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## Understanding the Complexity of Motivational Orientations towards Learning English among Pakistani Female University Students

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# Understanding the Complexity of Motivational Orientations towards Learning English among Pakistani Female University Students

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**Abstract:** The present study goal is to investigate female university students' motivation toward learning English as Second Language (ESL) studying at the University of Sindh, Pakistan. Two main objectives of the study were to evaluate the motivational orientation of the female learners in terms of integrativeness or instrumentality. Second, to study the factors that affect the learners' motivation towards learning English. A mixed-method approach was employed with descriptive and inferential statistics were performed on the data to evaluate the data. A number of 158 female students from both the Science and Arts faculties at the English and Chemistry departments filled the structured questionnaire. Additionally, to gain a deeper understanding of the researched phenomenon, the semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 students. The findings revealed a complex portrait of the target population, with the most prominent motivational factors being integrative motive, classroom environment, and instrumental motive. Besides, the influence of teachers was found to induce behavioral changes, while gender did not appear to significantly impact the learning process.

**Keywords:** ESL, Integrative, Instrumental, Motivation, Learning English, University, Students, Female.

## 1 Introduction

With its important role in worldwide research, trade, commerce, and information technology, English has become a truly global language. In Pakistan, social mobility and economic growth are directly linked with proficiency in English language skills. As a result, from primary school to higher education, English is a mandatory subject in all Pakistani educational institutions. English is a requirement for all students irrespective of their specific proficiency levels. Therefore, the students need a special attention as their prospective education and social mobility towards motivational orientations for learning English in Pakistani universities generally.

There has been an expanding number of studies on motivation over the last few decades, recognizing its pivotal role in determining learners' success in second language acquisition [1], [2], [3], [4], [5], [6]. Motivation, often described as the driving force behind action, is the primary impetus that ushers in the learning of a second language and serves as the propelling force that sustains individuals throughout the arduous and lengthy learning process [7]. Motivation is a complicated and multi-dimensional concept in the context of learning a second language. Motivation is described by [8] and [9] as an internal state or a coordinating force that directs people to act in particular ways. [10] elaborates on this viewpoint by stating that in an academic setting, motivation not only initiates actions but also sustains and improves learning endeavours. In this broader perspective, motivation is seen as a motivating factor that propels language learning efforts both initially and continuously. As a result, motivation is considered to be a dynamic and always-

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evolving force in the world of academic endeavours.

Research in the field of motivational psychology supports the understanding of motivation as an ever-changing concept. Scholars such as [11] and [12] have contributed to the understanding of motivation as an ever-evolving phenomenon. By recognizing the multifaceted and dynamic nature of motivation academics and researchers can get valuable insights into the intricacies involved in fostering and sustaining learners' motivation throughout their language-learning trajectories.

### Study Background and Significance

We investigate female learners' motivation to learn English as a second language. The psychological theories of integrative and instrumental approaches to second language (L2) learning serve as its main guiding principles. The primary objective of the study is to investigate psychological concepts of integrative and instrumental orientations to second language (L2) learning among female students. The study specifically examines how female learners approach English as a second language (L2) using instrumental and integrative perspectives. The two main motivational constructs of integrative and instrumental motivation are the focus of this inquiry. The instrumental outlook focuses on the benefits and tangible advantages of learning a second language, including job progression. The integrative concern, on the other hand, is more private and exhibits the learner's sincere attempts to understand and relate to the people and culture associated with the target language group. The present study underscores the significance and ramifications of the well-known motivational dichotomies of integrative and instrumental motivation by examining these constructs.

The current study was conducted at the University of Sindh (UoS), a public university located in Jamshoro, Pakistan. It aims to provide valuable information about the factors that drive female students' acquisition of the English language. By exploring motivation from various angles, this research can help define specific conceptualization of theoretical constructs and provide practical recommendations for enhancing motivation in educational institutions. The study has the potential to improve the language learning experience for female students, who constitute approximately half of the student population at Sindh University. Language teachers place a high priority on motivation because it clarifies the variables affecting their students' learning outcomes. It also helps in finding instructional strategies that might foster and sustain motivation. Persistent learning requires that students themselves understand how to keep their incentive levels high.

Consequently, the present study examines motivational factors and their varying degrees, which will enable an analysis of learners' expectations and learning objectives. Based on the objectives we formulate the following research questions to answer in the study: What factors motivate female students at Sindh University to learn English? How far instrumental and integrative motivation prevails among female students?

