
3	2.51 – 3.50	Not sure
2	1.51 – 2.50	Low
1	1.00 – 1.50	Very low

*Note.* From “Culture learning in language education: A review of the literature,” R. M. Paige, H. L. Jorstad, L. Siaya, F. Klein, & J. Colby, in D. L. Lange & R. M. Paige (Vol. Eds.), & J. H. Sullivan (Series Ed.), *Culture as the core: Perspectives on culture in second language learning* (pp. 173-236), 2003, Information Age Publishing.

## Participants

The present study had the participation of 274 EFL students (specified in Table 4), who were full-time and part-time students at the English Department, Hanoi University, Hanoi, Vietnam. In this study, full-time students, averagely aged 20, were the ones spending most of their daytime for study, while part-time students, averagely aged 31, were the ones being able to study after work hours only (mainly in the evenings). Furthermore, part-time students of the present study possessed at least one Bachelor’s Degree, which serves as one of the admission requirements for the program; hence, they did have professional experience prior to participating in the present study.

In the second phase of the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with participation of twelve students (specified in Table 6), open-ended questions were asked for them to elicit their perceptions of language learning motivation as shown in the following table.

**Table 4: Participants of the two research phases**

Phase	Instrument	No. of students invited	No. of students participated
1	Questionnaire	550	274
2	Semi-structured interview	30	12

**Table 5: Survey participants**

Student group	Number of Participants				Total	Gender of Participants		
	1 <sup>st</sup> year	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	3 <sup>rd</sup> year	4 <sup>th</sup> year		Female	Male	Rather not say
Full-time	-	75	77	72	224	202	21	1
Part-time	32	7	6	2	47	35	10	2
					271			

**Table 6: Participants of the interview**

No.	Participants (Pseudonym)	Abbreviation of names	Gender	Education level	Group
1	Lien	L	Female	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Full-time
2	Thanh	T	Female	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Full-time
3	Mai	M	Female	4 <sup>th</sup>	Full-time
4	Nhan	N	Female	4 <sup>th</sup>	Full-time
5	Phuong	P	Female	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Full-time
6	An	A	Female	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Full-time
7	Binh	B	Female	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Full-time
8	Khanh	K	Female	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Full-time
9	Oanh	O	Female	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Full-time
10	Quyen	Q	Female	1 <sup>st</sup>	Part-time
11	Vy	V	Female	1 <sup>st</sup>	Part-time
12	Chi	C	Female	1 <sup>st</sup>	Part-time

## Summary of Findings

### RQ1: What is the language learning motivation level of EFL students?

#### *Integrative motivation*

**Table 7: Descriptive results of Integrative Motivation**

Item	I study English ...	Full-time students			Part-time students		
		M	SD	Label	M	SD	Label
1	To be more at ease with other people who speak English	4.58	.593	Very high	4.66	.522	Very high
2	To meet and converse with more and varied people	4.59	.600	Very high	4.55	.686	Very high
3	To better understand and appreciate English art and literature	4.40	.726	High	4.19	.970	High
4	To participate more freely in the activities of other cultural groups	4.39	.756	High	4.28	.826	High
5	To know the life of the English-speaking nations	4.37	.741	High	4.13	.711	High
6	To understand English pop music	4.00	.876	High	3.79	.977	High
7	The more I get to know native English speakers, the more I like them	3.86	.849	High	3.68	1.002	High
8	To know various cultures and peoples	4.39	.674	High	4.43	.773	Very high
9	To keep in touch with foreign friends and acquaintances	4.20	.752	High	4.06	.870	High
10	To know more about native English speakers	4.22	.754	High	4.00	.860	High
11	The British are kind and friendly	3.59	.775	High	3.36	.673	Not sure
12	The Americans are kind and cheerful	3.62	.754	High	3.38	.709	Not sure
<b>Overall mean score</b>		<b>4.18</b>		<b>High</b>	<b>4.04</b>		<b>High</b>

