

## **Investigating The Core Motivation For LG240 Students To Study In ODL Environment**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The implementation of Online Distance Learning (ODL) has caused students to surmount different challenges ranging from a poor Internet connection, financial problems, family problems, and much more. Students generally struggle with motivation, whether external or internal motivation to study. This research aims to investigate the motivation of language students from the English for Professional Communication course (LG240) of UiTM Shah Alam during the Covid-19 pandemic. This research also adopts a quantitative research method using a survey design. The theoretical framework for this research was adapted from Hong and Ganapathy (2017) on the related topic that supports the idea that instrumental and integrative motivation is integral to language students' performance. The participants had to answer two sets of questionnaires from both motivation types. The data collected from the online survey form indicates that LG240 students are leaning more towards integrative motivation than instrumental motivation despite the small margin of difference. The findings of this study show that motivation has no direct correlation with students' academic performance. One notable implication from the research is an inference that aside from instrumental and integrative motives, there may be other reasons that can explain the students' performance during the ODL.

**Keywords:** Instrumental motivation, integrative motivation, Online Distance Learning, language students

## INTRODUCTION

During the pandemic, Open and Distance Learning (ODL) has replaced conventional physical classrooms as a teaching and learning medium at different levels of education including primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. ODL is a flexible learning method that intends to teach students who are not physically present, and it is usually carried out whenever geographical factors do not allow physical classes to commence (Towobola & Raimi, 2011). With the implementation of ODL, teaching and learning without having to physically face one another are now made possible, and despite contradicting physical classrooms, the teaching and learning process is still feasible.

However, the study conducted by Esra and Sevilen (2021) has revealed that students have negative perceptions of online learning due to factors such as lack of interaction and minimal feedback. A stable Internet connection is crucial for online classes but since video conferences require a stable Internet connection, and this could be a problem for students who have a bad Internet connection due to financial constraints. Since language courses, such as the LG240 course, require verbal communication to be more successful for students, video conference is essential. In addition, the environment at home is not always conducive for some students. This could also be the case with students of Applied Language Studies (Hons.) English for Professional Communication (LG240) of UiTM Shah Alam, in which they struggle with motivation to learn English.

### *Research Objectives (RO) and Research Questions (RQ)*

The research aims to achieve these objectives:

- 1) To determine whether the students of LG240 are instrumentally or integratively motivated to learn during the pandemic.
- 2) To determine the relationship between students' motivation and their performance in LG240 language course.

Consequently, the researcher has decided to focus on these research questions:

- 3) Are the students of LG240 UiTM Shah Alam more instrumentally or integratively motivated to learn in the ODL environment?
- 4) How does the LG240 students' motivation relate to their achievement in English?

### *Problem Statement*

Despite the fact that ODL can make life much easier, as some might have claimed, there is also a need to examine its disadvantages and how it correlates to students' motivation to study. One of the key aspects of a successful online class is a stable Internet connection. A stable Internet connection is crucial for online classes since these classes are conducted through virtual conference platforms, namely Google Meet, Webex Meeting and Zoom Conference. However, video conferences require a stable Internet connection, and this could be a problem for students who have a bad Internet connection or who are unable to afford mobile data due to financial constraints.

Since language courses, such as the LG240 course, require verbal communication to be more successful for students, video conference is essential. Research conducted by Sutiyatno (2018) revealed that both verbal and non-verbal communication contributes to 47% of students' English achievement in which verbal communication contributes higher to students' language achievement. Harish (2017) has highlighted that "exhibiting the necessary pragmatic understanding of the content and outcomes of a learning course (in this case being able to process and produce verbal comprehension) can help provide the basic enabling skills to function well in the real and professional worlds".

The environment at home is not always conducive for some students. They may be dealing with family issues or mental health issues, which makes them less inclined to study. Kotera, Ting, and Neary (2021) have revealed that Malaysian students struggle with higher levels of mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, stress, shame, and lower levels of self-compassion and resilience, compared to UK students. In retrospect, ODL has been implemented for at least two years and as of now, there are no signs of reverting to physical due to health and safety constraints. Most students have acclimated to ODL for a variety of reasons, such as motivation. Learning in an ODL environment requires students to have self-regulation. Pintrich (1999) said that motivational beliefs help to promote, sustain, or facilitate self-regulated learning. Students who are motivated can have better self-regulation and have a higher chance of being successful in learning.