## 2 Review of the Literature

### Dimensions of Motivational Research

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has witnessed a growing emphasis on the development of a knowledge-based society, prompting a simultaneous evolution in the field of learning [8], [13]. However, the diverse range of definitions attributed to motivation has established it as a hypothetical concept lacking a universally agreed-upon definition. Some writers perceive motivation as an internal state that directs individuals towards action [14], while others conceptualize it as the energy that enables goal-directed activities [15], [16], [17]. Motivation has also been described as the motive or cause for achievement rooted in intrinsic needs or as a decision-making process that initiates and sustains specific behaviours [18], [19].

Conflicting paradigms frequently arise because of the volume and importance of motivation in second language (L2) learning. Therefore, this part of the study aims to define the main motivational concepts and their significance for L2 learning in the Pakistani context. When it comes to acquiring a second language in particular [20] recognizes that motivation to learn is a complicated and diverse construct. It is crucial in deciding whether or not learners are successful in picking up the target language.

Motivation as "a state of cognitive and emotional arousal, a state which leads to a conscious decision to act and gives rise to a period of sustained intellectual and/or physical effort" [21:120]. Through a variety of intentions and activations, it takes the forms of energy, direction, and persistence. Its practical application is what gives it worth since it inspires and mobilizes people into taking action. In essence, people's level of effort and desire to succeed in their aims typically determine how successful an action is. Motivation is a psychological phenomenon that acts as an impulse to motivate and excite action—a motivating force that prompts and provokes people. In general, it is essential to comprehend the components of motivation. Overall, comprehension of motivation's function in language acquisition depends on an understanding of its dimensions, which also provides insight into the variables that affect learners' engagement and

persistence in achieving their objectives.

### **Motivation in Foreign Language Learning**

The process of learning a foreign language is greatly aided by motivation, which includes a variety of effects and cognitions that start the process of foreign language acquisition, direct language choices, and improve the overall educational process [21]. [1] argues that the most critical aspect of second language acquisition is motivation. Since learning a second language is thought to be a long-term endeavour, it is primarily driven by L2 motivation [22]. The choice to participate in a particular language, tenacity, perseverance in learning over a lengthy period, and sustaining a high degree of engagement in the process of learning the significant stages of language learning motivation, according to [23].

Three factors contribute to motivation for learning a foreign language, according to [24] a desire to learn the language, actions taken to acquire the language, and favourable attitudes towards the learning objective. These three elements— affect (attitudes towards the target language) want (a desire to learn a second language), and effort (strength of motivation)—are emphasized from Gardner's perspective on L2 motivation. Gardner's definition is particularly important since it sees language acquisition motivation as an ongoing process that needs dedication to produce results. From the perspective of a social psychologist, Gardner's main area of interest was the social dimensions of motivation.

In order to contextualize numerous challenges and innovations pertinent to learner motivation, this study suggests examining the integrative/instrumental components and the theoretical underpinnings of Gardner's theory. It is important to note that Gardner's theory lends itself to development because it is reliable and repeatable. The theory begins by agreeing with the conventional view of motivation, which states that it consists of "those factors that energize behaviour and give it direction" [1:281].

#### **The Integrative Motive**

The integrative motive in second language learning is characterized by a strong interpersonal aspect. It represents the desire to learn a language in order to communicate with members of the target culture and develop a close affinity with the L2 group. Integrative motivation, according to [25] is characterized by a genuine interest on the part of the individual in the people and culture that the other group represents. However, for integrative motivation to be successful, the student must be willing to acquire subtle behaviours from members of a different ethnolinguistic group and to identify with them [25].

#### **The Instrumental Motive**

On the contrary, the instrumental motive is motivated by pragmatic concerns. To achieve particular objectives, like career growth, it includes learning a second language. Students who are motivated by utility have L2 proficiency-related utilitarian goals. [26] coined the phrase "carrot and stick hypothesis" to describe this form of motivation, which contends that learner motivation is derived from practical and functional goals like passing a test or being able to access employment possibilities.

The instrumental motive has been seen as a comparatively weaker predictor of success in L2 learning, but it seems to be more significant in situations where learners have little to no interest in and little opportunity to connect with members of the target-language culture [27]. In these circumstances, the useful advantages associated with become more prominent motivators.

Integrative and instrumental motivations are two unique types of motivation for learning a language. In contrast to instrumental motivation, which emphasizes tangible advantages and goal achievement, integrative motivation places a strong emphasis on social relationships and cultural affinity. Understanding the interplay between these motives can provide valuable insights into learners' motivations and their impact on language learning outcomes.

