

# The Relationship between Motivations and Self-Learning and the English Language Achievement in Secondary High School Students

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## Abstract

This study aims to determine the level of motivation and relationship of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations and self-learning concerning students' achievement in the English language, in relevance with their determination and the use of English to derive knowledge and as a medium of communication. A total of 120 secondary high school students in Pekanbaru Riau, Indonesia were randomly chosen as sample to evaluate and determine the influence of internal and external factors, as well as self-learning in mastering the English Language. A set of questionnaire was used in this study to assess the level of students' motivation and self-learning and its relationship with their achievement. A test was used to measure the level of English proficiency. Pearson correlation and descriptive analysis were used to analyze the findings by using SPSS version 19.0. The findings showed a medium high level of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and self-learning, whereas students' achievement was simply at the medium low level. The findings show that there is a less significant relationship between extrinsic motivation and the English Language achievement among students, however there is no significant relationship between intrinsic motivation and self-learning with the achievement. The study also stressed on the importance of providing a supportive learning environment to inspire and encourage students' interest to form a culture of learning English Language rather than independent learning and intrinsic motivation.

**Keywords:** intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, self-learning, English proficiency

## 1. Introduction

In the advent of globalization and ever changing society, the English language is positioned as a worldwide spoken and universal language and its importance is emphasized not only in education, but also is extensively used publicly. English language is a requirement for employment and essential to understand various sources of knowledge. School is a learning institution and a learning medium, thus, it is the best field to enhance the learning spirit among students.

English Language has become a very important global language in all fields, especially in understanding new technology and indeed a competitive edge in the job market. To meet the needs and demands, students need the right approach and should have the best learning strategies to understand and master the English language. Teachers play a very important role in providing a superb learning climate and they are also the main influence to inspire students to learn the language through their inner awareness.

Therefore, this study evaluates and examines how the internal elements of the students and the learning environment encourage students to acquire and learn the English Language through the guidance and lessons provided by their teachers. In addition, the process of self-learning is also capable to produce good results and deemed as an effective way to improve terrific learning outcomes. In this case, the academic achievement of the English Language is used to measure students understanding and their mastery level. The challenges for teachers were studied in the hindrance to create and establish a practical routine culture among their students.

## 2. Background Study

### 2.1 Students' Motivation

Motivation is the driving factor in catalyzing the will and desire to succeed or to achieve certain goals.

Motivation can be considered as a drive to avoid failure (Donald, 2001). In this regard, motivation is considered as an extension of the psychological process that drives a person to act. In principle, motivation is the force to meet biological needs and demands. Motivation is also related to the interest and stimulation. According to Ross (1999), "*motivation is the reason why people behave the way they do. Motivated behaviour is energized, directed, and sustained*".

According to Azizi Latif Yahya and Jaafar Sidek (2005), motivation has a significant effect on the areas of growth, development, learning and achievement. Motivation is a process to encourage certain behaviour as to achieve specific information. Motivational concepts are difficult to understand because their effects cannot be known directly. A teacher has to consider various action motives of one's behaviour as to measure changes, desires, needs and goals. High motivation will motivate an individual to work harder to achieve his goals. Indeed, motivation is a very useful stimulant in determining a student's achievement in his studies.

This is in line with the opinion stated by Woolfolk (1990) that motivation is referred to as an internal power in human, which arouses, directs and controls their interest and behaviour. A student is said to have the motivation to learn if he has a high level of attention and perseverance in solving certain learning tasks. A motivated student will have great effort and enthusiasm in learning, even outside the time specified by the teacher, as well as having the need to have extra learning. Motivated students are committed and always have the needs to find and enrich information from various sources. Mohd Anizu & Siti Salwa (2002) described motivation as a force that makes people change their attitudes, interests or activities.

### 2.2 Motivation Stimulus

Motivational stimulus triggers the craving and the will to achieve something. Motives and incentives are two main types of motivating stimuli.

Motive is the key element of incentives to stimulate and force the desire to learn and acquire something. Motives may be a need to get a job done, an appreciation from others, to demonstrate personal ability, to take up challenges and so on. Through a strong motive, students usually can study harder and effectively working toward meeting their needs. For instance, a student who knows the importance of the English Language to further his study at a higher level will have better focus to ensure that his will to acquire and understand the language can be realized.

