



MOTIVATION TO STUDY ENGLISH OF NON-ENGLISH MAJORED FRESHMEN

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Abstract:

Motivation is regarded as an influential factor in the success of any activity. It plays a significant role in reaching the desired goals, including learning English. This research aims to analyze the students' motivation and factors affecting their motivation to learn English. The population of this study was 326 freshmen in nine faculties of natural sciences at Tay Do University. The quantitative data was collected through the questionnaire and analyzed by SPSS software. The results show that the students had motivation to learn English, but their motivation levels were not high. Additionally, the students had both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. However, the latter was higher than the former. Moreover, the results also indicate factors affecting learners' motivation. The research findings contribute to improving English teaching and learning quality in Vietnam in general and in Tay Do University in particular.

Keywords: motivation, study English, English teaching and learning quality, Tay Do University

1. Introduction

At the workshop on "Solutions to improve the quality of training in the context of integration and autonomy" held by Agriculture and Forestry University of Ho Chi Minh city in 2017, Dr. Pham Huy Cuong – Deputy Head of the Department of Foreign Languages, Economics - Law University, Vietnam National University HCM City – declared that in the survey of more than 100 businesses in Vietnam, with up to 70% of respondents need English in employment. However, he also affirmed that the effectiveness of English language teaching and learning at university is quite low, failing to meet the

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requirements of the labor market. This is indeed a stinging problem in teaching English in many universities in Vietnam.

Among the most important factors influencing English language learning outcomes is motivation because motivation is also a basis to explain why learners are enthusiastic, excited, positive and do not feel pressure when participating in learning activities (Spratt et al., 2002; cited in Nguyen & Truong, 2014). Similarly, Jakobovits (1970, cited in Luu, 2017) reveals that the motivational factor accounts for 33%; the factor of capacity 33%; intellectual factor 20% and other factors 14%. Therefore, it can be concluded that motivation has a great contribution to success in learning English.

Numerous studies on motivation to study English have shown that motivation has a significant influence on the students' learning outcomes as well as their learning achievements (Dwija, 2008; Rejeki, 2012; Wiyono, 2003; Hamdu, 2011; Rahman, 2011; Djamarah, 2011; Hamalik, 2011 cited in Muhammad, 2016, p.152). Scholarly literature also reveals that these studies still have some limitations such as investigating only one group of objects or studying the impact of a certain factor on learning motivation or little to no empirical research on motivation to study English in universities in the Mekong Delta has been documented. An examination of the effect of motivation on learning English in Tay Do University seems imperative.

1.1 Research questions

The following questions were formulated:

- 1) To what extent are non-English majored freshmen at Tay Do University motivated to learn English?
- 2) What kinds of motivation do they have in studying English?
- 3) What factors affect their motivation to learn English?

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Motivation

2.1.1 Definitions

Up to now, many definitions of motivation can be found in various studies. Johnstone (1999) considers motivation as a stimulant for achieving a specific target. In Hall (2011, cited in Ahmed, 2014, p2), motivation is defined as a key factor in the accomplishment of a particular activity. According to Woolfolk (1998), motivation is considered as an internal state that arouses, directs and maintains behavior. Similarly, Salvin (2001, cited in Dr. Mustapha, 2017, p.122) defines motivation as "*an internal process that activates, guides and maintains behavior over time*". Hence, motivation is seen as a basic and indispensable part of learning.

2.1.2 Types

Motivation has been classified into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation by many scholars over the years (Deci & Ryan, 1985 and Woolfolk, 1998). According to Deci and Ryan (1985), intrinsic motivation is the desire to engage in activities in anticipation of internally

rewarding consequences such as feelings of competence and self-determination while extrinsic motivation is the desire to engage in activities because of a reward from outside of and beyond the self. Similarly, Woolfolk (1998, cited in Santrock, 2004, p. 418) believes that intrinsic motivation stems from factors such as interest or curiosity whereas extrinsic motivation involves doing something to obtain something else.

Motivation can also be divided into instrumental and integrative motivation by other researchers (Liu 2007, cited in Rayhanna, 2012; Marjan Moivaziri, 2002, cited in Rayhanna, 2012; Oller et al., 1977). These authors believed that instrumental motivation focuses on learners' interest in the L2 as well as the individual's L2-related affective predispositions whereas instrumental motivation relates to the individual's future career concerns.

