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L2 Attitude and Motivation of Secondary, Undergraduate, and Postgraduate ESL Learners in India

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Abstract

Second language (L2) attitude and motivation-related studies focusing on differences caused by age have mostly highlighted the temporal dimension of L2 attitude and motivation. Age-related L2 motivation studies have also been gainfully employed at comparisons between L2 learners of different age groups recruited from different L2 learning environments. Such studies have not, however, attempted an analysis of the L2 attitudinal and motivational differences that may exist among L2 learners within a closer age range, e.g., 18 to 25 years. This article presents the findings of an L2 attitude and motivation survey, using a modified version of Dörnyei et al. (2006) and Ryan (2005), conducted among secondary, undergraduate, and postgraduate English as a second language (ESL) learners (N>210) in India. It primarily presents a comparative analysis of the L2 attitudinal and motivational constructs of integrativeness, instrumentality, cultural interest, linguistic self-confidence, and L2 anxiety attested in the sample. Additionally, it offers a description of the correlation between the five L2 attitudinal and motivational constructs concerning the different ESL groups. As the ESL learners across the academic levels demonstrated ESL motivation more on the side of instrumentality, they also reported linguistic self-confidence more in the familiar environment of an L2 classroom than outside of it. Since better motivational strategies enhance learner dedication to the learning of a certain L2, an elaborated understanding of the specific differences in L2 attitude and motivation within this important age range should help design more useful and effective L2 pedagogical methods.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Theoretical Background

Motivation is identified as one of the main determinants of individual differences in the success or failure of the second language (L2) learning (e.g., [Dörnyei, 1994a](#); [Gardner, 1985](#); [Gardner & Lambert, 1959, 1972](#)). Neither appropriate curricular imparted through good teaching nor can an exceptional individual intellectual ability of a learner alone ensure higher achievement in L2 learning, if the learner is not sufficiently motivated ([Dörnyei & Csizer, 1998](#)). In various attempts at the description of the basic dimensions of L2 motivation, several theoretical possibilities have been identified. One of these is the L2 motivational self-system in which seven components of L2 motivation—integrativeness, instrumentality, attitude to the L2 speaker community, milieu, linguistic self-confidence, cultural interest, and ethnolinguistic vitality—have been proposed ([Dörnyei et al., 2006](#)).

In addition to those components, language anxiety is also recognized as an important dimension of L2 motivation in other studies (e. g., [Gardner, 2007, 2010](#)). Moreover, the temporal dimension of L2 motivation, since the achievement of L2 proficiency is a long-term goal involving sustained long periods of learning, and its impact on individual learner achievement has also been identified as significant ([Chambers, 1999](#); [Gardner et. al., 2004](#); [Tachibana et al., 1996](#); [Williams & Burden, 1999](#); [Williams et al., 2002](#)). L2 motivation is perceived as a cyclic process, to emphasize more on the importance of the temporal dimension, fluctuating over time affecting L2 achievement and getting affected by it ([Dörnyei, 2001](#)). In other words, the factor of age difference has been identified as a significant construct, along with other extraneous influences, that may potentially affect the degree and intensity of L2 motivation experienced by the L2 learners with the possibility particularly in the context of formal L2 instruction that motivation for it may decline with age ([Dörnyei, 1994a](#)).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Research in highlighting the temporal dimension of L2 motivation has been, however, attentive more to issues of how learners' views of L2 motivation change over their personal histories and less on the systematic investigation of the attitudinal and motivational dispositions observed within a single L2 environment across samples of L2 learners with age differences ([Kormos & Csizer, 2008](#)). Considering the need for the development of different motivational strategies for better pedagogical practices in L2 education, specific differences in L2 motivation among various learner groups concerning both these orientations need to be equally understood in depth. With this perspective in mind, the present article primarily attempts at a description and analysis of the similarities and differences in five major L2 attitudinal and motivational dimensions of integrativeness, instrumentality, cultural interest, linguistic self-confidence, and L2 anxiety observed among three ESL (English as a second language)

learner groups: secondary, undergraduate, and postgraduate level Indian ESL learners. Additionally, it offers a description of the correlation between the L2 classroom centric attitudinal and motivational dimensions/constructs—linguistic self-confidence and L2 anxiety—and the rest of the three L2 attitudinal and motivational constructs of integrativeness, instrumentality, and cultural interest concerning three groups of Indian ESL learners.

L2 teaching programs in highly motivational environments in favour of the concerned L2 potentially develop more dedicated language learning habits among L2 learners (Dörnyei, 2019; Muir et al., 2021). But the L2 motivational behaviours may show differential dynamics in relation to the sources or factors fostering such L2 motivation (Adolphs et al., 2018). What works for a particular group of learners may not be a complete guarantee of a successful L2 motivational strategy for another. Only an in-depth understanding of the specific differences in L2 attitude and motivation among L2 learner groups will lead to a more practically oriented understanding of the L2 learning practices conducive to L2 motivation within a particular classroom type.