## **3 Data and Methods**

### **Questionnaire**

We adapted a Five-point Likert scale was employed for the study which consisted of the following components:

- a) Instrumental Motivation (Q no. 3, 6, 7, 8, 9)
- b) Integrative Motivation (Q no 1, 2, 4, 5)
- c) Classroom Environment (Q no 10, 11, 12, 13)
- d) Behavior Change (Q no 14,15,16,17)

## e) Gender Perspective (Q no 18, 19, 20)

By employing this Likert scale, the questionnaire aimed to capture participants' perceptions and attitudes regarding instrumental and integrative motivation, the classroom setting, behavior alterations, and gender-specific perspectives related to language learning. The responses offer insightful information for exploring and comprehending the different facets of motivation and its impact on language learning accomplishments.

### Participants

The respondents for the study were 120 female learners from the English and Chemistry departments, whereas 20 students, 10 from each department were invited for interviews.

**Table 1.** Frequency of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Chemistry	70	44.9	44.9	44.9
English	86	55.1	55.1	100.0
Total	156	100.0	100.0	

### Data Collection and Analysis

To examine the motivational inclination of the learners and to investigate the relationship among these components a T-test was conducted. T-test is a parametric technique used for testing the dissimilarity between two means [28]. In this study, an independent-sample T-test, also known as an unrelated T-test, was employed to compare the mean scores of two different groups of individuals or conditions or to investigate the mean score of a continuous variable. Alternatively, a paired-sample T-test compares the mean scores of the same group of individuals at different time points or instances [29]. The choice of the appropriate T-test depends on the research design and the specific objectives of the study.

### Interpretation of Findings

Based on the given information, the researcher collected data using a survey questionnaire with five items to measure integrative, instrumental constructs, classroom environment, behavior change, and gender.

To calculate the t-statistics, the items were combined using the additive method (i.e., summing the scores and dividing by the number of items). The t-test was used to determine the difference between groups. A p-value of less than .05 was considered significant, indicating a difference in perception of motivational orientation between the social science and natural science samples.

Three constructs—integrative, instrumental, and classroom environment—were examined for significant differences using Levene's Test for Equality of Variance. With a p-value of less than .05., these three constructs specifically demonstrated a meaningful difference. However, because their p-values were higher than .05., behavior change and gender did not demonstrate a significant difference.

In the first step of the analysis, the researcher examined the significant values of the two-tailed column in the t-test. The p-values for each construct were as follows: integrative = .005, instrumental = .048, classroom environment = .008, behavior change = .074, and gender-related attitudes = .064.

The descriptive statistics for the factors (items combined into relevant constructs) were calculated for the whole sample, which includes both English and Chemistry respondents.

**Table 2.** Descriptive Statistics.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
INT	156	3.00	5.00	4.1394	.47370
INS	156	1.20	4.80	3.6910	.67177
CLASS	153	2.50	5.00	3.9771	.54059
BEHA	156	1.50	4.75	2.6971	.66539
GEND	156	1.00	5.00	2.7436	.87649

Valid N (list-wise)	153			
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**Table 3.** One-Sample Statistics.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
INT	156	4.1394	.47370	.03793
INS	156	3.6910	.67177	.05378
CLASS	153	3.9771	.54059	.04370
BEHA	156	2.6971	.66539	.05327
GEND	156	2.7436	.87649	.07018

## 4 Results

### Factors Affecting L2 Motivation of Female Learners

The questionnaire data helped to answer the question of what factors impact the learning of female students of Natural and Social Science Faculties.

#### Integrative Factor

The integrative factor in the questionnaire consisted of items 1, 2, 4, and 5. This factor represents the participants' interest in learning English to be like British or Americans. The overall mean score for the integrative factor was found to be 4.1394.

One specific item within the integrative factor was *"I wish to learn English to be like British/Americans"*. This item received a mean score of 4.24 from both the English and Chemistry departments, indicating a relatively high level of agreement among respondents from both departments regarding their desire to learn English to resemble British or Americans. In addition to the item mentioned earlier, there are two more items within the integrative factor:

1. *'I wish to learn English to read novels and watch movies'* received a mean score of 3.87.
2. *'I want to learn English because of my own interest'* received a mean score of 4.45.
3. *'I am learning English to achieve more advanced knowledge'* received a mean score of 4.36.

Based on these mean scores, it is evident that respondents generally agreed with the statements related to integrative motivation for learning English. The highest mean scores were obtained for the items *"I want to learn English because of my own interest"* and *"I am learning English to achieve more advanced knowledge,"* with mean scores of 4.45 and 4.36, respectively. These scores indicate a strong agreement among respondents in both the English and Chemistry departments regarding their motivation to learn English for personal interest and to acquire advanced knowledge.