While incentives are shaped by external influence to support and entertain the students during the learning process, such as teachers' appraisal, interesting teaching aids and fantastic lessons. The incentives promote the students to be diligent and enhance a stronger desire to master the lesson. An occupation or a field of works will be more effective if the main forces and influential factors are identified. For example, when a student is praised by the teacher after a good presentation, this will be a symbol of excellence. In other words, motivation is indeed part of the many leaning concepts. Incentives are motivating an individual to act and to reap the rewards.

### 2.3 Types of Motivation

There are two types of motivation as identified by psychologists, namely:

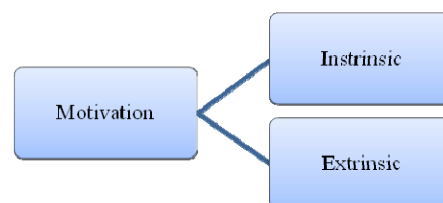


Figure 1. Two types of motivation

The first type of motivation is internal in nature and it is in a form of volunteerism driven by pleasure, desire, attitude, interest and the internal factors of an individual. For example, individuals who are keen to learn and eager to master the subject will study harder and always have the drive to complete their assignments.

Based on Bruner (1966), intrinsic motivation is linked with curiosity and inner drive to achieve efficiency for new students in the school. However, not all intrinsic motivation is created by nature. There is also a set of intrinsic motivation which is formed by the purposes of getting personal pleasure and fun in acquiring new learning experiences.

Students who are driven by intrinsic motivation can be seen by their characteristic and propensity towards challenging learning situations. They have more incentive to work to leverage personal satisfaction, rather than trying to get good grades for the sake of getting acknowledgement. They prefer to solve their problem on their own instead of relying on their teachers' assistance or guidance.

A well-motivated teacher who is driven to enhance the learning process for academic purposes should take advantage of this intrinsic motivation in students by creating a great learning climate which provides satisfying activities and learning opportunities for the students. In other words, teachers need to direct the students to work towards successful learning. However, it should be determined in advance, so that students will perceive themselves as capable.

In the school context, students' feeling is connected with the subjects studied, teachers and schools. Positive feelings on a subject will influence the students to work diligently to achieve a high grade for the subject. Good grades will convince the students that they are really capable in the subject.

The second type of motivation is more prevalent, due to the encouragement and supports from the outside, such as from teachers' determination and skills, a fun learning environment, effective teaching aids and interesting ICT stimulation, peer support and comprehensive learning facilities. For example, a proper set of testing equipment in the science labs or a comprehensive English language laboratory in schools will inject extra enthusiasm and the desire to learn.

External motivation may be less effective because its goal could be misconstrued by students. This occurs because students will focus mainly on getting certain rewards rather than fulfilling actual learning objectives. However, a simple intrinsic motivation such as a well-endowed praise or appreciation remains to be effective because it works as an encouragement and a positive reinforcement for students.

Extrinsic motivation will be a drive in students to do something beneficial. Extrinsic motivation is grown from external stimuli in order to move the individual to be more engaging in an activity that will bring great benefit to him. Extrinsic motivation can be stimulated in the forms of a simple praise, incentives, prizes, grades and conducive environment and climate which propel students to learn.

In the classroom, teachers need to know the type of reinforcement to be used and how often it should be given. The reinforcement can be provided on a regular basis, such as frequent praises or a solicitation of support. According to Kazdin (1984), reinforcement will be more effective when it is regularly given at the initial state of learning. Therefore, it is good to provide frequent praises and supports especially when students begin to learn a new task.

#### *2.4 Self-learning*

Self-learning is an effective way of a student-centred learning where the teacher's role is reduced, as the learning activities are explored and developed by the students through effective materials provided by the teacher or access made through ICT. The teachers mostly play the roles as motivators, facilitators and mediators. This concept is often referred to as Self-directed Learning or Self-instruction Learning (PAK) and also known as the Self-access Learning.

Self-learning refers to the personal search for information on the internal drive, without neglecting teachers' main roles. In fact, teachers can guide their students to find out the best that they can do, in order to regulate and assist their learning activities.