1.3 Objectives and Research Questions of the Study

To achieve the broad aim of understanding the L2 attitudinal and motivational behaviours of the three Indian ESL learner groups of secondary, undergraduate, and postgraduate students, the study set three specific objectives. First, it aimed to analyse the differences and similarities in the five L2 attitudinal and motivational constructs identified for the study vis-à-vis the three Indian L2 learner groups. Second, it attempted to measure the correlations among the five L2 attitudinal and motivational constructs in relation to the three Indian ESL learner groups. Third, the study proposed to measure the effects of the L2 attitudinal and motivational constructs of L2 anxiety and linguistic self-confidence on the other three constructs with reference to the three groups of Indian ESL learners. Keeping these specific objectives in mind, the study posed the following three research questions:

1. What are the differences and similarities in the L2 motivational constructs vis-a-vis the secondary, undergraduate, and postgraduate ESL learners of India?
2. How are the five L2 motivational constructs identified for the study correlated in relation to the secondary, undergraduate, and postgraduate ESL learners of India?
3. Is there any correlation between L2 anxiety and linguistic self-confidence and the other three L2 attitude and motivation constructs vis-à-vis the secondary, undergraduate, and postgraduate ESL learners of India?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Components of L2 Motivation

The five scales of L2 motivation identified and selected for the analysis—anxiety, integrativeness, instrumentality, linguistic self-confidence, and cultural interest—appeared inclusive of the various dimensions of L2 motivation that the study aimed to understand. They represented the major components of L2 motivation that took into account both the general L2 attitudinal aspects and L2 instructional issues discussed in L2 motivation literature. Integrativeness, one of the key components in the early

conceptualization of L2 motivation, is defined as a positive outlook on the L2 and its culture, and higher scores in this construct reflect the L2 learners' desire to become similar to the L2 speaker community by integrating themselves into the L2 culture (Gardner, 1985; Gardner & Lambert, 1959, 1972; Lambert, 1980). It is one of the more widely discussed concepts in the field of motivation studies and it has been viewed as a significant way to empirically investigate various aspects of the L2 learning process (e.g., Clement, 1980; Clement & Kruidenier, 1985; Dörnyei, 1990, 1994a, 1994b; Dörnyei & Kormos, 2000; Gardner et al., 1992, 1985; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991; Schumann, 1986). Despite being the principal building block of many theoretical constructs of L2 motivation, the notion of integrativeness, however, lacks any parallel ideas in the areas of motivational psychology and remains somewhat of an enigma (Dörnyei, 2003). The meaning of the term has been stretched as per the individual emphasis of researchers and slightly varies across L2 motivational studies (Gardner, 2001).

Instrumentality, a comparatively less ambiguous concept than integrativeness, is yet another very frequently used notion in L2 motivational studies (e.g., Kraemer, 1993; Lukmani, 1972; Shaaban & Ghaith, 2008; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995; Warden & Lin; Wen, 1997). Understood as the construct that provides the greatest driving force in the L2 learning process, it is defined as the perceived practical benefits of acquiring proficiency in the L2 (Dörnyei & Csizer, 2005). It provides the practical reasons for L2 learning in terms of functional achievements such as getting jobs, good salary, etc., and supplies the utilitarian stimulus for learning the L2 (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Identified as a tangible dimension of L2 motivation that emerges for the underlying promise of a touchable and saleable prize in the learning of the L2, it is a part of the greater desire to do something for the hope of a substantial return (Tileston, 2010).

The notion of cultural interest, on the other hand, is associated with the L2 learners' appreciation of cultural products such as films, videos, TV programs, music, magazines, books, etc. in the L2, especially in certain learning environments where direct contact with the L2 speakers is minimal (Dörnyei & Csizer, 2005). It represents the socio-cultural dimension of L2 motivation and measures the L2 learners' enthusiasm to know about the world, cultural products, social and cultural life of the target language group (Clement & Kruidenier, 1983). The cultural interest dimension of L2 motivation demonstrates the importance of L2 cultural products in shaping the L2 learners' attitude to the L2 by familiarizing them with the L2 community (Dörnyei & Csizer, 2005). Linguistic self-confidence, another important notion in L2 motivation studies, is described as the anxiety-free self-belief that the L2 learners have about their personal ability and the available resources in the learning environment required for mastering the L2 (Clement, 1980; Clement et al., 1977). Concerned with a generalized perception of one's coping potentials regarding a task, it represents the personal belief of the L2 learner about his or her capacity to successfully finish the task and it may either specifically refer to the learning of a particular language or L2 learning in general without involving any specific target language (Dörnyei & Csizer, 2005). With the quality and quantity of social contact in the L2 as the principal antecedents of linguistic self-confidence, it has been considered not only crucial in multicultural contexts but also mono-cultural linguistic environments (Clement et al., 1994; Lou & Noels, 2016, 2017).