Despite their different classifications, they all agree that both types have a great impact on learning English.

2.1.3 Motivation in learning English

Motivation is one of the factors that make a difference in the language learning of each person in the same environment and learning conditions. Cook (2000) confirms that the second language acquisition of learners is influenced by three main factors, such as age, personality and motivation, among which motivation is the most significant one. Similarly, Richards and Schmidt (2002) consider motivation as the primary causes of success and failure in second language learning. More specifically, Ellis (1994, cited in Tengku & Sepideh, 2012, p.232) believes that motivation is *“the attempt which learners put into learning a second language because of their need or desire to learn it”*. Lightbrown and Spada (2001, p.33) identify motivation in second language acquisition as *“a complex phenomenon which can be defined in terms of two factors: learners’ communicative needs and their attitudes towards the second language community”*. The researchers believe that when learners think that they need to speak the second language with the aim of being in touch with others or accomplishing and achieving specialized desires and goals, they will be motivated to obtain expertise and skill in it. Furthermore, *“motivation also represents one of the most appealing, yet complex variables used to explain individual differences in language learning”* (MacIntyre et al., 2001, cited in Cattleya Mendoza, 2016). In summary, motivation in learning English is a combination of effort and desire to obtain the aim of learning English as well as the positive attitude toward learning English.

2.2 Impacts of motivation on language learning outcomes

Learning outcomes – a finished product of the learning process – are influenced by many factors such as learners themselves, the learning strategies, learning media, teaching materials used, teaching methods, learning environment, and motivation (Nguyen & Bui, 2005; Nguyen & Le, 2011; Vo, 2010; cited in Chau, 2014, p.9). Hence, motivation is believed to have a significant influence on students’ learning outcomes as well as their learning achievements (Dwijia, 2008; Rejeki, 2012; Wiyono 2003; Hamdu, 2011; Rahman, 2011, cited in Muhammad, 2016, p.152). Djamarah (2011, p.148) also declared that learning motivation is highly needed in a learning process and that since once a learner

does not have any motivation, it becomes impossible for this person to do learning activities. Moreover, Hamalik (2011, p.175, cited in Muhammad, 2016, p.152) also stated that learning motivation has directed the actions to achieve the intended goals, namely learning outcomes. In brief, motivation seems to be an initial foundation that motivates the later stages of a learning process and motivation is also closely linked to learning because when learners have motivation, they can recognize clearly their aims and set appropriate learning strategies to conquer their desired result.

2.3 Factors affecting language learning motivation

Motivation can change even during a L2 class (Dörnyei, 2005, p.83) since this dynamic construct varies throughout time. Therefore, motivation is a factor that is easily lost or decreased by internal and external impacts.

Hypothetically, the lack of motivation occurs because of many reasons, such as the problems arising from learners, teachers' attitude, teaching methods, syllabus, materials, learning environment, etc.

However, Dörnyei (1994) divided the L2 motivation into three levels affecting language learning motivation: the Language Level, the Learners Level, the Learning Situation Level, as summarized in the table below.

2.3.1 Three Levels theory of L2 motivation by Dörnyei (1994)

2.3.1.1 Table

Other studies also showed that some of the above-mentioned factors affect students' motivation. Luu (2012) indicated that learner factors have a certain influence on their motivation. Students' previous language learning experience influenced their views of learning process. It means that if students had good previous learning knowledge, they would be predisposed to study well at present and vice versa. Additionally, teachers and teaching methods as well as materials are the indispensable factors in the student's learning process. Luu (2012) also showed that 65.9% of the students were interested in teaching methods. In other words, if the teaching methods were boring, the students' motivation could be reduced. The results also presented that another influential factor was textbooks, which was proved by Ekiz (2016) since his study pointed out that 75% of the participants were more motivated when teachers used authentic materials.

Parents' impacts and class environments were also believed to affect students' motivation. Actually, Ekiz (2004) demonstrated that parental factors play an important role in learning English because the majority of students are more motivated when their parents stress the importance of English in entire life and give material support. Besides, class environments also have some influences on students' motivation. For example, if class facilities such as projectors and speakers do not work well or the class is crowded, students can lose interest and focus on the lesson. Besides, the majority of students seem to be more motivated when they work with their friends. This means that students' classmates have impacts on their motivation (Ekiz, 2016).