Thus, it is crucial to investigate what kind of motivation propels students to succeed during a pandemic. When it comes to language learning, both instrumental and integrative motivation play essential roles in students' success. According to Gardner and Lambert (1972), integrative motivation is a drive to learn English to feel a sense of belonging in a group of people meanwhile instrumental motivation relates heavily to the practical use of English such as employment.

### *Limitations of the study*

The study was conducted at UiTM Shah Alam and the participants were limited to Semester 6 students of LG240 program, Bachelor of Applied Language Studies (Hons.) English for Professional Communication. Even though the findings of this study portray that there is no proven relationship between instrumental motivation and integrative motivation, and that students are more integratively motivated than instrumentally motivated, there are several limitations that may have caused such results.

Firstly, the respondents involved consist of only Semester 6 UiTM students from the LG240 program. The findings and results from this research are not rational to be taken as a general fact to represent all UiTM Shah Alam students since the population is based on the present sample only. The absence of other instruments like interviews, evaluation tests, and observation in the research is the second limitation. The only method utilised to gather data was a questionnaire. As a result, replies from students may not accurately reflect their views on the subject under study. The final limitation is the reliability of the questionnaire. Some individuals might purposefully select the opposing option or flatter the study. Therefore, further study should be conducted to ensure the reliability of the data collected.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Motivation is usually defined as the reason why a person does something or behaves in a particular way. Cherry (2020) suggests that motivation is “the process that initiates, guides, and maintains goal-oriented behaviors.” Motivation is something that drives you to act, and it can involve factors like biological, emotional, social, and cognitive forces. Nevertheless, the term motivation is quite extensive, and a considerable amount of literature has been published on the subject. In the context of language learning, instrumental and integrative motivation tend to be more influential towards students’ achievement. Gardner and Lambert are prominent figures in defining instrumental and integrative motivation and their roles in language learning. They explained that instrumental motivation is a condition where the learner’s interest to acquire a foreign language is heavily due to the utilitarian advantages, for example, better employment and favourable wages (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, as cited in Dornyei, 1990). On the other hand, integrative motivation is a high level of drive in which an individual strives to acquire a language to facilitate or appeal to a certain group (Dornyei, 1990). For example, an individual can be integratively motivated to learn a second language to communicate and build relationships with people who speak a different language than theirs.

One of the previous studies on the subject matter was conducted by Zanghar (2012). His study examined whether Libyan EFL learners were instrumentally or integratively motivated to learn English. The result suggests that the Libyan students’ integrative motivation is slightly higher than their instrumental motivation. The main factor that contributed to the result is that the majority of the test samples have a positive impression on the Western culture. In addition, Samad, Etemadzadeh and Far (2012) found that the majority of high achievers were more integratively motivated whereas the majority of low achievers were more instrumentally motivated in learning English. This may suggest that students who are more integratively motivated tend to be more successful in academics.

In comparison, several studies have shown that instrumental motivation can be more dominant than integrative motivation in language learning. Dornyei (1990) has found that students are more instrumentally motivated to acquire a foreign language. When conducting the study on students of the Hungarian branch of the British “International House”, it was found that the students were more instrumentally motivated due to the fact that it was a language school and the majority of the students participating were already working. Therefore, the need to acquire a language is highly related to having utilitarian skills that could be used to better improve their marketability and to reveal more job opportunities (Dornyei, 1990). Similarly, the study conducted on 12 form four students at a secondary Chinese school in Penang by Hong and Ganapathy (2017) highlighted that the majority of the students are instrumentally motivated to learn English even though they lack commitment in mastering the language. Additionally, the present study has also attempted to discover whether there is an existing relationship between students’ motivation and academic achievement. High achiever students may be more self-driven to study whereas low achievers may resort to group discussions and peers’ assistance to success in language learning. It would be insightful for future research if the present study can demonstrate the existence of a relationship between motivation and academic achievement among language students.

Gardner and Lambert (1972) stressed the roles of both instrumental motivation and integrative motivation as being highly crucial in second language learning. Cook (as cited in

Mahadi & Jafari, 2012) commented that “students with no instrumental or integrative motivation will be faced with difficulties to learn and gain knowledge of a second language”. Hong and Ganapathy (2017) claimed that students who are highly motivated, either instrumentally or integratively, tend to put in more effort and are more persistent during their language learning process, whether at school or at home. Since Gardner’s theory of motivation is more inclined and specified toward language learning, compared to other motivation theories, it is only rational to base the research on it since the participants of this research consist of language students from English for Professional Communication (LG240) of UiTM Shah Alam. The theoretical framework implemented for this study, adapted from Hong and Ganapathy (2017), can be observed below:

