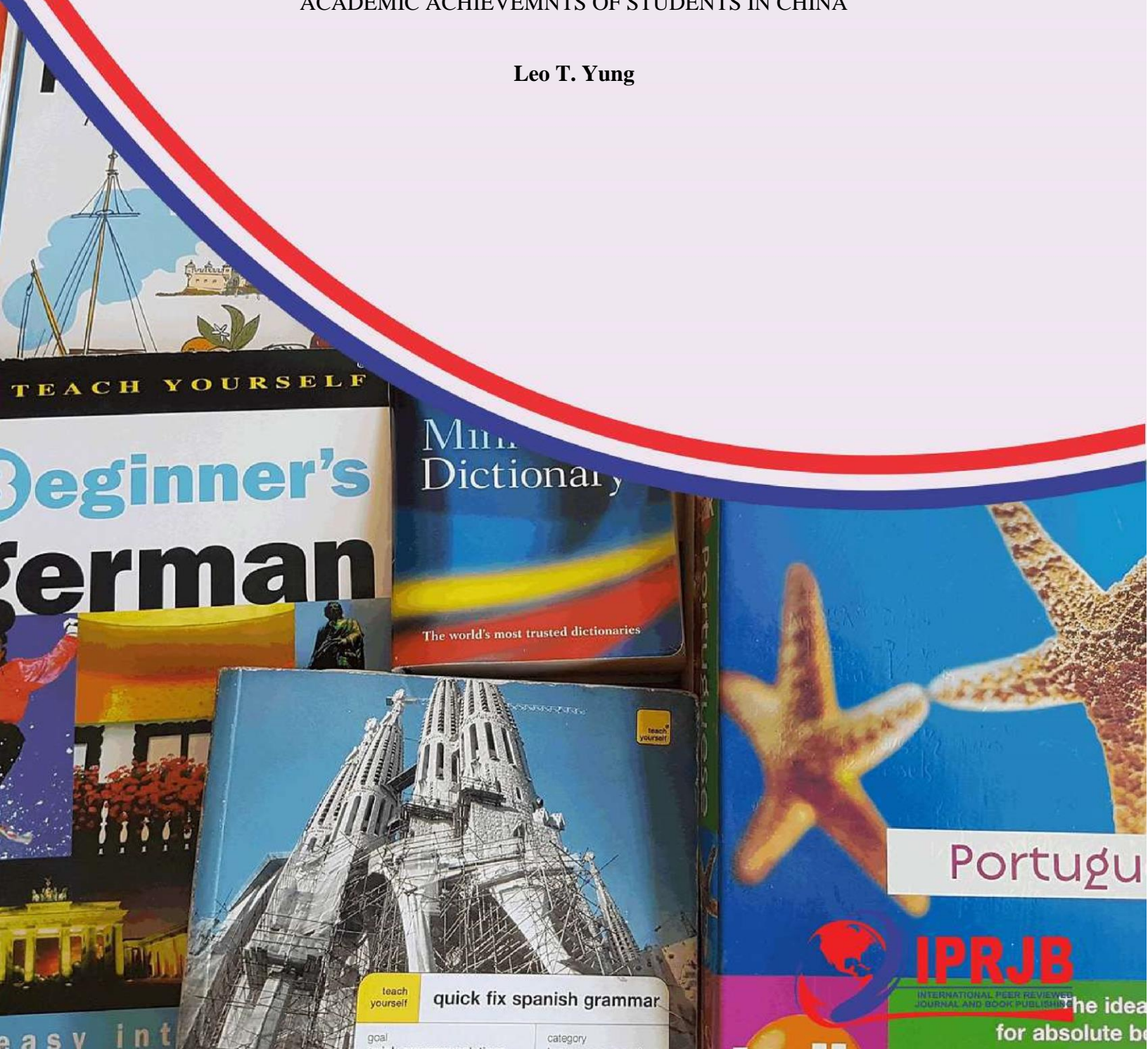


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ROLE OF MOTIVATION IN LEARNING ENGLISH FOREIGN LANGUAGE ON THE
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS OF STUDENTS IN CHINA

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**Role of Motivation in Learning English Foreign
Language on the Academic Achievements of
Students in China**

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of motivation in learning English foreign language on the academic achievements of students in China.