Self-learning will help students to plan, organize and evaluate their own learning. According to Rozman Harun (2001), the aspects of self-study or self-learning are self-confidence, the use of individual learning strategies; it depends on students' willingness to take responsibility of their own learning; it is closely linked with the meta-cognitive strategies of planning, decision making, monitoring and evaluation.

#### *2.5 Achievement*

Achievement is the ultimate success of meeting the goals. On the other hand, achievement level is the extent to which a student succeeds in the examination or standardized test (Wilkes-Carille, 2000). A standardized test which is used to measure students achievement should be based on the criteria provided by the learning materials and stated in the learning elements.

#### *2.6 Statement of the Problem*

According to Ross CM (1999), the Indonesian students are still weak in the English Language and their proficiency level is still low. They failed to openly communicate well, even the school test results also showed that the results obtained are poor. Teachers are also seen as not adopting an exciting English Language teaching

methods and the learning climate is less favourable.

The common problems encountered in the English reading practice is that students do not have any significant reading strategies, since they do not receive any specific reading training to change the topic, to identify main ideas and to derive specific information from the reading texts. Hence, students often encounter deadlock and constantly in confusion.

Other problem found is that students are disinterested and do not show enthusiasm in the English language classes. According to Donald (2001), group works and independent learning materials can help to attract students' interest to the materials they are learning, but these efforts are rarely implemented. Instead, teachers are still conducting a traditional one-way communication and dominating the whole instructional process.

### 3. Purpose of the Study

This study aims to identify the students' ability to acquire the English Language, as a result of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and self-learning. Relatively, it is also to study the relationship of the three aspects with students' English Language proficiency.

### 4. Conceptual Framework

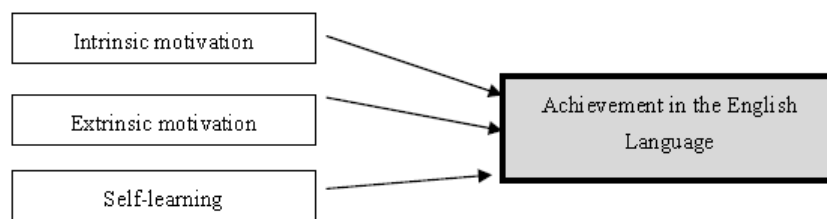


Figure 2. Relationships of the variables studied

The variables of motivation and self-learning are important factors found to be effectively influence students' English Language achievement. Hence, a profound low or high level of motivation and self-study can determine the level of students' achievement in the subject. This is the focus of this study, which is to determine the level of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and self-learning in affecting students' performance and the English Language proficiency.

Intrinsic motivation refers to the following aspects of how students direct their learning with clear goals, students' participation in the English Language learning activities, active seeking for clarification during the lessons, the excitement to perform activities, the proper use of reading techniques, the happy feeling during the lesson, self-satisfaction, no sense of shame in using the language, diligent in learning the language, capable and frequently use the language.

On the other hand, extrinsic motivation covers the aspects of how the external encouragement and motivation help students to understand and acquire the English Language, speaking activities, technology aids, teaching facility, special attention given by teachers and friends, activities and campaigns organized by the school, competitions with the English language counterparts, the influence and role of the media as well as the surrounding community, participation in the English Language contests, teachers' rules and the needs to meet career demands.

Self-learning involves several aspects, namely through students learning behaviour in understanding and mastering the English Language, such as self-study, personal learning strategies, self-monitoring of the learning progress, setting up personal target, self-efforts to use the language, self-access for information from the Internet, personal revision, imitating the way other people talk and interact constantly in the English Language, self-changing personal learning strategies, using the proper way to read and managing a comprehensive study schedule.

### 5. Research Methodology

This is a survey using a questionnaire and test. The intrinsic motivation includes 22 items, extrinsic motivation has 23 items, and self-learning includes 22 items, while the test of achievement encompasses 40 multiple choice items to evaluate students' achievements. The sample of the study comprised 120 students from 10 secondary high schools in Pekanbaru, who were randomly selected. A pilot test was carried out to test the reliability of the research instrument, and it involved 30 students from different school where they had the same standard. The

Cronbach's Alpha for the reliability value of the intrinsic motivation was 0.86; extrinsic motivation was valued at 0.88, whereas a value of 0.84 was found for self-learning. The Cronbach's Alpha value for the achievement test was 0.85.

## 6. Findings and Discussion

The following data shows the level of intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation among students.