In summary, these previous studies demonstrated that such factors as learner factors, parents' impacts, class environments, teachers, teaching methods and materials

have certain influences on students' motivation. Nevertheless, the influential level of each factor would be changed depending on learning environment. For this reason, this research, based on the Three Levels theory by Dörnyei (1994), aims to investigate the six influence factors (students themselves, parents, classroom environments, teachers and their teaching methods, learning materials, tests) on the freshmen' motivation to learn English at Tay Do University.

3. Research method

3.1 Design

This research is a descriptive study which was conducted in 18 weeks. The quantitative data was collected through a questionnaire and analyzed by SPSS software.

3.2 Participants

The participants were 326 non-English majored first-year students from the faculties of nine natural sciences including Food Technology, Information Technology, Electricity - Electronic Engineering, Construction, Veterinary, Pharmacy, Aquaculture, Land Management and Nursing at Tay Do University. Most of them had learned English from grade six. Additionally, they also have learned TOEIC - based English, followed the book *'Very Easy Toeic'* by Anne Taylor and Garrett Byrne (2006) for two semesters before the study. In other words, they had two to three months to study English by the teaching methods of Tay Do University teachers. Therefore, they had enough experience in learning English to express their motivation clearly.

3.3 Questionnaire on students' motivation to study English

A questionnaire based on the Three Levels theory by Dörnyei (1994) was employed to collect data for this study. In order to avoid misunderstanding due to students limited English competence, the questionnaire was designed in Vietnamese with two sections: (1) The first section contained four demographic and personal questions about the student's class, gender, year of birth, duration of learning English; and (2) the second section with 57 statements followed Likert scale of five levels (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree).

3.4 Analysis

Firstly, statistical and coding methods were used to analyze the quantitative data. Next, negative statements (11, 14, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 41, 44 and 46) in the questionnaire were converted to synchronize data. Finally, the synchronized data was processed by SPSS software to identify the reliability of questionnaire, the level of students' motivation as well as the motivation types and the percentage distribution of the factors affecting language learning motivation.

4. Results

The data collected from 57 statements in the questionnaire were analyzed by SPSS. The internal consistency of this scale using Cronbach's alpha in SPSS Statistics shows that the reliability coefficient is 0.927, which indicates a high level of the reliability of the questionnaire. Hence, it can be confirmed that the questionnaire is reliable enough to be used for this research.

4.1 Level of participants' motivation to learn English

Before getting some deeper insights into the motivation of learners in this study, the motivation level of the research object should be verified. Thus, the table below shows the level of the participants' motivation.

Table 1: Level of participants' motivation to learn English

	N	Min	Max	Mean (M)
Motivation level (from Q1 to Q18)	326	1	5	3.55

Table 1 indicates that the motivation level's min score is 1, the max score is 5. Both are at the limit of a scale from 1 to 5. The mean score ($M_{ML} = 3.55$) is higher than the accepted one ($M=3.0$). However, motivation level's mean score is still below point 4 in the five-point scale. Hence, it can be concluded that the participants had motivation to learn English, but their motivation was not very high.

4.2 Types of participants' motivation to learn English

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were investigated in this study. The results are presented in the following table.

Table 2: The participants' motivation types to learn English

	N	Min	Max	Mean (M)
Intrinsic motivation	326	1	5	3.45
Extrinsic motivation	326	1	5	3.60

Table 2 displays the general mean score of each motivation type. The mean score of extrinsic motivation ($M_E = 3.60$) and intrinsic motivation ($M_I = 3.45$) are above the average level, but below the agreement level (of) 4.0. For this reason, it can be concluded that the students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were not high. In addition, the mean difference is rather clear (0.15), which means that the participants' extrinsic motivation is a bit higher than their intrinsic motivation.

A detailed analysis of the factors that determine these two types of motivation was shown in Table 3 and Table 4 below.