Methodology: The study adopted a desktop methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.

Findings: The findings revealed that there exists a contextual and methodological gap relating to the role of motivation in learning English foreign language on the academic achievements of students in China. Preliminary empirical review reveals that motivation is a component that is both very crucial and effective in the process of picking up a new language. Therefore, it is important for instructors and lecturers of languages to learn about, appreciate, and pay attention to the personalities of the pupils in their classes. In addition, they need to have an understanding of motivation, the significant value it holds, and the different forms it might take.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The Gardner's Motivation theory, the Acculturation model and the Self Determination theory may be used to anchor future studies relating to the role of motivation in learning English foreign language. The study will be beneficial to EFL teachers and other relevant stakeholders in establishing policies and strategies to promote motivation in learning English foreign language.

Keywords: *Foreign Language (FL), Motivation, Intrinsic, Extrinsic.*

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INTRODUCTION

To a large extent, one's level of motivation is responsible for explaining whether or not they are able to complete a challenging task. A person's level of motivation is directly correlated with their level of performance. It is simple to assume that a motivated learner will succeed in second language acquisition. Several investigations and tests in the field of education lend credence to these assertions. Nevertheless, they never really explain what motivation is or how it works in depth. So, what exactly does it mean to claim that someone is motivated? The question is: how can we instill and maintain a sense of drive? All those involved in the process of learning a second or foreign language- students, instructors, content creators, and researchers—agree that intrinsic motivation is crucial. Alqahtani (2015)

According to Nakamura (2014), the concept of motivation is convoluted because it seeks to provide an all-encompassing explanation for human behavior that defies a reductionist analysis. According to Alizadeh (2016), the problem is not a shortage of ideas to explain motivation but a surplus of theories and models. Thankfully, there is a growing body of literature examining how intrinsic desire affects language acquisition. Whether or not an individual achieves their goal depends on how hard they work and how badly they want it, as stated by Hofmann (2012).

Individuals commonly refer to this intangible mental component, the impetus behind an action, as motivation. It's a driving force that gets people up and moving. Determine whether or not a student is ready to speak by looking at their level of motivation. Motivation is defined as the willingness to put in effort and show enthusiasm for learning the language in order to achieve the desired outcome. Simply said, someone's motivation to learn a second language is measured by how hard they try to study the language out of pure interest and how fulfilled they feel while doing so (Saranraj & Shahila, 2016) Motivation cannot be inferred from mere exertion. The motivated individual makes an attempt to achieve the goal, but the effort itself does not guarantee motivation (Gardner, 1985). Learners need motivation because it gives them a reason to continue on their path toward achieving their goals.

As a result, it plays an essential part in acquiring a second language. Without sufficient motivation, students may struggle. Learners will struggle greatly without the intrinsic motivation to do so. According to Malone (2021), students who lack sufficient intrinsic motivation to learn can benefit from focusing on the significance of language. The importance of learners' motivation in their language acquisition is clear, and teachers can help their students become more intrinsically motivated by making a few adjustments.

The word "motivation" can mean different things to different people. According to Mahadi and Jafari (2012), the term "motivation" describes a learner's attitude toward the ultimate purpose of their language study. People's actions, wants, and needs can be explained by their motivation, as stated by Koo and Fishbach (2014). Another way to look at motivation is as the force behind an action, or the factor that makes one desire to carry it out again. According to Murnieks (2014), a person's motivation is what drives them to take specific actions or form certain preferences. Motivation, as defined by Gardner (1985), includes both the willingness to put in the effort necessary to learn the language and the desire to do so, as well as a positive outlook on the process. Oxford and Shearin (1994) described motivation as a desire to obtain an aim, along with the energy

to work towards that objective. What drives a person to act is what they call their "motives" (Guay *et al.*, 2010).