### 6.1 Students' Motivation Level

The descriptive analysis involving the mean and standard deviation was conducted to determine the level of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. The results are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The level of motivation among students

| Variables            | Mean | Standard Deviation | Interpretation |
|----------------------|------|--------------------|----------------|
| Intrinsic Motivation | 3.47 | 0.307              | Medium High    |
| Extrinsic Motivation | 3.66 | 0.217              | Medium High    |
| Total                | 3.62 | 0.254              | Medium High    |

Based on the table above, intrinsic motivation is moderately high (mean = 3.47 and sd = 0.307), as well as extrinsic motivation which also shows a medium high (mean = 3.66 and sd = 0.217). In conclusion, the level of students' motivation is high but at a moderate level.

This finding indicates the existence of internal and external motivations in students' efforts to understand and acquire the English Language. This is consistent with the view of Habibah Elias (1993), that all students are motivated to learn because of their personal needs and initiatives, and it will be more rewarding rather than learning for the sake of fulfilling others' needs. Hence, the driving force for students to master the English Language lies in themselves which triggers their efforts to achieve it.

This level can actually be enhanced through teachers help and expertise in providing a conducive climate, supported with appropriate teaching and learning aids, including the proper use of ICT. In this way, teachers create a fun and interesting environment for students to learn, thus effortlessly engage their focus and attention. The same view was given by Cofer (1972), who stated that the inner feelings in students to learn are the most useful motive to increase their maturity and satisfaction. The same view was also expressed by Gill, Gross & Huddleston (1983), who emphasized that when students participate actively during the learning process, this will improve their achievement and also enhance their learning performance.

All in all, the finding shows that the level of motivation is not enough to help them to improve their proficiency in English. Accordingly, to increase students' intrinsic motivation, Belaja et al. (2012) suggest that students be exposed to activities which are personally interesting and enjoyable. Likewise, Liu and Zhang (2013) provided the following recommendations: a) making the students aware of the importance of English, enhancing their self confidence, boosting their positive attitude towards English, praising them, providing positive feedback, encouraging them to have more access to English (such as fine arts, watching film and making pen pal with international students) which can be considered as good ways to enhance students' motivation.

### 6.2 Level of Self Learning

The following findings indicate results of the descriptive analysis using the mean and standard deviation related to the level of self-learning, to assess the efforts and initiatives taken by students in mastering the English Language. Muhammad Rafee (1990) specified that personal or self-effort in finding information is the most effective way to understand and master the language. The descriptive analysis result is shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Level of self learning

| Variables     | Mean | Standard Deviation | Interpretation |
|---------------|------|--------------------|----------------|
| Self-learning | 3.21 | 0.114              | Average        |

The finding shows that the level of self-learning is at a moderate level. This clearly shows that the students are not fully prepared in the context of self-learning and still rely on the teachers as their source of information and educational resources. Self-learning is a learning approach that allows students to personally access their learning resources, thus acquire knowledge and skills independently. Mohd Anizu and Siti Salwa (2002) in a study concluded that students' involvement in the learning process is not yet optimal; hence, this hampers their acquisition of knowledge and skills. To tackle this problem, Wu et al. (2011) suggest that any academic program should provide the students with a foundation from which they can further develop their own ability to keep on studying on their own.

Even in the presence of internal and external motivations, students are still unable to successfully learn in the right way and are still vague of the best efforts to get the best learning outcomes. In other words, even though students learn on their own, they are still under their teachers' supervision and guidance. Therefore, an appropriate learning environment should be provided to meet the needs, interests, and various learning styles. This view is also supported by Roziman Aaron (1999), who has seen the need for a conducive learning environment to promote learning and practical outcomes.

Teachers and technology should be correlated, in which information technology is used constantly and teachers wholeheartedly plan and manage their teaching and learning process (Baron, 2001). This is the most ideal way, including providing guidance for the students in their study and in their progress of obtaining information (Nur Mustafa, 2012). To get the students motivated, the teachers also must have excellent competency. This is because the teachers are the people who have direct influence on the students' achievements.