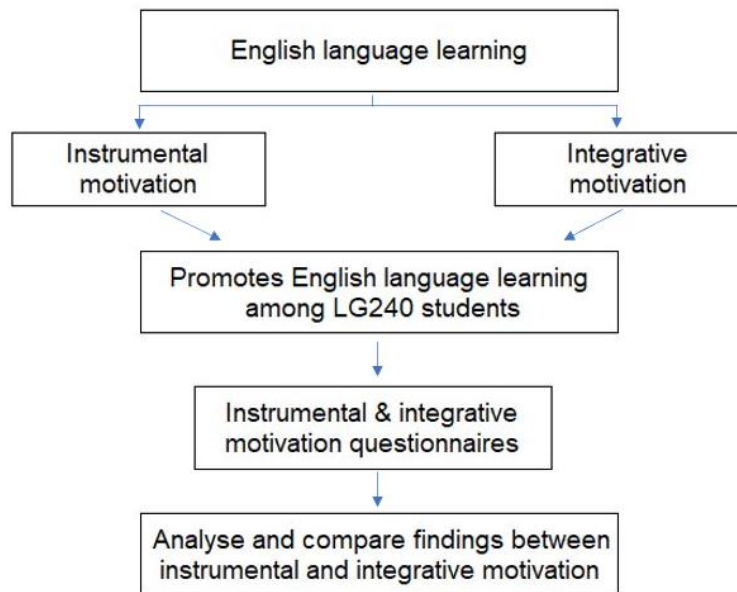


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework (Hong & Ganapathy, 2017)

## METHODOLOGY

The study implements a quantitative research design, and a form of survey was used as an approach for data collection. The setting of this study was within UiTM Kampus Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia. The sample size is expected to be 92 out of 120 LG240 Semester 6 students. The instrument that was utilized is a set of questionnaires that was constructed using the Google Form platform. The questionnaire consists of three sections; Section A consists of questions on the demographic background such as gender and age, Section B requires the students to provide their recent academic performance which is determined based on their recent Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) and Section C comprises of two sets of questions on instrumental motivation and integrative motivation. The instruments in Section C were adapted from Zanghar (2012) on similar area of study. The survey provides answers in the form of multiple-choice questions in Section A and B, and in the form of the Likert Scale in Section C. Likert Scale is used to obtain a participant's degree of agreement with a statement or set of statements, ranging from 1) *Strongly disagree*, 2) *Disagree*, 3) *Neither*, 4) *Agree* and 5) *Strongly agree*.

## FINDINGS

In the introduction section, the researcher has identified these research questions:

- a) *Are the students of LG240 UiTM Shah Alam more instrumentally or integratively motivated to learn in the ODL environment?*
- b) *How does the LG240 students' motivation relate to their achievement in English?*

In order to investigate these research questions, the data gathered have been run through multiple tests using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program. The researcher has identified two crucial tests that can be utilized to answer the research questions.

To determine the answer to the first question, the data extracted from the questionnaire had undergone a paired samples t-test to determine which one between the two, instrumental motivation and integrative motivation, affected students more in their English language learning during the ODL period. For the second question, a Pearson's correlation test was conducted to reveal the relationship between students' motivation and their academic achievement. The means of both types of motivation for each student were first calculated before being run through the test and the comparison was made.

### **RO 1: Are LG240 students generally more instrumentally or integratively motivated to learn in the ODL environment?**

To answer the first research question, to determine which type of motivation, between instrumental motivation and integrative motivation is more preferred by students of LG240, a paired samples t-test was conducted. The researcher implemented the same calculation utilized by Zanghar (2012) to compare the means of two variables, in this case instrumental and integrative motivation, from a common group which is LG240 students by using the paired samples t-test. The means for each item of motivation were calculated beforehand using the SPSS version 25 to provide the data for a paired samples t-test.

Table 1  
 Paired samples t-Test for instrumental and integrative motivation

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Average instrumental motivation	4.5699	93	.41355	.04288
	Average integrative motivation	4.6283	93	.49940	.05178

Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations for items of both types of motivation. It further revealed that LG240 students are slightly more inclined towards integrative motivation

compared to instrumental motivation as indicated by the value of means despite there is no significant difference between the two motivation types as the value of both means are proximate to each other. In addition, it can also be deduced that students are considerably highly motivated both instrumentally and integratively since the maximum degree of agreement in the questionnaire was 5. The result of this descriptive analysis demonstrates that students tend to incline to one type of motivation than the other, even though the difference margin is relatively small. The standard deviation for both means (0.4 & 0.5) indicate there is a small deviation from the original value of mean as it represents the average value of deviation from the mean. This shows that most students tend to select the same degree of agreement with the statements in both motivation items. This result is likely due to the statements being positively worded. Interestingly, despite the fact that the integrative motivation has a higher value of mean, the standard deviation is also higher compared to instrumental motivation.