The notion of language anxiety has also received considerable attention in L2 motivational studies for the last four decades (Gkonou et al., 2017). Defining anxiety

as the individual emotion of apprehension in the consciousness of the autonomic nervous system (Spielberger, 1983), the notion of L2 anxiety refers to the feeling of tension and apprehension experienced in the acts of listening, learning, and speaking in the context of an L2 (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). Depending upon its source and nature anxiety has been either categorized as trait anxiety, referring to a stable feeling to get anxious all the time, and state anxiety, triggered by external stimuli, that changes intensity over time (Spielberger et al., 1976; Suzuki & Childs, 2016), or facilitating anxiety that strengthens learner's performance, and debilitating anxiety in which learner's performance is negatively affected (Scovel, 1978). Regarded both as the cause and the consequence of academic performance, anxiety is often implicated for impaired performance and lower grades on tests (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre, 2017; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989). Language learning anxiety has been classified as trait anxiety that recurs in the context of language learning (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991b) and L2 anxiety may be described as situation-specific anxiety that fluctuates across varying situations (Horwitz et al., 1991; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991a, 1991b). It has been identified as a debilitating factor in the learning of an L2 as anxiety negatively affects the process of L2 learning (Horwitz & Young, 1991). Anxiety in L2 learning experienced by learners has been reported to have a negative effect on their oral performance in the L2 (Tóth, 2017; Young, 1986). Additionally, it may even inhibit the growth of intrinsic motivation for a task by negatively affecting the potential flow experience involved in it (Oxford, 2017).

2.2 Age-related Difference in L2 Motivation

Establishing a connection between the factors of age and motivation, a decline in work motivation coinciding with age has been observed in work motivation studies that have led to the idea that the hedonic treadmill effect consequent upon age decreases work motivation (Warr, 2001). This relationship between age and motivation has been attested in L2 motivation studies, too. Seventh-graders were observed to have scored significantly higher than ninth-graders on various dimensions of L2 motivation such as, need for the language, integrative orientation, positive attitude towards the L2 instructors, perceived self-ability, and L2 success (Hadfield & Dörnyei, 2013; Williams et al., 2002; You et al. 2016). On another occasion, elementary students were found to be more motivated toward learning foreign languages such as Chinese, Japanese, and Korean than secondary students (Sung & Padilla, 1998). Confirming the fact that younger learners were more motivated than older learners (Baker & MacIntyre, 2008) further, age was found to be an influential factor in a study of college-going learners of Chinese in which the younger learners, influenced by their friends' opinion about the language classes and professors at school as well as their desire to study in a Chinese-speaking country, were observed to be more positive toward Chinese language learning (Sung, 2010). There were a few studies, however, with contradictory findings. A group of around 20-year-old Chinese immigrant learners of English in Hong Kong was found to be more motivated to learn English than a younger group of L2 learners (Wong, 2008). In another study, the youngest group of secondary school learners of English of the three different age groups of Hungarian language learners was reported to display the lowest language learning motivation towards English—the other two groups being university students and adult learners (Henry & Cliffordson, 2013; Kormos & Csizer, 2008).

Several reasons have been proposed to justify the findings of these studies on the relationship between age and motivation in language learning. First, it was suspected that the younger language learners were more motivated towards learning the language because there was a pre-existing general tendency in school-based learning in which motivation for language learning decreases by the time learners reach secondary school (Dörnyei et al., 2015; Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015; Williams et al., 2002). Second, it was proposed, explaining the lower motivation for English language learning observed among younger learners, that the compulsory nature of learning English in schools where the learners needed to continue learning the language, they had chosen till the end of the secondary school years was the reason for the decline in motivation (Kormos & Csizer, 2008). Third, it was believed in the case of the Chinese immigrant learners that the older Chinese immigrant learners were much more motivated to learn English than the younger group of learners because the older learners were required to pass the English test included in an important public university entrance examination (Wong, 2008).

3. METHODS

3.1 Design and Procedure of the Study

The details of the research design and the procedure of data collection adopted in the study are explained in the following three sub-sections.

3.1.1 Selection of the participants

The participants of the survey were selected using stratified random sampling. The sample was a mix of adolescent and adult Indian ESL learners comprising three groups in a range of age between 18 and 25 years—secondary school students (18-19 years), undergraduate students (19-21 years), and postgraduate students (21-25 years). An effort was also made to keep both male and female representatives in the sample. Although the target sample size was initially around 500, the majority of the contacted participants either abstained from responding or responded to only a small number of items in the questionnaire.

Table 1. Demographic details.

Level of class	N	Sex	
		Male	Female
Secondary students	72	43	29
Undergraduate students	67	32	35
Postgraduate students	79	24	55
Total	218	99	119

Altogether, 218 complete responses were collected in the survey out of which, as shown in Table 1, 72 were from secondary school students, 67 from undergraduate, and 79 from postgraduate students. The participants in the survey were distributed across different schools, colleges, and universities in India and they were from a wide selection of academic disciplines—humanities, sciences, management, engineering, and commerce. A total number of 24 institutions located in the four different regions of the

country—east, west, north, and south—were contacted for the survey. Eight of them were secondary schools located in rural and urban areas, eight were engineering, commerce, and management colleges mostly in semi-urban and urban locations, and eight were universities located mostly in urban centres. Unlike in schools, the urban-rural divide may not reflect in the colleges and universities as the student respondents in these institutions cut across such strata. The objective of stratifying the institutions in these different regional locations was to select a sample that represents the various groups of ESL learner populations within the country, male/female, east/west, urban/rural, etc.