#### Instrumental Factor

The instrumental factor in the questionnaire consisted of items 3, 6, 7, 8, and 9. This factor represents the participants' instrumental orientation towards learning English, which encompasses motivations related to practical goals and tangible benefits.

The specific items within the instrumental factor and their corresponding mean scores are as follows:

1. *'I want to learn English for getting better status'* received a mean score of 4.32.
2. *'I want to learn English because it is like a fashion in Pakistan'* received a mean score of 3.11.
3. *'I want to learn English to get a good job'* received a mean score of 4.10.
4. *'I want to learn English because I want to go abroad'* received a mean score of 3.70.
5. *'I want to learn English to pass exams'* received a mean score of 3.23.

The instrumental factor stands for the blend of instantaneous achievement and personal growth for the learners. It

mirrors incentives such as cultivating social standing, considering English as a smart language in Pakistan, finding improved employment opportunities, desire to travel around the world, and getting through exams successfully.

### Classroom Environment

Classroom environment refers to a variety of factors relating to the learning environment in an English lesson. It covers things like how welcoming the setting is, how interested students are in the English class, how satisfied they are with their English teacher, and how satisfied they are with the methods of instruction.

1. *'I have a very friendly environment in the class to learn English'* - the mean score for this item is 3.66.

This indicates that, on average, the participants perceive the classroom environment as somewhat friendly for learning English. It suggests that there might be room for improvement in fostering a more supportive and welcoming atmosphere.

2. *'I find my English course interesting'* - Participants, on average, gave this item a mean score of 4.23, suggesting that they believe their English class to be engaging.

This may indicate that the course material or teaching strategies are interesting to the students and pique their attention.

3. *'I am satisfied with my English teacher'*, the mean score for this item is 4.51, indicating a high level of satisfaction with the English teacher.

This shows that participants have a favorable view of their teacher overall, which is important for fostering a happy learning environment. The overall mean for the classroom environment factor is calculated to be 3.9771, which indicates an overall positive perception of the learning situation. However, it's important to note that while the mean scores provide an average view, individual responses may vary, and it's essential to consider any specific feedback or concerns raised by the participants.

### Behaviour Change

The behavior change factor in this context explores the perceptions of female learners regarding gender dynamics and their self-perception in relation to male students. It aims to understand how female learners view themselves in comparison to their male counterparts in the context of learning English.

This factor's overall mean score is 2.6050. This suggests that generally speaking, female learners are concerned or perceive gender disparities in the English learning environment to be of modest importance. These specific statements are counted as part of this factor:

1. *'I want to learn English so I can speak like the male students in my class,'* with a mean score of 2.55. This implies that generally speaking, female students indicate a desire to imitate the male students in their class when it comes to studying English.
2. *'Male students can learn more easily because they are more confident'* – This statement received a mean score of 2.77.

This shows that generally speaking, female students think that male students have an edge when learning English because of their perceived high level of confidence.

## 5 Discussions

The data collected for the present study revealed that various factors served as motivation for female students in both the Natural Sciences and Social Sciences Faculties to engage in language learning. Notably, integrative motive, classroom environment, and instrumental motive emerged as the most prominent among these motivating factors. Furthermore, the influence of teachers was found to elicit behavioral changes in the learning process, while gender, whether of the teacher or students, did not appear to exert significant influence in this regard.

### Instrumental Motivation

Instrumental motivation stands for the practical incentives typically related to the notion, as well as the significance of the specific second language (L2) in the global context and its role in fostering an educated individual [22]. Given the significance of instrumental motives in contexts where English is learned as a second language, it becomes crucial to examine this aspect within the Pakistani context. The findings of this study resonate with [20] conceptualization of instrumental motivation.

Most of the learners stated that they wanted to study English for practical reasons and because they thought that

speaking and understanding English equated to being intelligent. This result is consistent with [22] notion of instrumental motivation. Additionally, as contributing elements to instrumental orientation, pragmatic concerns like passing exams, obtaining social achievement, and simplifying international travel were also noted.

*S5: English is very important for social status today. They know English will help us in professional life. Physics, and chemistry all are in English.*

Several girls believed that learning English will help them get respectable jobs and rise up the social ladder. This notion is in line with [30] observation that in Pakistan, speaking English well is associated with having a higher social status. and the girls' conviction that it correlates with better work chances reflects the recognition of English as a valuable asset in the local job market and its potential to enhance their social positioning.