**RQ 2: How does the LG240 students’ motivation relate to their achievement in English?**

To answer the second research question pertaining to the relationship between students’ motivation and their CGPA, a correlation was calculated between both types of motivation and their latest CGPA using the Pearson’s Correlation. This test would determine whether or not there exists a plausible connection between students’ motivation and their academic achievements.

Table 2  
 Result of Pearson’s correlation test between CGPA and both motivations

<b>Correlations between CGPA, Instrumental &amp; Integrative motivation</b>				
		CGPA	Average Integrative Motivation	Average Instrumental Motivation
CGPA	Pearson Correlation	1	.136	.153
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.192	.143
	N	93	93	93
Average Integrative Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.136	1	.730**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.192		.000
	N	93	93	93
Average Instrumental Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.153	.730**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.143	.000	
	N	93	93	93

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As displayed in Table 2, the result shows that there is negligible or no correlation between LG240 students' CGPA and their motivation. The correlation between CGPA and instrumental motivation is 0.153 whereas the correlation between CGPA and integrative motivation is 0.136. This result does not support the notion that motivation can positively affect students' academic performance. This can be due to the reason that low achiever students and high achiever students can have high instrumental and integrative motivation and vice versa. However, the result also indicates that there is a strong correlation between the two types of motivation, demonstrating that students who have high instrumental motivation are also highly motivated integrative wise. This can be seen with the correlation between the two types of motivation being 0.73.

## **DISCUSSION**

The motivational items revealed some valuable insights into students' preferences of motivation. The instrumental items revealed that the students are highly motivated to learn English due to factors such as employment. Coincidentally, research conducted by Heang, Mee, Ramalingam, and Hoe (2019) revealed that employers in the advertisement industries, human resources, and marketing sectors seek language fluency, communication skills, and the ability to express ideas and talents when recruiting employees. Since most language students will probably enter employment in one of these sectors, it is not surprising that being fluent and proficient in English is crucial. In comparison, Item 6 has a noticeably low value of mean, indicating that most participants do not have a strong positive perception of the statement. Hong and Ganapathy (2017) revealed that 7 out of 12 survey participants from their study believe that learning or speaking the English language does not make one more respectable than others due to the perception that respect has to be earned through exemplary behaviours and personal characteristics.

Integrative motivational items suggested that the students believe that learning English can help them to be more comfortable, specifically when speaking to people of different cultural backgrounds. According to Julian (2017), English is the second most spoken language in the world after Mandarin. However, Mandarin speakers consisted of over 82 percent of native speakers meanwhile English is spoken by over 62 percent (611 million) of non-native speakers. This indicates that English is more appealing to people from different parts of the world. Thus, it can act as a platform to connect with diverse groups of people. The item with the lowest value of mean in the integrative section is Item 7 (mean= 4.51).

An inference that can be made may be that the particular process of learning English is not as much as fulfilling or enjoyable. However, the use of the language, whether in formal or informal settings, in connecting with people of varied cultures can be deemed as satisfying to most people as it fulfills the need to communicate or relay information.

## **CONCLUSION**

Essentially, the research was conducted to investigate whether LG240 students' motivation during the ODL can influence students' motivation. It is found that LG240 students are both highly instrumentally and integratively motivated with the latter being more dominant by a considerably



small margin. In addition, it was found that students' preference or the tendency of motivation has no or very little impact on their academic performance. The present research is an attempt to understand instrumental and integrative motivation in-depth and how they compare to other studies that were conducted pre-pandemic. It is equally important to note that not everything can be described or explained purely based on numerical data alone. For instance, learning effectiveness, language perception, student commitment, and passion can be deciding factors for students' achievement in terms of academics.

In addition, the results of the motivation questionnaire certainly could not be utilised to draw broad conclusions about motivation given the scope of the current study. Therefore, future research should consider including further open-ended questions or group discussions, or individual interviews with the survey participants to unravel more findings on the subject matter. These methods help respondents to be more genuine and transparent with their feelings towards the topic of the survey.

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