*Note: M = Mean (N=224), SD = Standard Deviation, N = Number*

**Table 8: Descriptive results of Instrumental Motivation**

Item	I study English ...	Full-time students			Part-time students		
		M	SD	Label	M	SD	Label
13	I'll need it for my future career	4.65	.609	Very high	4.74	.530	Very high
14	It will make me a more knowledgeable person	4.48	.669	High	4.60	.681	Very high
15	It will someday be useful in getting a good job	4.61	.604	Very high	4.85	.360	Very high
16	Other people will respect me more if I know English	3.62	1.004	High	3.83	1.028	High
17	I will be able to search for information and materials in English on the Internet	4.53	.627	Very high	4.64	.605	Very high
18	I will learn more about what's happening in the world	4.33	.702	High	4.45	.880	High
19	Language learning often gives me a feeling of success	3.95	.851	High	4.15	.932	High
20	Language learning often makes me happy	3.99	.836	High	3.98	.872	High
21	An educated person is supposed to be able to speak English	3.41	1.125	Not sure	3.68	.935	High
22	I can understand English-speaking films, videos, TV or radio	4.38	.658	High	4.38	.644	High
23	I can read English book	4.33	.696	High	4.53	.620	Very high
24	To know new people from different parts of the world	4.34	.644	High	4.32	.663	High
25	Without it one cannot be successful in any field	3.12	1.192	Not sure	3.30	1.082	Not sure
<b>Overall mean score</b>		4.13		High	4.27		High

Comparison between the mean scores of the questions in integrative part illustrated that students were strongly motivated in questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8, with the mean scores from 4.37 to 4.59, followed by the other questions 6, 9, and 10, ranging from 4.00 to 4.22. Three items (Q7: The more I get to know native English speakers, the more I like them; Q11: The British are kind and friendly; Q12: The Americans are kind and cheerful) had the lowest mean scores in the integrative part.

Generally, respondents agreed that studying English was important as they could interact with other English speakers, meet and be exposed to various cultures, understand and appreciate art and literature, and join a variety of culture-related activities, resulting in their understanding of other people and their background. However, they are more neutral in considering British and Americans as kind and friendly speakers. With an overall mean score of 4.18 and 4.04, it could be concluded that most students have high integrative motivation toward learning English.

### ***Instrumental Motivation***

An examination of the frequency distribution and mean scores of the instrumental part shows that items 13 (M = 4.65 & 4.74), 15 (M = 4.61 & 4.85), and 17 (M = 4.53 & 4.64) had 'very high' scores for both student groups and items 14 and 23 had 'very high' scores for part-time students, revealing that English learners would like to be good at English for future jobs. Most of the other items had 'high' scores, indicating students agreed with most of the other statements, including the fact that they could be more knowledgeable thanks to being

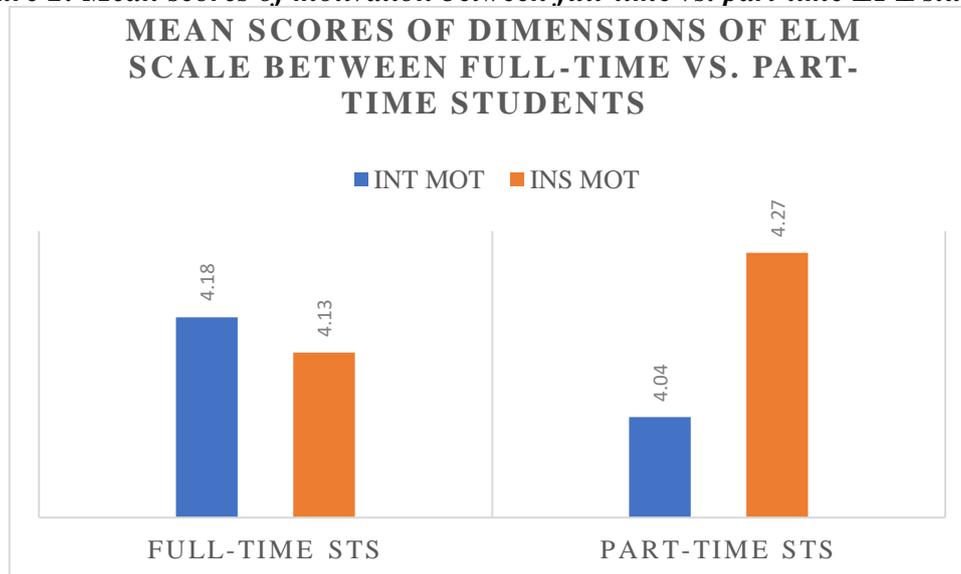
proficient in English; they could receive respect from others because of their ability to communicate in English, get updated of news, have feelings of success, understand English-speaking resources, know more people from other nations and cultures, and after all, feel happy.