### 6.3 Level of Students Achievement

Descriptive analysis involving the mean and standard deviation was conducted to determine the level of achievement of the English language learners. The result is shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Level of students' achievement

| Variables  | Mean | Standard Deviation | Interpretation |
|--|------|--------------------|----------------|
| The achievement of the English Language Learners | 2.02 | 1.81               | Medium low     |

Students achievement in the English Language was found as still at the medium low level based on the results of the study. This indicator signals that the internal and external motives and self-learning are unable to provide much help in improving the skills and English Language proficiency. This might be due to teachers' pedagogical skills which need to be changed, the use of ICT in teaching and learning should be expanded, and the learning process also requires a more practical approach to provide ample hands-on practices of its use in various situations. According to Deci and Ryan (1985), a combination of individual's inner drive and impressive teaching pedagogy can produce a fantastic learning situation, which involves learners' active participation and a great way of teaching.

According to Ross (1999), achievement can be improved if the teachers manage to plan and apply effective strategies and capable of making the students enjoy learning the language. This is the nagging reason for teachers to continuously learn and apply new superb skills to manage their lesson.

### 6.4 Relationship of Motivations and Self-Learning with Students Achievement

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and self-learning with the achievement of English language learners. The results are shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Relationship of motivations and self-learning with students achievement

| Relationship         | Achievement of the EL |       | Interpretation |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-------|----------------|
|                      | R                     | Sig.  |                |
| Intrinsic Motivation | 0.191                 | 0.145 | -              |
| Extrinsic Motivation | 0.301                 | 0.019 | poor           |
| Self-learning        | 0.046                 | 0.730 | -              |

Table 4 shows the relationship between students' motivations and self-learning with their achievement. The result shows a poor relationship. This means that students' internal motivation did not have a significant correlation with the achievement, the same goes to external motivation and self learning on students' achievement. Based on the aforementioned discussions, it is obvious that intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and self-learning contributed only a small percentage to the acquisition and students achievement in the English Language.

One of the things that need to be determined is the ways to mobilize the relevant motives with students' personal needs and the content of the English Language syllabus. Currently, it seems that students are interested to acquire the English Language; however the interests are strictly for entertainment and games, which do not lead to the requirement and skills as stated in the content of the subject syllabus.

### **7. Implications and Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the results indicate the level of students' motivation and self-learning is still moderately high. Hence, more concrete steps need to be done in providing better understanding among the students on the needs to have clear motives to learn, together with a comprehensive support from the environment to enhance the learning and teaching process. The problem lies in the students who are not clear of their personal motives to learn and who fail to see the inherent competition with peers as a challenge of a healthy competition. This is indicated by Azilah Arshad (2001) who indicated that poor thinking and lame perspective on the learning ethics and learning needs, will fail the students to emphasize their drives to learn in the right way.

Conclusions can be drawn from the findings that students are not familiar with the culture of self-learning, students are more comfortable with the teachers' dominant attitudes in the teaching and learning process, thus they fail to personally find other opportunities to get involved in the learning process. Teachers need to be aware of this, so as not to victimize their students of the circumstance.

The teaching and learning situation itself should be fair to the students by giving them fair chances to grow their own potentials. According to Habibah Elias (1993), students should be actively involved in the learning and teaching process, as their potentials will fail to grow if they do not fully utilize their senses to apply their personal skills in providing their ideas and talents.

This study is also a reminder to the schools in providing comprehensive facilities to support students' learning. This is consistent with the view provided by Abedah Ismail and Norhaini Abedah (2004) who stressed on the importance of the learning environment as a motivating factor to improve the learning process. At the same time, it is essential for the teachers to provide proper guidance and encouragement, so that students can improve their strength and spirit of acquiring new learning information. This study has the some recommendations: a) the school should provide pleasant environment for students b) The ministry of education should retrain the teacher how to be creative to encourage students via technology to increase their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as well as to contribute to their achievements c) the teacher should build up rapport with students and provide guidance for them how to do self-learning to improve their English.

### **8. Conclusion**

In conclusion, internal and external motives in each of the students need to be mobilized to support their learning activities. As high internal motives, supported by conducive learning environments will create a better climate and are able to boost students' achievement. This is due to the fact that students learn based on their own needs and personal desires, not because they are forced or directed by others. In addition, the provision of information with the help of technology will quicken the exploration of authentic information; hence, effortlessly engage students with the learning process. Thus, this relatively creates a situation of active teaching and learning, as well as provides a meaningful experience for students.

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