Particularly in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts, the issue of motivation is so crucial that it makes all other concerns about teaching methodology seem trivial in comparison. As a result of the harsh realities of learning English for most of our students, it is crucial to consider motivation as the essence of language teaching. There isn't enough exposure to the target language, there aren't enough opportunities to interact with native speakers, there aren't enough positive role models advocating for the study of English, and there may not be enough societal acceptance of the goal of learning English. As a result of these obstacles, one needs extraordinary motivation to master a foreign language (Anjomshoa, 2015)

To learn effectively, one needs to be intrinsically motivated. According to Gardner (1885), in order for a learner to be motivated, he or she must have some sort of end goal or purpose to work toward. This goal would be acquiring a foreign language as a second or foreign language. An actual goal or purpose must exist for the learner, with the target language serving as the means to that end (Mahadi & Jafari, 2012)

According to Mahadi and Jafari (2012), many students' performance and presentation improve and even excel in the context of learning a second or foreign language. Because they have higher intrinsic motivation. Different students have different rates of success when learning a new language, according to research presented by Dörnyei (2014). As for his thoughts on what factors affect learning a second language, he thinks there are three major ones. Age, character, and drive are the three components in question. Of the three factors mentioned, motivation is the most important one for acquiring a second language. Motivation is "the effort which learners put into learning an L2 as a result of their need or desire to learn it". Lightbrown and Spada (2001) concur, noting that "learners' communicative needs and their attitudes towards the second language community" are essential components of what motivates SLA students to study and practice the subject. In their view, students will be more driven to master a second language if they believe it is necessary for socializing or achieving narrowly defined objectives. Whether or not you succeed in learning a second language is strongly related to these types of motivation, as has been demonstrated by extensive research (Lightbrown & Spada, 2001).

The interest in learning Japanese outside of Japan has been the subject of a number of studies (for example, Guo & Quan, 2006; Nuibe; Onishi, 2011; Seo, 2011). The importance of inspiration in language learning has been recognized for some time (see Dörnyei, 2014) by researchers. If teachers tailor their lessons and classroom activities to their students' individual interests and goals, learning Japanese from a non-native speaker can be a rewarding experience. One of the most crucial aspects of successful second- and foreign-language learning is intrinsic motivation (Gardner, 1985; Gardner *et al.*, 1987). The educator also bears responsibility for fostering students' sense of competence, motivation, and self-assurance.

China places a high value on learning English because of the widespread recognition of the necessity of English for international trade, travel, and education. Across China, English is taught in nearly all public and private schools, and there is also a growing demand for English language instruction outside of the classroom. Typically, Chinese students are introduced to the English

language in elementary school, where they learn the fundamentals of the language like vocabulary and grammar. Beginning in the eighth grade, students must take English classes, and by the end of high school, they are expected to have reached a certain level of fluency (Butler, 2015)

As a result of the government's commitment, English instruction in China has received substantial funding increases in recent years. The government has been actively reforming the national curriculum in recent years with an eye toward bettering the standard of English language education. There has been an uptick in both the quantity and quality of English language instruction in China, as well as the quantity and quality of Chinese students studying abroad in English-speaking countries (Rahman et al., 2018). However, despite these initiatives, many Chinese students continue to struggle with English proficiency. This is because of factors such as a lack of exposure to the language outside of school, few chances to practice speaking and listening, and an emphasis on rote learning and grammar rather than the development of communicative competence.