Table 3: Participants' intrinsic motivation to learn English

Sub-categories	Items	Mean (M)	Below avg. (%<3)	Avg (%=3)	Above avg (%>3)
The necessity of English	Q10	4.43	3.60	6.40	90.0
Updating information about the world	Q21	4.10	5.30	15.9	78.8
Communicating	Q22	3.69	11.7	28.5	59.8
Completing homework	Q6	3.40	17.2	33.4	49.3
Watching and listening to English movies and music	Q20	3.39	19.6	35.3	45.1
Like of English subject	Q19	3.31	17.5	40.2	42.3
Looking forward to English class	Q15	3.07	22.5	47.2	30.3
Self-learning	Q3	3.02	26.0	43.0	31.0
Finding foreigners to practice	Q9	2.61	47.9	35.6	16.5
Mean total (M_{In}) = 3.45					

The data from Table 3 showed the results of intrinsic motivation. The results show that the mean scores of Q10 and Q21 are the highest ($M_{10} = 4.43$; $M_{21} = 4.10$). About 90% of the students agreed and strongly agreed that "Learning English is necessary". This indicates that most of the students were aware of the importance of English. Furthermore, more than 70% of the students thought that English was necessary for them to update world news. Besides, the mean scores of the statements 22, 6, 20, and 19 are higher than the accepted one ($M = 3.0$), but lower than the agreement level ($M = 4.0$). This means that these factors had relatively positive effects on the students' intrinsic motivation. Question 22 has the highest mean score ($M_{22} = 3.69$), and nearly 60% of the participants desired to communicate and make friends with more English speakers. About 50% of them always completed their English homework ($M_6 = 3.40$). Additionally, they also liked studying English ($M_{19} = 3.31$) as well as watching English movies and listening to English music ($M_{20} = 3.39$).

However, the mean scores of questions 15 ($M_{15} = 3.07$) and 3 ($M_3 = 3.02$) are just slightly above the average level ($M = 3.0$). Especially, the mean score of Q9 is very low ($M_9 = 2.61$). This indicates that the students were not so eager to go to English classes and their self-learning consciousness was not high. Besides, they were not hardworking and did not have a habit to make opportunities to practise with foreigners.

The above part presents details of intrinsic motivation and data of extrinsic motivation are displayed in the following part.

Table 4: Participants' extrinsic motivation to learn English

Sub-categories	Items	Mean (M)	Below avg. (%<3)	Avg (%=3)	Above avg (%>3)
Future career	Q17	4.43	2.40	9.00	88.6
Finding a good job	Q25	4.07	4.60	17.5	77.9
Getting good grades	Q12	3.68	9.80	26.1	64.1
Studying English with real purpose	Q11	3.48	22.6	26.4	51.0
Punishing students	Q27	3.41	20.8	31.5	47.6
Bonus marks	Q26	3.37	19.0	36.5	44.5

Low scores	Q28	3.35	23.0	29.4	47.6
Requirements for graduation	Q24	3.32	23.9	28.2	47.9
Getting certificates	Q23	3.28	20.9	34.3	44.8
Mean_{total} (M_E) = 3.60					

As can be seen in Table 4, the mean scores of questions 17, 25 and 12 are fairly high ($M_{17} = 4.43$; $M_{25} = 4.07$; $M_{12} = 3.68$). Especially, the mean scores of 17 and 25 are higher than the agreement level 4.0. This means that the students were extremely interested in future occupations and class grades. The results also indicate that more than half of the students agreed that they had real purposes to study English ($M_{11} = 3.48$), and nearly 50% of them admitted that they were fairly interested in bonus marks ($M_{26} = 3.37$). They were also afraid of low scores ($M_{28} = 3.35$) and teachers' punishment ($M_{27} = 3.41$). Besides, nearly half of the students stated that they learned English to get certificates ($M_{23} = 3.28$) and meet requirements for graduation ($M_{24} = 3.32$).

To sum up, the majority of the students were interested in future careers and class grades, which indicates that these two factors had a positive influence on their extrinsic motivation. Besides, there were still some factors that fostered their extrinsic motivation such as getting certificates and meeting requirements for graduation.

4.3 Factors affecting participants' motivation to learn English

Figure 1 presents an overall picture of the six factors affecting the students' motivation to learn English.