On the other hand, participants were ‘not sure’ about items 21 and 25, indicating that it is not necessary to possess good English ability to be considered an educated person, and English is not essential to success in any field. With an overall mean score of 4.13 and 4.27, it could be concluded that most students have high instrumental motivation toward learning English.

**Table 9: Comparison of motivation between full-time vs. part-time EFL students**

Dimensions	Mean	
	Full-time STs	Part-time STs
INT MOT	4.18	4.04
INS MOT	4.13	4.27

**Figure 2: Mean scores of motivation between full-time vs. part-time EFL students**



**RQ2: How can language learning motivation be defined by Vietnamese EFL students?**

The full-time second-year students seemed to have similar ideas on the way the concept could be defined, as they emphasized some keywords such as “encouraging”, “motivating”, or “stimulating”.

Moreover, the full-time third-year students and part-time first-year students highlighted the definition of language learning motivation with some words such as “purpose”, “goals”, and “determination” when shaping their own ideas. For example, Lien (L1) said that it was until you realize your purpose and goals for study, such as for a career or for pleasure. Similarly, Oanh (O9) embraced the efforts of the process and stated that it was about someone’s own identification of her/his goals, with utmost determination to achieve what an individual wanted. This opinion was quite similar to a fourth-year student’s idea, Nhan (N4), as she stated, “It will be the reason why you want to study that language,” or Phuong (P5) mentioned that any realistic reason leading you to the goal one wants to. Another similar perspective shared by part-time students including Quyen (Q10), Vy (V11) and Chi (C12)

was because of personal purposes of an individual that drives one to learn a second language for specific goals, such as a job so that prospective opportunities could be brought and blossom their employment chances.

### **RQ3: At what level do students evaluate their language learning motivation? Why?**

Most interviewees gave themselves a score of 8 or 8.5 (out of ten) even though their reasons were not the same. Lien (L1) said that she used to learn for pleasure, but now she had to learn for her future career. Other eight-point students, such as Binh (B7), Khanh (K8), Oanh (O9), Quyên (Q10), and Vy (V11) also shared the same idea; they were in need of English for future jobs; all envisioned their job prospects which could be involved with the high level of English language, hence explaining their current high learning motivation. One participant, Nga (#5) evaluated her motivation at the score of nine since she wanted to speak English as a native speaker. Only one participant, Chi (C12) stated that her motivation was worth ten because she had set up and known specific goals for learning English.

On the other hand, Thanh (T2) and Nhan (N4) gave six and seven respectively to their motivation even though they were aware that English is a lingua franca, and they got an advantage to communicate with many people in the world; however, their motivation was not stable.

### **RQ4: What do EFL students think about the importance of language learning motivation?**

One hundred percent of the interviewees agreed that motivation to learn a language is important, with the use of adverbs “very” or “extremely” to emphasize their opinions. Students believe that thanks to motivation, they will be more active in learning and have better results. Participants were aware that the learning process required patience and stability, and hence they could increase their personal language ability thanks to motivation. Besides, motivation could be helpful in nurturing and maintaining interests – the important factor that they are in need of during the process of learning, otherwise, “if you do not have motivation in doing anything, you cannot go along with it” stated Nhan (N4/15).

To emphasize the points, Chi (C12) explained that “whenever I feel demotivated, I always recall the reason why I chose to learn English, then I will feel better and retain motivation” (C12/16). Finally, Binh (B7) supposed motivation helped learners acquire more knowledge and expand their network while learning English.

### **RQ5: How does EFL students’ language learning motivation develop?**

Regardless of various reasons, all participants stated that their motivation level is now higher than when they were high school students. Some of the participants confided their motivation to learn English had been increasing since the commencement of their study at the University, partly because they realized other friends and classmates were much better at English than theirs. With the fear of being “left behind” as confided by An (A6), the student had her own internal motivation to overcome difficulties during the learning process and kept moving forward with the learning and practicing. A little more different, Binh (B7) felt positively overwhelmed when entering the university where things were so new to her; however, that fresh, initial feeling turned out to become a motivation to the student, stimulating her own eagerness and interest in learning the language major as she chose.

Quyen (Q10) also admitted that overwhelming feelings made her sometimes anxious at the beginning; nevertheless, thanks to communicating with teachers and classmates about her worries, she could manage to overcome such a difficult time and got back to study more effectively.