The degree to which Chinese students are motivated to learn English is a crucial factor. The Chinese government has made a concerted effort to improve English language education in the country because it sees English proficiency as a key driver for economic growth and international competitiveness. Nonetheless, many Chinese students still have difficulty becoming fluent in English, and a lack of motivation is a major factor in this. Cultural attitudes toward English, the quality of English language instruction, the perceived relevance of English to the student's goals and interests, and the student's level of self-efficacy (belief in their ability to learn English) are all factors that can affect a Chinese student's motivation to study the language (Teo et al., 2018)

Statement of the Problem

In view of the increasing expectations for graduates to obtain an acceptable level of proficiency in the English language, more study has to be undertaken in these areas about the function of motivation to learn English Foreign Language at institutions of learning. Past research have found that students' motivation to study English has been influenced by a range of elements from their impression of the English language, motivation from their instructors, cultural attitudes among others. This study attempts to evaluate the influence of motivation in learning English foreign language on the academic results of students in China (Freeman et al., 2015)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Gardner's Motivation Theory

Gardner's Motivation Theory, which he developed in the middle of the 1970s, is one of the most often recognized and significant theories in the field of second language acquisition. It is also known as the Socio-Educational Model. Gardner invented this theory. According to this idea, the elements that influence a person's motivation to learn a second language might be either internal or external to the learner.

There are two basic types of motivation that drive language acquisition, integrative motivation and instrumental motivation, according to Gardner. These two types of motivation are outlined below.

Integrative motivation is when a person wants to learn a language so that they can connect with the culture and people that are linked with that language. This is the desired outcome of integrative motivation. On the other hand, the term "instrumental motivation" refers to the learner's desire to study the language for a practical goal, such as for the progress of their career or for the purpose of traveling. The significance of social elements as drivers of second language acquisition is another aspect that is highlighted by Gardner's thesis. These social elements include the attitudes that people have towards the language and the culture that is linked with the language, the attitudes that the learners themselves have towards the language and the culture, and the learners' sense of connection to the language and culture (Mahadi & Jafari, 2012)

According to Gardner, a social environment that is encouraging and uplifting can lead to more integrative motivation, which in turn can contribute to higher success in the process of learning a second language. This involves support from teachers, classmates, and the community as a whole, as well as chances for language learners to interact with native speakers of the language and participate in cultural activities that are connected to the language. The significance of the individual as well as the social environment in the process of learning a second language is emphasized by Gardner's Motivation Theory. According to this idea, students who are driven to learn a second language by integrative as well as instrumental considerations, and who have the backing of a supportive social environment, are more likely to achieve their goals in this endeavor, and succeed in learning the language (Gardner, 2014)

The Acculturation Model

The Acculturation Model is a theoretical framework that focuses on the relationship between acquiring a new language and making appropriate adjustments to one's culture. In the 1970s, John Schumann was the first person to suggest using this model in the research of second language acquisition; since then, the model has been utilized in a variety of settings for this purpose.

According to the Acculturation Model, the degree to which learners are able to adapt to the culture and language of the target environment is one of the most important factors in second language learning. The approach implies that acquiring a language is not solely a cognitive activity, but also a process that is influenced by social and cultural factors. Assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization are the four distinct approaches to acculturation that the model recommends as possible courses of action for students to take when confronted with variations in cultural norms. (Zaker, 2016)

According to the Acculturation Model, students who are able to successfully integrate into the culture of the target language are more likely to be successful in the process of learning the target language. They are able to adjust to the new cultural environment and cultivate a sense of belonging within the new community, which is why this is the case. The model does, however, take into account the fact that adjusting to a new culture can be difficult and may result in unfavorable emotional responses such as culture shock and anxiety. As a result, the model places a strong emphasis on the significance of offering learners support and tools in order to ease the cultural adjustment process (Zaker, 2016)

The Acculturation Model, in its whole, emphasizes the significance of taking into account the social and cultural aspects that have an effect on the process of learning a second language. Language instructors can give more effective support for their students' language learning and cultural adjustment if they have a better awareness of the manner in which learners adapt to the culture they are learning.