3.1.2 Preparation of the questionnaire used in the study

A new questionnaire was designed for the collection of data following the questionnaires described in Ryan (2005) and Dörnyei et al. (2006). Altogether sixty 6-point Likert items were originally used from these two questionnaires highlighting several dimensions of L2 motivation: integrativeness, instrumentality, cultural interest, the vitality of the L2, L2 confidence, L2 anxiety, classroom anxiety, milieu, parental encouragement, L2 attitude, international posture, ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 resilience. A varimax exploratory factor analysis was, however, conducted using the SPSS version 26.0 to analyse the actual constructs of L2 motivation reported in the questionnaire in the context of the sample, followed by a test of internal reliability of these L2 motivation constructs. As shown in Table 2, five underlying factors or constructs were finally identified in the questionnaire accounting for 45.35% of the variance. Keeping the original definitions of the respective relevant constructs, the factors were renamed as L2 anxiety, L2 integrativeness, L2 instrumentality, L2 self-confidence, and L2 cultural interest. All the five factors reached a reliability coefficient of .70 threshold or more, with the lowest being .73, presenting very high internal consistency for all the items in the factors selected for analysis.

Table 2. Motivation factors (cumulative variance of 45.35%).

Factor 1 L2 anxiety ($\alpha=.87$)		Factor 2 L2 integrativeness ($\alpha=.84$)		Factor 3 L2 instrumentality ($\alpha=.86$)		Factor 4 L2 self- confidence ($\alpha=.73$)		Factor 5 L2 cultural interest ($\alpha=.75$)	
Item	Factor loading	Item	Factor loading	Item	Factor loading	Item	Factor loading	Item	Factor loading
57	.782	14	.711	41	.655	45	.612	27	.741
54	.728	17	.685	46	.595	19	.603	30	.702
25	.695	11	.644	5	.568	49	.584	21	.662
7	.692	18	.597	60	.542	59	.548	22	.483
51	.682	13	.558	56	.540	4	.485	39	.406
47	.652	28	.544	40	.521	29	.458		
32	.601	34	.517	37	.507				
48	.553	36	.515	6	.505				
38	.544	50	.478	42	.504				
3	.430	26	.410	35	.485				
		43	.405	53	.441				
				12	.430				
Eigenvalue		7.256		2.801		2.418		1.954	
12.781									

The total number of items included in these factors, as shown in Table 3, from the 60 items in the original questionnaire was 44. While the factor of L2 anxiety (10 items) measured the level of anxiety felt by the L2 learner in the context of L2 use in everyday life, the L2 integrativeness (11 items) scale represented the L2 learners' willingness to integrate with the source culture of the L2. L2 instrumentality (12 items), on the other hand, was concerned with the utilitarian benefits like higher salary, better jobs, etc. associated with the increased proficiency in the L2. L2 self-confidence (6 items) measured the level of confidence felt by the L2 learner when the L2 was used in the context of formal L2 instruction in a classroom. L2 cultural interest (5 items) scale collected responses regarding the L2 learner's attitude to various cultural products associated with the L2 speaking community such as films, television programs, magazines, music, etc.

Table 3. Instrument elaboration.

Motivational scales	Item count	Examples of the items
L2 anxiety	10	I feel anxious if someone asks me something in English.
L2 integrativeness	11	I can imagine myself speaking English as if I were a native speaker of English.
L2 instrumentality	12	Studying English is important because I will need it for my career.
L2 self-confidence	6	I don't get anxious when I have to answer a question in my English class.
L2 cultural interest	5	I like TV programs made in English-speaking countries.
Total no of items used	44	

3.1.3 The procedure of data collection and analysis

The collection of data was severely restricted by the lockdown consequent upon the worldwide COVID-19 outbreak at the time of the data collection. Since the collection of responses through the distribution of print questionnaires to the learner populations was not possible because of the sudden closure of the educational institutions in the country for the nationwide lockdown, e-questionnaires were used in the survey. The links to the questionnaire were provided with the assistance of students working in the term paper project either on social network platforms like WhatsApp or they were directly emailed to the prospective respondents identified through personal contacts.

Besides the varimax exploratory factor analysis and internal consistency test conducted on the data using the SPSS version 26.0, three more statistical methods were employed to analyse the L2 motivational factors in the context of the three subsamples representing different academic levels. First, a one-way ANOVA test was conducted to compare the different dimensions of L2 motivation identified in the exploratory factor analysis across the subsamples. Second, to measure the correlation coefficients of the different scales of L2 motivation in the sample, a Pearson correlations analysis was carried out. Finally, separate multiple regression analyses were also conducted to identify and measure the predictor variables in the L2 motivational scales in the three subsamples.

3.2 Research Paradigm

After excluding the items that failed to receive internal consistency, the remaining items were identified as part of the five dimensions of L2 motivation and they were selected for further analysis. Since the main focus of the study was to measure the relationships between the dimensions of L2 anxiety and L2 self-confidence on one hand, and their relationships with the other three L2 motivational dimensions, it was considered reasonable to restrict the total number of scales to only five.

Table 4. Reliability coefficients of the motivation variables for the subsamples.