On the other hand, most of the other participants stated that their motivation could be developed because of easy and redundant access to the Internet and media, where all kinds of resources could be found, such as videos, movies, songs, talks, speeches, stories, dramas, animations, etc. The basic reason for students' access to such resources is that they are in love with the native culture.

Furthermore, the study environment plays an important role in facilitating and inspiring learners to increase their learning motivation. Nhan (N4) used to feel demotivated sometimes during her learning process; nevertheless, opportunities to meet foreign friends gradually changed her mind and attitude, bringing back her aspiration to learn English now. Khanh (K8) also got a similar situation, when occasional meetings and communication with foreign friends could motivate the student to learn English. Thanh (T2) had a specific result thanks to her motivation to learn English when she got a chance to work with a foreign professor on an international project during her first-year study, which then turned out to become her new motivation to learn the language.

Sometimes, the vision of self in the future could help learners to increase their motivation, and Oanh (O9) was an example of this circumstance. Having admitted that the learning process sometimes had been tedious and boring, Oanh (O9) often pictured her future jobs doing some specific tasks. Thanks to this imagination, the student could have intrinsic motivation and move on with their study. Most of the participants interviewed confirmed that their motivation to learn English was higher than when they were in high schools.

## **Discussion and Recommendation**

First, the students of the current study have a high level of both integrative and instrumental motivations. Nevertheless, full-time students have a higher level of integrative motivation, while part-time students have a greater level of instrumental motivation. Even so, most participants interviewed emphasized their motivation to learn English was because of their concern for prospective employment opportunities, which can be labeled 'instrumental motivation'. Meanwhile, only three (out of ten) participants would like to communicate as well as native speakers, which can be considered 'integrative motivation'. The findings of the study reveal the pragmatic goals of most EFL students in L2 learning.

Second, students' personal definition for the concept of motivation can be considered quite close to that of the literature when most of them emphasized the two main motivation orientations proposed by Gardner (2001). By emphasizing some ideas of attempts to embrace learning instead of giving up or endeavors to have more intensive and effective learning approaches so that visible goals relating to prospective jobs can be realized, this group of EFL students seems to highlight the importance of instrumental motivation that can stimulate their learning process. Furthermore, this implies their enjoyment of the L2 learning task as Gardner (2001) coined in the socio-educational model, which is considered an important factor that sustains the long and sometimes tedious learning process (Dörnyei, 1998).

Third, most students of the current study are aware of their level of language learning motivation. This was basically built on the students' goals for employment prospective, at which high proficiency of English would be highly demanded, resulting in personal stimulation to learn the second chosen language. They, hence, could shape their own understanding on the meaning of language learning motivation, which generally was described as individual goals or self-motivation recommended by Nunan and Lamb (1996), coupling with determination of L2 learners that encourage ones to embrace continual learning processes until specific achievements could be realized. Reflecting this into the literature, this proposed definition is close to those of Dörnyei (1998) and Gardner (2001), who asserted that one might not succeed without appropriate levels of motivation. Even though some of the participants of the study may not have stable motivation during the L2 process, they are aware of the fact that they will have advantages once possessing English proficiency. Their perceptions fit the contemporary trend of globalization and internationalization occurring worldwide, which fosters increasing needs for good English competence so that furtherance of the process can be facilitated thanks to better cultural understanding among people from different cultural backgrounds. This situation can benefit Vietnam, a fast-developing nation in need of highly qualified human resources who can acquire English language and culture thanks to their high learning motivation. This reveals the fact that EFL students' intuitive perspectives in the definition of motivation are quite comprehensive and close to concepts scholarly proposed by researchers.

Fourth, students of the current study have a common agreement on the importance of language learning motivation because motivation triggers off their interest in the native language and culture, and it keeps them moving forward within the pathway of learning instead of giving up halfway. Another value-added factor of motivation is that the knowledge and network of learners will grow up as the snowballs during the progress. This result should be taken into account when considering elements of language learning motivation proposed by Gardner (2001), which includes 'integrativeness' and 'attitudes toward the learning situation'. Evidently, the high scores on students' self-evaluation reveal that the students of the study have positive thoughts on the reasons why they should acquire a second language.