Social Determination Theory

As a theory of human motivation, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) holds that people are primarily motivated by the desire to meet their requirements for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Those who have their emotional and social needs addressed are more likely to put in effort toward a goal, as postulated by SDT.

Students are more likely to be motivated to learn a foreign language if they have a sense of autonomy over their learning (control), proficiency in their language abilities (progress), and a sense of belonging to a community of learners (connection) (relatedness) Many studies (Oga-Baldwin et al., 2017) Studies have shown that students are more engaged in language learning when they feel like they have some say in the process and can make decisions about what and how they study. Instructors can encourage student independence by giving students some say in how they learn, whether it's by letting them pick their own project ideas or letting them pick from a variety of learning activities. Students are more likely to remain engaged in their language studies when they perceive they are making progress in this area. Instructors may help students feel confident in their abilities by giving them constructive feedback that highlights their growth and accomplishments and by giving them challenges that are just above their current skill set (Zimmerman, 2012)

Finally, pupils are more likely to remain motivated to study a foreign language if they feel a bond with other students also studying the language. Instructors may help students feel more connected by creating a classroom climate that encourages students to work together and build relationships, and by giving them chances to practice their language skills with native speakers.

Overall, SDT reveals that students' feelings of autonomy, competence, and relatedness influence their motivation to study a foreign language. Insight into these characteristics will allow teachers to foster a classroom climate that encourages and facilitates students' interest in and commitment to the target language.

Empirical Review

Keaney (2014) conducted a study on foreign language learners' motivation and its effects on their achievement: implications for effective teaching of students studying Japanese at University Brunei Darussalam. This study used a quantitative survey to try to fill in this gap in knowledge. Using a sample of Brunei university students, factor analysis was used to find the five main motivational factors. These are: (1) interest in Japanese pop culture and traditional culture; (2) interest in Japanese language; (3) interest in understanding Japanese people and society; (4) career use of Japanese language; and (5) self-satisfaction. Participants' reasons for learning Japanese were very different based on their gender and age. Male students were more likely to study Japanese because they were interested in Japanese pop culture and traditional culture (Factor 1), while

female students were more likely to study Japanese because they were interested in themselves (Factor 5). Also, students in the oldest age group (24–27) did much better than those in the other two age groups on Factor 3: Understanding Japanese people and society orientation.

Ditual (2012) conducted a study on the motivation for and attitude towards learning English in the Philippines. Different studies had gotten the researcher interested, and was curious about what might affect the attitude and motivation of language students at Mindanao State University. The researcher wanted to find out what might be linked to these important factors for learning a language. The study found that the people who took part were very interested in learning English and had a good attitude about it. They were both interested in getting things done and in making connections. They wanted to learn English so they could get jobs and talk to people who spoke English. But the results show that the people who answered the survey were self-motivated, so outside factors like the independent variables did not change or affect their attitude or motivation.

Rehman (2014) sought to investigate the role of motivation in learning English language for Pakistan learners. The study was quantitative in nature. A Likert scale was used to make a questionnaire that was sent to 50 intermediate-level Pakistani students at a private college. The goal was to find out what they thought. In terms of gender, there were 25 men and 25 women in the group. 70% of the students agreed that they were learning English because they wanted good grades and a good job, wanted to go to college, and thought it would help them in the long run. 24% of the students agreed that they are learning English because they love the language, it is the language of the upper class, and they want to go abroad.

Wallace (2020) also sought to explore language learning motivation among primary EFL learners. The study looked at what makes young people want to learn English. A 10-item open-ended survey was filled out by 23 sixth-grade students from a primary school in Macau. Findings showed that most of the participants were highly motivated and learned English for both practical (like work and travel) and integrative reasons (like wanting to fit in with the culture of the target language). Most of the people who answered the survey said they had a good opinion of their teachers. This may be why most of them also had a good opinion of studying English, even though their families expected them to do well on exams and most of their classmates didn't like it. Participants also said that games and songs were their favorite things to do because they made them want to learn more on their own.