Variables	Secondary	Undergraduate	Postgraduate
L2 anxiety	.89	.81	.83
L2 integrativeness	.91	.80	.78
L2 instrumentality	.77	.86	.85
L2 self-confidence	.65	.71	.74
L2 cultural interest	.65	.78	.77

For the confirmation of internal consistency of the items in the questionnaire across the three subsamples of secondary, undergraduate, and postgraduate Indian ESL learners, three separate principal component analyses were done to measure the five dimensions identified in the exploratory factor analysis of the L2 motivation questionnaire. The reliability coefficients, as shown in Table 4, of the majority of five scales or factors in the three different subsamples were within the same range. The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency reliability coefficients of most of the scales were above the .70 threshold. The scales of L2 anxiety and L2 integrativeness reached the highest reliability coefficients of .89 and .91 in the secondary subsample, whereas the scale of L2 instrumentality reached the highest reliability coefficients of .86 and .85 respectively in the subsamples of undergraduate and postgraduate ESL learners. Although the reliability coefficient in the scales of L2 self-confidence and L2 cultural interest was as low as .65 for the secondary school subsample, it was well within the acceptable range.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Differences and Similarities in the L2 Motivational Constructs

The descriptive statistics of the five L2 motivational scales in the context of the whole sample and a comparative analysis of the three subsamples along these five L2 motivational scales using a one-way ANOVA are presented in Table 5. The scales of L2 integrativeness and L2 cultural interest showed the highest mean values (above 4.5 on a 6-point scale) for all three subsamples. This is evidence of the fact that the L2 learners across the three subsamples showed exceptional interest in the socio-cultural dimensions of the L2. The L2 motivational scores for two other scales, instrumentality and linguistic self-confidence, were also quite high (above 4) across the three subsamples. It pointed to the fact that the L2 learners were aware of the utilitarian benefits of learning the L2 also revealed that they were not particularly anxious about using the L2 in the context of the classroom.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics and comparisons of the motivation variables across the three levels of education (S=secondary; U=undergraduate; P=postgraduate)

Variables	Levels of education	M	SD	F	Sequence ^a	Effect size ^b
L2 anxiety	S/U/P	3.21/4.07/3.87	1.31/.96/.99	12.11***	S < P < U	.101
L2 integrativeness	S/U/P	5.17/5.11/4.89	.84/.70/.66	3.00	-	-
L2 instrumentality	S/U/P	5.12/4.60/4.26	.63/.94/.87	21.10***	P < U < S	.164
L2 self-confidence	S/U/P	4.92/4.41/4.30	.75/.93/.89	11.01***	P < U < S	.093
L2 cultural interest	S/U/P	5.21/4.99/4.95	.65/.93/.81	2.23		-

a '<' represents significant difference; ',' represents non-significant difference.

b Eta².

***p<.001.

The only scale where the L2 motivational score was considerably low (around 3-4) for all the three subsamples was L2 anxiety indicating the existence of an anxiety factor in L2 use outside the classroom. The standard deviation figures for this scale also showed the largest variation in the study pointing towards a high variation in the experience of L2 anxiety—an anxiety that primarily concerns communication in the L2 in general and not particularly in the context of any specific physical domain of communication—across the three subsamples attested in earlier studies of L2 motivation (e. g., Horwitz, 2001; Kormos & Csizer, 2008; MacIntyre, 2002).

4.2 Correlations among the Five L2 Motivational Constructs

Three Pearson correlation analyses were carried out to measure the correlation coefficients, as shown in Table 6, of the five L2 motivational scales separately in the three subsamples. Significant positive correlations were observed between L2 integrativeness and three other L2 motivational scales—L2 instrumentality, L2 self-confidence, and L2 cultural interest—across all three subsamples. Additionally, similar positive correlations were observed between L2 instrumentality and L2 self-confidence for all three subsamples. Significant positive correlations were also observed between L2 instrumentality and L2 cultural interest, and between L2 self-confidence and L2 cultural interest, but only in the subsamples of undergraduate and postgraduate L2 learners. These motivational trends were expected as L2 learners showing high L2 motivation in one of these three dimensions would also be implicated for higher motivation in the other dimensions. Indian ESL learners across academic levels, considering the utilitarian significance of learning English in India, demonstrated greater curiosity about the target culture and showed more desire to integrate with it. The motivated ESL learners across the board correspondingly found the use of the L2 in the context of a classroom less challenging.

Table 6. Correlations-coefficients of the L2 motivational variables across the three academic levels.

Level of education	Variables	L2 anxiety	L2 integrativeness	L2 instrumentality	L2 self-confidence	L2 cultural interest
Secondary	L2 anxiety	--	.06	-.34**	-.34**	.13
	L2 integrativeness		--	.53**	.41**	.42**

Table 6 continued...

	L2 instrumentality			--	.48**	.41
	L2 self-confidence				--	.19
	L2 cultural interest					--
Undergraduate	L2 anxiety	--	.10	-.22	.27*	.11
	L2 integrativeness		--	.70**	.41**	.56**
	L2 instrumentality			--	.37**	.45**
	L2 self-confidence				--	.46**
	L2 cultural interest					--
Postgraduate	L2 anxiety	--	.04	-.32**	.07	-.02
	L2 integrativeness		--	.57**	.66**	.65**
	L2 instrumentality			--	.58**	.56**
	L2 self-confidence				--	.41**
	L2 cultural interest					--

4.3 Correlation of L2 Anxiety and Linguistic Self-Confidence with the Other Constructs

Two separate stepwise multiple regression analyses were carried out to find out the predictor variables of the learners' L2 anxiety and L2 self-confidence in the motivational scales. As shown in Tables 7-9, the results of the analyses associating the two motivational scales of L2 anxiety and L2 self-confidence showed considerable academic level-related variations in the three subsamples. Although L2 integrativeness contributed significantly to L2 anxiety in the subsamples of secondary school and postgraduate L2 learners, it did not contribute to L2 anxiety in the undergraduate L2 learner subsample. Additionally, L2 cultural interest significantly contributed to L2 anxiety only in the secondary school L2 learner subsample. The contribution of the L2 motivational scale of L2 instrumentality to L2 anxiety, on the other hand, was significantly negative in the subsamples of secondary school and postgraduate L2 learners pointing to an L2 learning situation in which L2 instrumentality leads to a possible reduction in L2 anxiety among L2 learners across the three academic levels.

