

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AND ANXIETY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING AT SECONDARY LEVEL

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Abstract

This quantitative correlational research was designed to investigate the relationship between students' motivation and anxiety in the context of learning English as a second language at the secondary school level. A randomly selected sample of 600 tenth-grade students, drawn from 20 different secondary schools within the Lahore district, participated in the study. Data collection was carried out through two structured and adapted questionnaires, both employing a five-point Likert scale to measure the relevant variables. To analyze the collected data, a series of inferential statistical methods were applied, including Pearson r to assess the association between variables, independent samples t -test to explore gender-based differences, and linear regression to evaluate the predictive impact of anxiety on motivation. The findings revealed a statistically significant inverse correlation between motivation and anxiety in English language learning, indicating that students who reported higher levels of anxiety tended to exhibit lower levels of motivation. Furthermore, gender-based analysis showed a significant difference in motivational levels, with male students displaying greater motivation than their female peers. However, no statistically significant gender differences were identified in terms of anxiety levels. These outcomes highlight the critical role of addressing and mitigating anxiety in language learning environments, as doing so may contribute to enhanced student motivation and improved academic performance in second language acquisition.

INTRODUCTION

English, often regarded as a global language of power and influence, continues to hold significant appeal for people in developing countries. It is highly valued not only by the linguistic elites whether political or economic but also by rural students who view proficiency in English as a gateway to improved career opportunities and a more promising future (Anderson, 1990). In many parts of the Global South, English is not merely treated as a second language; rather, it is perceived as a symbol of intelligence, a marker of ambition, and a key determinant of future academic success.

Christiansen and Chater (2008) emphasized the strong link between learners' cognitive abilities and their perception, suggesting that these factors play a crucial role in the acquisition of a second language. Despite the importance of these elements, previous research has paid limited attention to how learners' academic backgrounds and their levels of motivation interact and influence their success in learning English (Amara, 2015). Among these factors, motivation is particularly vital in the process of language learning. Highly motivated learners tend to perform better academically and acquire second languages more efficiently compared to their less motivated peers (Liu & Huang, 2011). This highlights the need to consider both psychological and contextual variables in understanding language learning outcomes.

One of the central issues in second language acquisition research is the concept of motivation, commonly understood as the internal desire, need, or drive to engage in and persist with the learning process. MacIntyre et al. (2001) characterize motivation as a psychological trait that significantly influences an individual's behavior toward a specific task. Over the past three decades, motivation has been a major area of focus in language learning research, primarily because it helps account for the variation in learners' performance outcomes (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002).

In contrast, anxiety is often described as an elusive and abstract emotional state that has a detrimental impact on the process of language learning (Brown, 2007). It has been shown to hinder learners from achieving higher levels of language proficiency (Aida, 1994) and can significantly reduce their motivational drive (Linnenbrink, 2007). Several empirical studies (e.g., MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Phillips, 1992; Gardner, 2005) have consistently demonstrated a negative correlation between language learning anxiety and academic achievement. For some students, the experience of learning a foreign language remain emotionally distressing and

anxiety-inducing (Hewitt & Stephenson, 2011). When examining this issue within the Pakistani context, Jabeen et al. (2011) argue that English language learning is not only shaped by linguistic factors but is also deeply influenced by broader socio-economic and political conditions. These contextual influences play a critical role in shaping both learners' motivation and their levels of anxiety, thereby affecting overall language learning outcomes.

Motivation and anxiety are two critical psychological factors that significantly influence language learning outcomes, particularly in the realm of second or foreign language acquisition. These variables are closely interconnected and jointly affect a learner's ability to succeed in acquiring a new language. Despite their importance, there is a relative scarcity of empirical studies that investigate the interaction between motivation and anxiety, especially within the context of English language learning in countries like Pakistan. In such environments, students often have minimal exposure to native or fluent English speakers, which limits their opportunities to practice and internalize the language in authentic communicative settings. English is commonly viewed not as a medium of everyday interaction but rather as a tool for academic advancement or a means to secure better employment prospects. Consequently, students are frequently compelled to learn English under pressure, primarily to pass examinations or meet future career goals. This instrumental approach to language learning often leads to heightened anxiety, as learners feel stressed, self-conscious, or apprehensive when required to use English, particularly in public or unfamiliar situations due to their lack of real-world practice. Similar patterns have been documented among English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners in other non-English speaking contexts, such as China, where studies have shown that anxiety and motivation significantly influence learners' overall performance in English (Liu & Huang, 2011). These findings reinforce the notion that the interplay between emotional readiness and motivational drive is essential in shaping the effectiveness of second language learning, particularly in linguistically and culturally non-immersive environments.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Following were research objectives of the study to:

1. Investigate relationship between students' motivation and anxiety in English as second language at secondary level.
2. Find out the effect of students' motivation and anxiety in English as second language at secondary level.

3. Determine differences between students' motivation and anxiety in English as second language at secondary level with regard to gender.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Following were research questions of the study:

1. What is relationship between students' motivation and anxiety in English as second language at secondary level?
2. What is the effect of students' motivation and anxiety in English as second language at secondary level?
3. Is there a difference in students' motivation and anxiety in English language learning at the secondary level with regard to gender?