Altasan (2016) aimed at investigating the motivational orientation and their effect on English language learning; a study in EFL Saudi context. The purpose of this research was to analyze the factors that motivate Saudi students to study English and to identify relationships between students' motivation and their English proficiency levels. Non-English major EFL students from two Saudi Arabian technical institutions in Dammam and ArRass took part in a survey based on the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) created by R. C. Gardner (1985). Several elementary statistical tests, including means and standard deviations, were performed on the concurrently obtained data. Overall, the results showed that the Dammam group had better English accomplishment scores, but that they were similar to the ArRass group in terms of motivational perspectives. This suggests that the achievement scores were influenced by factors more than just

the level of English proficiency. The results of this study demonstrated a statistically significant difference between the two groups on the variable of attitude toward the English language.

Diego (2019) conducted a study on the factors that influence Ecuadorian university students' motivation towards English learning. Four hundred and twenty-two undergraduates from a variety of programs across three public institutions in Ecuador participated in a survey designed to help researchers uncover the variables that drive students to study English. Statements concerning integrative and instrumental motivation were the subject of the questions, with the participants' levels of agreement with each statement serving as data. Moreover, a free-form inquiry was designed to elicit the respondents' thoughts on what they saw as the primary motivations for studying English. The results demonstrated that many of the participants were motivated to learn the language for both short-term goals (such as traveling and communicating in the target language) and long-term goals (such as further education and career advancement).

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a desktop methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.

FINDINGS

A knowledge gap occurs when desired research findings provide a different perspective on the topic of discussion. For instance, Altasan (2016) aimed at investigating the motivational orientation and their effect on English language learning; a study in EFL Saudi context. The aim was to study Saudi students' motivation to learn English and the correlations between their motivational outlooks and their English achievement scores. A modified 18-item survey, adopted and modified from the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) developed by R. C. Gardner (1985), was administered to two groups of non-English major EFL students at two technical colleges from two different cities, Dammam and ArRass, in Saudi Arabia. Data were collected simultaneously and were subjected to some basic statistical analyses, such as mean and standard deviation. Overall, findings indicated that although Dammam group obtained higher English achievement scores, they were similar to ArRass group in respect of their motivational outlooks, which means that achievement scores were affected by other variables. On the other hand, our present study focuses on the role of motivation in learning English foreign language on the academic achievements of students in China.

In addition to that, our study revealed the existence of a methodological gap. For instance in his study Altasan (2016) employed the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) developed by R. C. Gardner (1985) in collecting data for his study whereas our present study adopted a desk study literature review methodology.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the findings, motivation is a component that is both very crucial and effective in the process of picking up a new language. Therefore, it is important for instructors and lecturers of languages to learn about, appreciate, and pay attention to the personalities of the pupils in their classes. In addition, they need to have an understanding of motivation, the significant value it holds, and the different forms it might take. In addition to this, they should be aware of, and make an effort to become acquainted with, the personality of each individual student. After that, they should, according to that particular personality type, find and recognize the sort of motivation that is associated with it, and then include it into their method of instruction. In this scenario, they have the opportunity to have a language classroom that is useful, successful, and practical in addition to achieving a favorable outcome in the context of their instruction.

The situation in which a language is being learned can have a positive or negative impact on the learners' motivation. The development of linguistic abilities is greatly aided by the presence of motivation. Motivating students to study a foreign or second language is one of the most important roles that teachers may perform in the classroom. When it comes to mastering a foreign language, motivation is a critical component that can be affected by a number of various factors. When trying to encourage their students to learn more, some EFL instructors tend to gloss over the importance of motivation. Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) are strongly encouraged to teach students how to become more motivated. Instructors have a responsibility to assist their students in locating sources of motivation in areas where they would not normally look for it and also in researching their own motivational processes so that they can make use of it.

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