It's interesting that several respondents said that learning English would increase the quality of their marriage proposals. They had the opinion that since males favor marrying educated women, educated girls don't have to work very hard to find a compatible partner. Some further noted that if they know English, they will be respected by their in-laws because they generally dread such women and cannot handle them.

*S8: Women get respect after marriage if they know English. People think they are educated.*

The learners exhibited a high degree of motivation because they believed that learning English would make them appear more intelligent and successful to others. The findings show that the learners' ambition to be a part of the educated community, both locally and globally, was what motivated them to study English. Many female students reported a desire to move abroad in order to pursue higher education or job prospects. They thought that learning English would help them become more respected wherever they went and make it easier for them to interact with other professionals in their respective fields. However, the teachers' charismatic personality links to the students' intrinsic motivation and perceived learning [31]. The students understood that academic books in many areas, including the social and scientific sciences, are written primarily in English. As a result, students understood the value of knowing English in order to be successful in any chosen career.

### **Pragmatic Incentives**

Instrumentality concerned the pragmatic incentives that are usually associated with the concept, as well as importance of the particular L2 in the world and the contribution its proficiency makes to becoming an educated person' [22].

A majority of the students in the study expressed a desire to pursue higher studies or secure lucrative job opportunities abroad.

*S7: I want to learn English to improve my personality. I am working for it . I will also join the center in June, July to improve my English. I want to become like English men. I want to speak like them fluently.*

*S:6 I want to get a higher degree from abroad and live there. I can talk to English and Pakistani people abroad if I am knowing well English. I can adopt good ways of foreigners but also keep my values.*

*S8: I want self-satisfaction so I am learning English. I want English for my personality. I want to move to Dubai and work as an English teacher there. I want to get a good job. It's an insult if you don't know English outside Pakistan.*

These statements indicate the understanding that English as a global language is used in various domains such as academia, business, science, and international communication. Gaining proficiency in English can open up a wider range of educational and professional prospects for learners and make it easier for them to communicate effectively with those from other linguistic backgrounds.

### **Integrative Orientation**

In the current study, the integrative orientation factor examines the learners' desire to integrate into the English-speaking community, considering both [2] and [22] perspectives on integrativeness. The integrativeness is characterized by a desire to merge with native speakers of the target language [2], on the other hand, [22] redefined integrativeness as a desire to be part of the global community, extending beyond just the L2 (second language) community. It includes the aspiration to become part of an educated and well-off indigenous community by virtue of L2 proficiency.

*S1: If we go for foreign scholarships, it helps us understand the local people. It will help us talk to nationals (foreigners). I want to be like them.*

### **Positive Disposition towards Western Culture**

The prevailing sentiments among the majority of female participants centered on their awareness of the cultural aspects



prevalent in English-speaking countries. The female learners held the belief that English-speaking nations exemplify a liberal, non-discriminatory, and less contentious stance on gender politics. Their appreciation of the English language extended beyond practical and utilitarian purposes, as they perceived Western society as imbued with social dimensions seemingly absent in Pakistani society, particularly pertaining to women. Consequently, the allure of these Western societies prompted aspirations to visit, reside, study, or even establish permanent residence there. It is noteworthy that some participants defined Western culture as 'democratic and full of freedom,' a perspective that may have been influenced by portrayals of Western culture disseminated through media and films in Pakistan.

## 6 Concluding remarks

In addressing the research questions, the study predominantly relied on quantitative data, which illuminated a noteworthy disparity across all motivational factors. However, the insights garnered from the interview data presented a more nuanced picture, with mixed responses concerning the learners' motivational orientation. Overall, the study revealed the coexistence of both instrumental and integrative motivation among female learners in the English and Chemistry departments. As the study suggests, various factors intricately linked to second language (L2) learning can either facilitate or impede the process. Important among these factors are socio-cultural influences, the surrounding community or environment, and the pragmatic value attributed to L2 proficiency.

Regarding motivational orientations, the results underscored the prevalence of both integrative and instrumental motivations. Specifically, the female participants demonstrated a desire to acquire English proficiency to secure a successful career and elevate their social standing. Simultaneously, they expressed aspirations to become part of native English-speaking communities by pursuing opportunities abroad. The interplay of these motivational factors enhances depth to our understanding of language learning dynamics among female learners in these specific academic disciplines. However, this research contributes to the broader understanding of motivation in language learning and provides valuable insights for educators, learners, and educational institutions equally.

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## Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict regarding the publication of this paper.

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