Fifth, the students of the current study have approaches to maintain and enhance their driving forces. One of the most popular 'supports' many of them have utilized is abundant, free-of-charge, and easy-to-get-access Internet and media. All kinds of resources could be found, such as videos, movies, songs, talks, speeches, stories, dramas, animations, etc., which became attractive factors to students. This result, again, consolidates the findings of the study, confirming the high level of 'integrativeness' and 'attitudes toward the learning situation' among full-time EFL students as it is often stated that integrative orientation encourages L2 learners to seek invisible, culture-oriented resources, and stimulates them to communicate in the target language with people from the target community (Vakilifard & Khaleghizadeh, 2021). In addition, the use of Internet and media can be categorized 'other support' as the model of Gardner (2001) proposed, contributing to achievement of learning the second language as the desirable result among EFL students. On the other hand, for part-time EFL students, the 'other support' included peer discussion in the classroom and teachers' professional advice in approaches and methods of learning, which then became a significant driving force for students to sustain their learning process. This two different motivation approaches between the two groups of EFL students consolidates the quantitative findings of the present study when evidently, full-time students whose integrative motivation is higher seek culture-related sources for acquisition, whereas part-time students whose

instrumental motivation is higher make use of their learning opportunities to serve or support (future) employment, resulting in their personal reasons for English learning.

Another common approach the students of the current study often utilize to foster their motivation is to envision their prospective career. Dörnyei (1998) anticipated that the learning process is often long and tedious sometimes; to sustain it, L2 learners are in need of the primary impetus which can initiate learning the L2 and become the driving force to them. In this case, the students have their self-stimulus as personal internal strengths to overcome occasional ups and downs during the process. This special item can be categorized as 'other factor' as Gardner's model (2001) introduced.

Finally, most of the students in the current study are more motivated to learn English than when they were high school students. The first outstanding reason is that they would like to seek good job opportunities after graduation. It is the fear of being dismissed that motivates students to keep themselves stimulated in English learning. Reviewing the literature, this can be labeled an 'instrumental motivation' as it relates to career perspective. Meanwhile, the other reason is that full-time EFL students have interests in the native language and culture; the more they learn in depth about the language studies and cultural backgrounds, the more they are engaged with the program and feel more motivated to acquire as much as they can. As the literature suggests, this can be labelled an 'integrative motivation' since it relates to a desire to identify with culture or community that speaks the language as explained by Dörnyei (2001, 2009), Gardner (1985), and Vaezi (2008). On the other hand, part-time students, who have experience in the accomplishment of their first degree, emphasize the fact that their motivation can be sustained thanks to direct interactions with their teachers and classmates, which can be considered 'other factors' (Robert C Gardner, 2001) that facilitate and stimulate students' language achievement as the desired result. It can be seen that this finding matches the quantitative data of the current study, so it obviously supports and consolidates the findings of the two main motivation trends of EFL students.

## **Conclusion**

This study explored EFL students' motivation to learn a second language and their perceptions of language learning motivation at a public higher education institution in Hanoi, Vietnam. Through the quantitative data collected, the study reveals that EFL students in Vietnam have high levels of both integrative and instrumental motivation, but the patterns for full-time students versus part-time students are different. It evidently shows that full-time EFL students have a slightly higher rate of integrative motivation, while part-time EFL students have a higher level of instrumental motivation. Even so, the qualitative data collected shows that EFL students have a strong emphasis on prospective employment. Furthermore, EFL students' intuitive perception of language learning motivation was rather close to that of the literature. From the perceptive foundation, EFL students are aware of their own level of motivation, showing that EFL students in Vietnam have positive thoughts and attitudes toward their learning process. They have various approaches to enhancement of the language skills, aiming to sustain motivation, leading to the fact that they are (much) more motivated to learn English than when they were high school students. The main findings of the study are considered useful to the university's managers in planning essential talks and discussions on the importance of English in the modern world, and employment opportunities that can be opened up thanks to good English proficiency. These are expected to inspire EFL students to sustain their learning process and maintain personal motivation to continually enhance their language skills. In this light, more studies on these with the employment of

other data collection instruments (e.g., class observation) may answer more questions and yield further findings to the literature.

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## APPENDIX 1 : INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Time of interview: from eight to ten minutes

Date: .....

Place: .....

Interviewer: Huyen-Thanh Nguyen

Interviewee: .....

Interview number: .....

Good morning/afternoon.