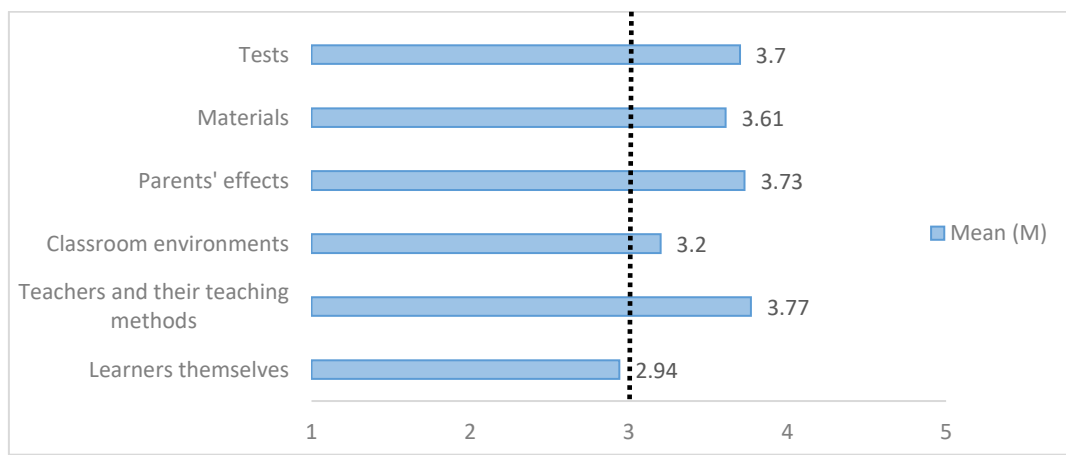


Figure 1: Factors affecting participants' motivation to learn English

As can be seen in the chart, the top total mean scores belong to four factors: teachers and their teaching methods, parents' effects, tests, materials ($M_T = 3.77$; $M_P = 3.73$; $M_{TE} = 3.70$; $M_M = 3.61$). These four total mean scores are higher than the accepted one 3.0 and nearly the agreement level 4.0, which means that these factors facilitate students' motivation to learn English. Besides, the total mean score of classroom environment is slightly above the average score 3.0 ($M_C = 3.20$), and the total mean score of learners themselves is lower than the average one 3.0 ($M_L = 2.94$). This indicates that learner factors did not have positive impacts on the students' motivation.

4.4 Learner factors affecting their motivation to learn English

Among the six factors affecting the students' motivation to learn English in this research, learner factors are the first one to be analyzed in Table 5.

Table 5: Learner factors affecting participants' motivation to learn English

Sub-categories	Items	Mean (M)	Below avg. (%<3)	Avg (%=3)	Above avg (%>3)
Needing to study well	Q30	3.78	15.0	19.6	65.4
Wanting to practice more	Q33	3.78	14.1	18.1	67.8
Background knowledge of English	Q29	2.67	46.5	29.0	24.5
Studying regularly	Q32	2.45	55.4	31.0	13.6
Knowing how to start	Q31	1.98	76.1	16.8	7.10
Mean total (M_L) = 2.94					

The total mean score of learner factors is the lowest one in the six factors and below the average score 3.0 ($M_L = 2.94$). This indicates that learner factors had negative effects on the students' motivation. The mean scores for the two questions 30 and 33, are the highest ($M_{30, 33} = 3.78$). More than 65% of the participants agreed that although English was not their major, they still needed to study English well and they also wanted to practise more. However, the mean scores of three last questions 29, 32, 31 are below the accepted one ($M = 3.0$). Especially, the mean score of question 31 is very low ($M_{31} = 1.98$). This shows that the majority of the students admitted that they did not know ways to gain their background knowledge of English. Similarly, nearly half of the students agreed that they had poor background knowledge of English ($M_{29} = 2.67$). Besides, about 55% of the participants stated that they wanted to be good at English, but they did not strive hard to learn this subject well ($M_{32} = 2.45$).

Overall, the participants were aware of the importance of learning English and knew that practising hard could improve their English skills. Nevertheless, they were not proactive in learning English. Many of them lacked background knowledge of English and they did not know ways to improve their English proficiency.