Table 7. Regression analysis (stepwise) of the variables with L2 anxiety and L2 self-confidence for secondary students.

Criterion variable	Predictor variables	Model			
		B	SE B		β
L2 anxiety	L2 instrumentality	-1.22	.26		-.59***
	L2 cultural interest	.53	.24		.26*
	L2 integrativeness	.41	.20		.27*
	R^2			.25	
	F for change in R^2			7.61***	

Table 7 continued...

L2 self-confidence	L2 instrumentality	.57	.13		.48***
	R^2			.23	
	F for change in R^2			20.88***	
B signifies regression coefficient. * $p < .05$; *** $p < .001$					

In the L2 self-confidence scale as the criterion variable, L2 instrumentality significantly contributed to L2 self-confidence in the secondary school and postgraduate L2 learner subsamples.

Table 8. Regression analysis(stepwise) of the variables with L2 anxiety and L2 self-confidence for undergraduate students.

Criterion variable	Predictor variables	Model			
		B	SE B		β
L2 anxiety	L2 instrumentality	-.23	.12		-.22
	R^2			.05	
	F for change in R^2			3.36	
L2 self-confidence	L2 cultural interest	.46	.11		.46***
	R^2			.21	
	F for change in R^2			17.36***	

B signifies regression coefficients.
*** $p < .001$

Table 9. Regression analysis (stepwise)of the variables with L2 anxiety and L2 self-confidence for postgraduate students.

Criterion variable	Predictor variables	Model			
		B	SE B		β
L2 anxiety	L2 instrumentality	-.58	.15		-.51***
	L2 integrativeness	.50	.19		.33*
	R^2			.17	
	F for change in R^2			7.97**	
L2 self-confidence	L2 integrativeness	.65	.13		.49***
	L2 instrumentality	.31	.10		.30**
	R^2			.50	
	F for change in R^2			38.25***	

B signifies regression coefficient.
* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

L2 cultural interest significantly contributed to L2 self-confidence in the subsamples of secondary school and undergraduate L2 learners, L2 integrativeness contributed significantly to L2 self-confidence in the postgraduate L2 learner subsample. Unlike what was observed with the L2 anxiety as the criterion variable, no L2 motivation scale negatively contributed to L2 self-confidence in any of the three subsamples emphasizing the need to describe L2 anxiety and L2 self-confidence as discrete L2 motivational scales. Indian ESL learners were observed to be differentially affected in their L2 anxiety and L2 self-confidence, depending on their academic levels, by the instrumentality, integrativeness, and cultural interest dimensions of L2 motivation.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Utilitarian L2 Motivation among Indian ESL Learners

The first research question of the study was about the differences and similarities in the L2 attitudinal and motivational constructs vis-à-vis the secondary, undergraduate, and postgraduate ESL learners of India. The purpose of this research question was to understand the principal trend(s) in the L2 attitudinal and motivational constructs observed among the groups. The findings in connection with this research question pointed towards a reconfirmation of the utilitarian dimension of ESL learning attested in some studies done before (e.g., [Dörnyei et al., 2006, 2015](#); [Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015](#); [Gardner et al., 1997](#); [Tremblay & Gardner, 1995](#)). The results of the principal component analyses and the reliability assessments indicated a utilitarian dimension to L2 motivation among all the three subsamples of ESL learners. The scales of L2 cultural interest and L2 integrativeness should be viewed as factors or scales significantly related to the L2 instrumentality factor. The desire to know more about the target culture and associate with it is predominantly dependent on the need to learn the concerned L2. In a developing country like India, where better livelihood prospects, both in the public and private sectors, hinged largely on English language proficiency, the instrumentality or the utilitarian benefits associated with English were the most significant aspects recognized by the L2 learners.

The recognition of the significance of the other two L2 motivational dimensions of L2 anxiety and L2 self-confidence separately also indicated the utilitarian dimensions of L2 motivation ([Dörnyei, 2019](#); [Muir et al., 2021](#); [Warr, 2001](#)) among the Indian L2 learners on two counts. First, the anxiety factor operated as a significant factor in L2 motivation because the dominant instrumentality impact of the L2 deepens the risk of failure in L2 learning. ESL learning in India takes place mostly through formal instructional settings at all levels with a wide-scale emphasis on the need to learn it for better livelihood placement. A simultaneous increase in the level of performance anxiety among the L2 learners across academic levels was considered an offshoot of such emphases. Second, L2 anxiety and L2 self-confidence were identified as separate, though related, factors in L2 motivation across academic levels. The presence or absence of anxiety in the use of the L2 in the context of a classroom was not considered equal to or the same as the kind of anxiety associated with the use of the L2 in everyday communication. L2 learners who were observed to be relatively less anxious or more confident in the context of the L2 use inside the classroom did not show a parallel absence of anxiety in everyday use of the L2 and vice versa.