Thank you for your participation today. I am Huyen-Thanh Nguyen, a researcher who is conducting a study on EFL Students' Perception of Intercultural Sensitivity, the English Department, Hanoi University. The goal of this project is to explore and analyze students' understanding and perspectives on intercultural sensitivity relating to the language learning process.

You were selected through a voluntary response to a previously administered mail survey, at which you were offered to participate in an interview and share your contact information if you had agreed to join. Prior to today's interview, you were sent an introductory letter and a consent form via email, then your reply was sent accordingly to confirm today's participation.

The interview takes from eight to ten minutes and will follow a designed interview protocol. If you have no further comments, let's get started with the first question.

*[Note: the researcher will use phrases such as "Tell me more", "Could you give me an example?", "Could you explain that?" as prompts to solicit more detailed information when needed.]*

No	Questions
1	In your opinion, how can intercultural sensitivity be defined/understood?
2	What level do you evaluate your intercultural sensitivity? Why?
3	What do you think about the importance of intercultural sensitivity? Explain in detail.
4	How does your intercultural sensitivity develop?
5	Are you more or less sensitive in intercultural communication than when you were a high school student? Why?

**Thank you for your cooperation!**

## **APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS**

1. Heading of the transcript is indicated with initials of pseudonyms of participants, and the number of the interview, e.g., Interview IL1.
2. Names of the participants in conventions are replaced with pseudonyms.
3. Initial I for interviewer and S for student are used.
4. Page numbers, Times New Roman, and 1.5 spacing are used.
5. Turns are numbered.
6. Tab is inserted after each speaker initial.  
  
E.g. 10        S        : Actually, I made opinion... Intercultural communicative competence means...the communication among different culture or language. And it tries to convey cultural meaning...like that.
7. Transcripts are labeled with an indication of total length in minute and second (e.g. 17.41 minutes).
8. Literal transcribing is used.
9. Capital letters for proper names are used.
10. Punctuation: Only question mark and quotation mark are used.
11. Long pauses are indicated with a full stop.

### APPENDIX 3: SAMPLE OF INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Interview IL1

Date: 29 December 2022

Total length: 10.51 minutes

Interviewer: Huyen-Thanh Nguyen

Student: Lien

- 1 I Good afternoon.
- 2 L Good afternoon.
- 3 I Let us get started with the first question. In your opinion, what can language-learning motivation be defined?
- 4 L For me LLM is something like when you have your purpose, and your purpose to study, and something like learn for what, for career or for something like, for pleasure.
- 5 I Okay. So, what is your type? Your type is about career or pleasure?
- 6 L I learn...by now I'm majoring in English linguistic, so it's my...In the past, it's my pleasure, for my pleasure, but now, it's for my career.
- 7 I I see. Please share: What level do you evaluate your language learning motivation?
- 8 L It's about 8 out of 10.
- 9 I How come you think that it should be 8 out of 10?
- 10 L I think my English is a little bit...not strong enough to help me to have a good career right now. So I work my best more and more to improve it.
- 11 I I see. Would you please share your opinion about the next question: What do you think about the importance of language learning motivation?
- 12 L I think it something like...When you have motivation, you will be more active in learning, and it would give you better result than when you do not any motivation.
- 13 I Please talk about: How does your language learning motivation develop?
- 14 L In the past, I think my language is quite good. But when I study in university, I see that many people have better English than me, so I feel confused and be overwhelmed. So, this made me try to learn more and improve as much as possible my English skill for my career and have better study results.
- 15 I Are you more or less motivated to learn English than when you were a high school student?

- 16 L I think so. I think my language learning motivation is higher, greater than it is in the past.
- 17 I Can you please explain why?
- 18 L In the past, it only for...helps me to train for university. But now it's for my whole life and my career. If I don't learn English well enough, I will not get any chances.
- 19 I Well. we are almost at the final part today's interview. So let me just ask you a very last question: What do you think about the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and language learning motivation?
- 20 L The relationship between intercultural communicative competence and language learning motivation, it's extremely close. 'Cause, when you know you have enough knowledge about intercultural communication or intercultural sensitivity, you will be eager and have more motivation to learn the language because you know well, so its easier for you to learn and communicate and you have more interest in it.
- 21 I I see. Very interesting, Le. So, this is the final question already. So before we just finish today's interview, is there anything that you would like to share with me rather than the questions I have asked you?
- 22 L No...It's all and I have nothing to share.

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