4.5 Teacher factors affecting participants' motivation to learn English

The second factor to be examined in this section is teachers of English and their teaching methods. More specific details are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Teacher factors affecting participants' motivation to learn English

Sub-categories	Items	Mean (M)	Below avg. (%<3)	Avg (%=3)	Above avg (%>3)
Giving marks fairly	Q43	4.12	2.80	14.1	83.1
Teachers' help	Q36	4.00	4.60	17.2	78.2
Comfortable atmosphere	Q34	4.04	7.70	14.4	77.9
Rewards	Q37	3.82	6.50	24.2	69.3
Interesting teaching methods	Q38	3.82	8.00	23.9	68.1

Checking English skills	Q42	3.78	6.20	25.4	68.4
Helping for self-studying	Q40	3.72	9.20	27.6	63.2
Appropriate teaching methods	Q39	3.68	8.30	29.4	62.3
Interest in study with current teacher	Q41	3.43	18.4	35.6	46.0
Offering opportunities to practise	Q35	3.32	25.2	23.3	51.5
Mean total (M_T) = 3.77					

As can be seen in Table 6, the participants responded very positively. The total mean score of teacher factors is very high – above the average score 3.0 and nearly the agreement level 4.0 ($M_T = 3.77$). Especially, most of the mean scores are higher than the accepted one ($M = 3.0$). All of these things indicate that teaching methods fostered positive motivation and encouraged the students to learn English well. Especially, the mean scores for questions 43, 36, and 34 are the highest mean scores. Actually, about 83% of the participants agreed that their teachers of English had fair evaluation ($M_{43} = 4.12$). Furthermore, more than 77% of them felt comfortable in English class ($M_{34} = 4.04$) because teachers were always enthusiastic to help them with their exercises ($M_{36} = 4.00$).

In addition, statements 37, 38, 42 and 40 related to the teaching methods got positive responses. All of the mean scores for these questions are quite high ($M_{37} = 3.82$; $M_{38} = 3.82$; $M_{42} = 3.78$; $M_{40} = 3.72$) and nearly reach the agreement level 4.0. Hence, it can be concluded that the current teaching methods had positive effects on the students' motivation. Specifically, the majority of the students (over 60%) felt that their teachers of English had interesting teaching methods. Besides, their teachers were devoted and enthusiastic because the teachers often checked their English language skills and taught them the ways to practise more at home.

However, the mean scores of two last ones are not very high ($M_{41} = 3.43$ and $M_{35} = 3.32$). About half of the participants wanted to continue to study English with their current teachers, but they expected their teachers to offer them more chances to practise English skills in class.

4.6 Classroom factors affecting participants' motivation to learn English

The processed data of the third factor are particularly shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Classroom factors affecting participants' motivation to learn English

Sub-categories	Items	Mean (M)	Below avg. (%<3)	Avg (%=3)	Above avg (%>3)
Teaching facilities	Q45	3.77	11.0	18.1	70.9
Class size	Q44	2.99	31.9	37.1	31.0
Classmates	Q46	2.82	35.2	43.6	21.2
Mean total (M_C) = 3.20					

The total mean score of classroom factors is the lowest one among the six factors ($M_C = 3.20$). This indicates that the classroom factors did not positively affect the participants' motivation to learn English. Question 45 has the highest mean score ($M_{45} = 3.77$) and over

70% of the students agreed that teaching facilities (speakers, projectors, tables, chairs, microphones, wall lights, fans, etc.) fostered English teaching and learning well in their classrooms. However, more than one third of the students admitted that they could not concentrate on and listen to lectures in overcrowded classes ($M_{44} = 2.99$). Besides, the mean score of question 46 is very low ($M_{46} = 2.82$) and below the average one ($M = 3.0$). In other words, the factor in question 46 is one of the main factors that reduced participants' motivation. The participants stated that their friends did not have high motivation to study English, which had a negative impact on their motivation.

4.7 Parental factors affecting participants' motivation to learn English

Questions 47, 48 and 49 address the parental factors affecting the students' motivation to learn English. The following table presents the results of the fourth factor in detail.

Table 8: Parental factors affecting participants' motivation to learn English

Sub-categories	Items	Mean (M)	Below avg. (%<3)	Avg (%=3)	Above avg (%>3)
Parents' desires	Q47	4.02	5.60	16.5	77.9
Financial support	Q48	4.01	6.20	16.2	77.6
English learning methods of relatives	Q49	3.17	25.8	33.8	40.4
Mean total (M_P): 3.73					

The total mean score of this part is quite high ($M_P = 3.73$) compared to the agreement level 4.0. This means that the parental factor had positive influences on the students' motivation. All of the mean scores in Table 4.8 are higher than the average one 3.0. Especially, Q47 and Q48 have the highest mean scores (above 4.0). More than 77% of the students admitted that their parents wanted them to learn English well ($M_{47} = 4.02$), and always provided financial support for their learning English ($M_{48} = 4.01$). This would help the learners focus on learning English more.