5.2 Influence of L2 Use Environment on L2 Motivational Constructs

The second research question of the study was about measuring the correlations among the five L2 attitudinal and motivational constructs vis-à-vis the three Indian ESL learner groups. The understanding of the correlations among these five constructs should provide us with a picture of the internal dynamics that exist between them. A higher score in one particular construct may or may not correlate with another. As far as the findings related to this research question is concerned, several significant negative correlations ([Dörnyei et al., 2015](#); [Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015](#)) were observed, however, between some L2 motivational scales in some subsamples. First, the

correlation between L2 anxiety and L2 instrumentality in two subsamples—secondary and postgraduate L2 learners—was significantly negative.

Although not statistically significant, the undergraduate L2 learners also showed a negative correlation between L2 anxiety and L2 instrumentality confirming a trend towards a negative relationship between these two L2 motivational scales. This was despite the presence of high L2 self-confidence in all three subsamples. It could be only explained by the fact that the use of the L2 in the context of a classroom and using it outside of the classroom were interpreted as two different challenges in L2 use by the L2 learners. They were comparatively more confident and less anxious in the use of the L2 in the comfort of the classroom than they were so in the use of it in everyday communication. Whatever be the reasons for the identification of this difference by the L2 learners, they unanimously found the use of the L2 outside the classroom rather challenging. Second, a significant negative correlation was observed between L2 anxiety and L2 self-confidence in the secondary L2 learner sample, whereas the correlation between these two L2 motivational scales was significantly positive among the undergraduate L2 learners. In other words, while a rise in the L2 self-confidence correlated with a fall in L2 anxiety in the secondary school L2 learners, no such differential relationships were observed in the other two subsamples. It pointed towards two potential situations. For the secondary school ESL learners, L2 anxiety felt during the use of the L2 in everyday communication got reduced with the growth in linguistic self-confidence in the use of the L2 inside the classroom. But such differential influence could not be attested with the more experienced groups of L2 learners as they perhaps began to understand the differences in the task demands involved in the two separate contexts of L2 use.

5.3 Varied Sources of L2 Anxiety and Linguistic Self-Confidence

The third research question of the study proposed to see whether there was any correlation between L2 anxiety and linguistic self-confidence and the other three L2 attitudinal and motivational constructs or not vis-à-vis the secondary, undergraduate, and postgraduate ESL learners of India. It sought to understand whether L2 attitudinal and motivational constructs of integrativeness, instrumentality, and cultural interest correlated with L2 anxiety and linguistic self-confidence in specific ways or not. It provided us with the knowledge of the academic level-related variations in L2 anxiety and L2 self-confidence as criterion variables for the other three L2 motivational constructs. The results related to this research question mostly reconfirm findings of previous studies on the topic (e.g., [Gkonou et al., 2017](#); [Horwitz et al., 1986](#); [MacIntyre, 2017](#); [MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989, 1994](#); [Oxford, 2017](#); [Tóth, 2017](#); [Young, 1986](#)).

Some specific conclusions, however, may be drawn in this connection. First, reduced levels of L2 anxiety with the parallel rise in ease and confidence in the L2 were induced by different L2 motivational factors in the three subsamples. The younger L2 learners appeared much more motivated towards the L2 and the two L2 motivational scales of integration and cultural interest were the predictor variables for higher ease and confidence in the L2 for them. The same L2 motivational scales, on the other hand, did not consistently function as predictors for L2 anxiety, particularly in the undergraduate L2 learner subsample. Second, higher intensity in the L2 motivation scale of L2 instrumentality resulted in the parallel reduction in L2 ease and

confidence in the use of the L2 outside the classroom in most cases. The recognition of the utilitarian benefits of the L2 among the L2 learners might have increased the performance anxiety involved in L2 learning reducing confidence and ease in the use of the L2 in everyday communication. Third, L2 instrumentality contributed, unlike what happened in L2 anxiety, significantly to L2 self-confidence in the classroom. The high L2 motivation consequent upon the recognition of the utilitarian benefits of L2 learning led to increased L2 ease and confidence in the use of the L2 in the classroom unlike what had been observed in previous studies (e.g., [Kormos & Csizer, 2008](#); [Williams et al., 2002](#); [You et al. 2016](#)).

5.4 Implications

Several important implications may be observed in this connection. First, Indian ESL learners showed variations as per academic levels in three L2 motivational scales ([Baker & MacIntyre, 2008](#); [Sung & Padilla, 1998](#)). While secondary school L2 learners showed the highest mean values in the scales of L2 instrumentality and L2 self-confidence, the undergraduate and postgraduate L2 learners consistently showed relatively lower scores in these two scales. But the mean value of the undergraduate L2 learners was highest in the scale of L2 anxiety, followed by the postgraduate subsample. These differences in the mean values suggested an L2 motivational situation in which the secondary school L2 learners appeared more motivated and self-confident about L2 use in the classroom but more anxious towards communication in the L2 otherwise, whereas the undergraduate and the postgraduate L2 learners appeared less anxious about everyday communication in the L2 than the secondary school L2 learners. A slightly shorter experience of association with the L2 might have been the reason for the secondary school L2 learners getting a little more enthusiastic about the L2, whereas a slightly longer L2 learning experience for the undergraduate and postgraduate L2 learners might have given them more confidence in the everyday communicational use of the L2.

Second, the mean values in four of the five L2 motivational scales in the secondary school L2 learners were greater than the mean values in the same scales for the other two subsamples. A closer look at the mean values of the other two subsamples showed a continuous decline in magnitude against the growth in experience and years through academic levels. The secondary school L2 learners, being younger and less experienced than the other two subsamples, must have overemphasized the utilitarian significance of the L2. This trend could be seen repeated in the undergraduate and postgraduate L2 learner subsamples as the degree of motivation towards the L2 was in a continuous decline in many of the motivational scales for these two subsamples. But the trend was in reverse in the L2 motivation scale of L2 anxiety. While the subsamples of undergraduate and postgraduate L2 learners showed less L2 anxiety in the use of the L2 in everyday communication, the secondary school L2 learners were observed to be more anxious in such L2 use domains. Despite the highest mean value in the scale of L2 self-confidence reported by the secondary school L2 learners among the three groups, the anxiety level in the use of the L2 in everyday communication reported by them was significantly high. The lack of experience in the use of the L2 outside the classroom context might have been the reason for the high L2 use anxiety among the secondary school L2 learners. Additionally, it may be noted that more familiar

circumstances of the L2 classroom provided more L2-friendly sentiments and comfortable L2 practice opportunities for the L2 learners with higher L2 motivation.

Third, the functioning of L2 self-confidence as the criterion variable of the three L2 motivational scales of instrumentality, integrativeness, and cultural interest in various degrees as predictors was limited only to the use of the L2 in the context of the classroom. A simultaneous rise in the degree of L2 motivation across maximum motivational dimensions was attested in the context of only formal L2 instructional settings across the three subsamples. It was observed that the highly motivated L2 learners were consistently more at ease and confident in using the L2 inside the classroom, whereas the same higher intensity of L2 motivation was not accompanied by a parallel increase in ease and confidence in the use of the L2 outside of it.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Several important insights on the relationship between language anxiety and linguistic self-confidence in relation to the other dimensions of L2 attitude and motivation had been obtained in the study. First, ESL motivation among the Indian ESL learners indicated a utilitarian dimension across the three academic levels. It was not only observed in the consistently high L2 instrumentality score among the ESL learners but also the corresponding L2 motivation dimensions of integrativeness and cultural interest. The motivational dimensions of integrativeness and cultural interest exist only in the utilitarian benefits accrued in the instrumentality dimensions of the L2. Second, higher L2 motivational scores in all the dimensions were observed in the less experienced younger Indian ESL learners. Consequently, the L2 motivational dimensions of integrativeness and cultural interest contributed significantly to the higher L2 ease and confidence in the use of English in the context of a classroom in the secondary school ESL learners. Third, the two anxiety-related motivational dimensions of L2 anxiety in the use of English in everyday communication and L2 self-confidence in the context of the classroom were identified as discrete factors of L2 motivation in all three academic levels. Because of this difference, ESL learners who were observed to be relatively less anxious, or more self-confident, in the use of the L2 in the context of a classroom reported more anxiety in the use of the L2 in everyday communication outside the classroom. Fourth, the ESL learners displayed significant variations in the effect of these two motivational scales across the academic levels. Comparatively less L2 anxiety, or more L2 self-confidence, in the use of English in everyday communication was reported by postgraduate ESL learners, whereas the secondary school ESL learners expressed more language use anxiety in such contexts. Finally, Indian ESL learners across the three academic levels reported more L2 ease and confidence in the use of the L2 in the supportive environment of an L2 classroom than in the unpredictable circumstances of everyday communication outside the classroom. Although the exact reasons for this comparative ease and self-confidence will be known only in a more dedicated study focusing specifically on the relationship between these two motivational constructs, it was distinct from the responses in the present study that the Indian ESL learners found the familiar environment of the L2 classroom less challenging for L2 practice.

It must, however, be accepted that the findings described in this article can only be taken as general indicators, as has been already mentioned elsewhere in the article,

towards some potential trends than confirmed claims about the type and dimensions involved in the relationship between the various L2 motivational scales. The findings related to the undergraduate L2 learners particularly required more confirmation with a larger sample than the one used in the study as the specific nature of the results attested in the undergraduate L2 learner subsample asked for a more elaborate investigation and analysis. Moreover, the study could not discuss the effect of sexual identities of the ESL learners within the three academic levels on the correlations among the L2 motivational scales. Since L2 motivational scales are potentially influenced by such factors, factoring in such dimensions to the study would have led to more pedagogically useful insights. To be precise, an L2 attitude and motivation survey on a bigger sample size, selected with a wider stratum of sample analysis than the one used in the present survey, would potentially facilitate a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of the pedagogically more relevant dimensions of L2 attitude and motivation. Studies undertaken in L2 attitude and motivation in the future should address this concern.

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