Nevertheless, the mean score for Q49 is just slightly above the mid-level ($M_{49} = 3.17$). About 40% of the students agreed that they had relatives who could guide and share English learning ways with them.

4.8 Material factors affecting participants' motivation to learn English

The results of the fifth factor are reported in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Material factors affecting participants' motivation to learn English

Sub-categories	Items	Mean (M)	Below avg. (%<3)	Avg (%=3)	Above avg (%>3)
Inclusion of four skills and grammar	Q55	3.85	7.10	22.1	70.8
Attractive materials	Q52	3.84	6.50	19.6	73.9
Topics in the English book	Q51	3.58	9.80	33.1	57.1
CDs for self-studying	Q54	3.55	11.4	31.6	57.0
The short-English listening files	Q53	3.54	12.3	32.0	55.7

The suitable level of the English books	Q50	3.28	15.6	43.0	41.4
Mean total (MM): 3.61					

Table 9 shows that the total mean score 3.61 is rather high. This indicates that the students had a positive attitude towards their learning materials. The high mean scores from all of the questions in Table 4.9 prove that the students put their interest in their English materials. More than 70% of the participants agreed that their English courses developed all four skills and grammar knowledge ($M_{55} = 3.85$), and their English materials were presented in an attractive manner ($M_{52} = 3.84$). Furthermore, about 57% of the students felt that the topics in their English books were diversified, practical and comprehensible ($M_{51} = 3.58$). Besides that, over a half of the participants thought that the short conversations could help them practise listening skills more easily ($M_{53} = 3.54$), and the materials had CDs, which were convenient for them to practise listening more ($M_{54} = 3.55$). On the other hand, nearly 50% of the students were hesitant about the difficulty level of their English books ($M_{50} = 3.28$) meanwhile about 41% of the students agreed and strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the current level of their English books. This means that the difficulty of their English books was fairly suitable for them. However, if the difficulty level could be reduced a little, it would be better.

4.9 Test factors affecting participants' motivation to learn English

Table 10 shows the findings of the test factors, which consist of the suitability of English tests and the frequency of taking English tests.

Table 10: Test factors affecting participants' motivation to learn English

Sub-categories	Items	Mean (M)	Below avg. (%<3)	Avg (%=3)	Above avg (%>3)
Suitability	Q56	3.75	6.40	27.0	66.6
Frequency of taking English test	Q57	3.66	8.60	31.0	60.4
Mean total (MTE): 3.70					

With the high mean total ($M_{TE} = 3.70$), obviously, the participants' responses to this factor were extremely positive. Both mean scores of Q55 and Q57 are quite high. Nearly 67% of the students thought that English tests in class were suitable for their ability ($M_{56} = 3.75$), and about 60% of them answered that they often had English tests in class ($M_{57} = 3.66$). As a result, it can be concluded that the students felt their tests were consistent and positively impacted their motivation. In other words, if they took English tests appropriate for their abilities regularly, their English learning motivation could be increased.

5. Implications and conclusions

Basing on the findings of research results, three implications could be considered. Firstly, non-English majored freshmen in natural sciences could have motivation to learn English

although their motivation level may be just a bit higher than the average level. Secondly, the students' intrinsic motivation is a bit lower than extrinsic motivation. This indicates that external factors may have a great influence on the students' motivation. Therefore, there should also be ways to increase their intrinsic motivation so that the students' motivation can be more sustainable. Thirdly, although students have a good sense of the importance of learning English, many of them are not proactive in learning English. Therefore, teachers need to find ways to help their students increase learning autonomy. In addition, students should form a habit of learning each day. In brief, since motivation can be self-generated or lost, taking factors influencing learner's motivation into consideration is very essential.

The research findings could help raise the awareness of the students, the teachers and the school leaders of the significance of motivation in learning English so that appropriate adjustments can be made to improve English learning motivation as well as the quality of this subject in Vietnam in general and at Tay Do University in particular to help students meet the demand of the job markets.

Conflicts of interest statement

The authors whose names are listed immediately below certify that they have no conflicts of interest, authorship, and disclosures in publication. They confirm that this work is original and has not been published elsewhere, nor is it currently under consideration for publication elsewhere.

About the Authors

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