LITERATURE REVIEW

MOTIVATION

Motivation plays a pivotal role in the successful acquisition of the English language. Without motivation, it becomes exceedingly difficult if not impossible for effective teaching and learning to take place. This factor is particularly crucial in the context of developing nations, where students often face numerous social, economic, and educational challenges (Memon, 2007). Learners in such environments frequently need a clear sense of purpose or external pressure to guide their academic efforts and help them remain focused on their goals.

Motivation acts as a driving force that helps students maintain direction in life, empowering them to pursue and achieve their educational aspirations. As described by Cheng and Dörnyei (2007), it functions as a mechanism that sustains effort and persistence, helping learners stay committed to their academic journeys through structured reinforcement and consistent encouragement. In the context of the present study, we aim to examine how motivation not only enhances learning outcomes but also contributes to the reduction of anxiety. The research will explore how students who are highly motivated and experience lower levels of anxiety tend to perform better in language learning compared to their peers who struggle with anxiety management. Specifically, the study will highlight the impact of motivation on improving cognitive engagement and academic performance among secondary school students in the Daska region, offering insights into how motivational support can transform the language learning experience.

The distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation was first conceptualized by Deci and Ryan (1985) within the framework of Self-Determination Theory. Intrinsic motivation refers to engaging in an activity purely out of personal interest or enjoyment. For instance, a student who reads English poetry for leisure does so out of genuine curiosity or pleasure, rather than for any external reward. In contrast, extrinsic motivation is driven by external goals or rewards such as studying English to pass exams or secure employment. While both forms of motivation can lead to learning, research indicates that intrinsically motivated students tend to be more deeply engaged, perform at higher academic levels, and experience lower levels of anxiety compared to those who are primarily extrinsically motivated.

Cerasoli et al. (2014) further support this view by demonstrating that, although extrinsic incentives are more predictive of the quantity of performance (i.e., how much is done), intrinsic motivation is a stronger predictor of the quality of performance (i.e., how well it is done). Deci and Ryan (2012) explain that extrinsic motivation often functions through external regulation, where the learner acts to gain a reward or avoid punishment. However, under the influence of supportive individuals such as teachers, peers, or family members extrinsic motivation can gradually be internalized and transformed into intrinsic motivation. This process enhances autonomous learning and long-term engagement. Furthermore, drawing from these categories, instrumental motivation is typically associated with extrinsic goals. It refers to learning a language or subject for a practical, utilitarian purpose, such as fulfilling academic requirements or improving job prospects. In such cases, the act of learning is goal-directed, and personal interest in the subject matter may be minimal. On the other hand, integrative motivation arises when a learner is genuinely interested in the language and the culture associated with it. For example, a student may learn a foreign language because they are fascinated by the culture or wish to identify with the speakers of that language. In integrative motivation, the learner is internally driven by emotional or personal connection, and this form of motivation reflects a more heartfelt, self-directed engagement with the learning process.

Anxiety

Wei (2007) emphasizes that anxiety related to learning English as a second language (ESL) is situation-specific, meaning that it is shaped by particular contextual elements such as the complexity of the language, the competitive nature of learning environments, and the learner's self-concept and motivation. In the context of Pakistan, the dual education system

comprising English-medium and Urdu-medium institutions plays a significant role in shaping students' experiences. Adeel (2011) found that rigid classroom structures and students' self-perceptions contribute to heightened anxiety levels, especially among learners from Urdu-medium backgrounds, who often face greater challenges when transitioning into English-language settings.

Awan et al. (2010) further observed that anxiety and apprehension negatively impact both the acquisition and retention of language skills, particularly for students who are introduced to English-medium education at a later stage, where English is mandated as a compulsory subject. In such situations, learners often struggle with the sudden shift in language demands, leading to increased emotional pressure. Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) has been widely acknowledged as a serious and recurring issue in classroom environments, typically triggered by specific learning situations (Ghadirzadeh et al., 2012). FLA is recognized as a strong predictor of demotivation, significantly affecting students' academic engagement, participation, and overall performance. According to Lileikiene and Danilevichienė (2015), anxiety is one of the leading causes of failure in language learning. Therefore, reducing anxiety is essential not only for improving student motivation but also for enhancing achievement and language proficiency. By fostering supportive and less intimidating classroom environments, educators can help learners become more confident and effective in acquiring second language skills.

Anxiety, like other affective variables such as fatigue, boredom, and emotional disturbances, is fundamentally psychological in nature and rarely occurs in isolation. It manifests in different forms, each with distinct implications for language learning. According to Spielberger et al. (2005), anxiety can be categorized into three primary types: trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety, each of which uniquely influences learners' academic engagement and success in acquiring a second language. Trait anxiety refers to a stable personality characteristic that predisposes individuals to interpret a wide range of situations as threatening. People with high levels of trait anxiety are more likely to overreact to minor stressors and, as a result, are more vulnerable to experiencing anxiety in routine aspects of daily life (Reheiser, 2005). This underlying disposition may significantly impair their confidence and consistency in academic tasks, including language learning.

In contrast, state anxiety is a temporary emotional response triggered by specific circumstances or events, such as academic pressure or negative personal news. This form of anxiety is short-lived but can have immediate effects on the learner's emotional balance, often resulting in heightened stress levels, cognitive distraction, and decreased performance (Sydeman, 2005). For instance, a student may feel a surge of anxiety during an examination due to uncertainty about the outcome, which can negatively affect concentration and recall. The third category, situation-specific anxiety, emerges in particular environments such as a foreign language classroom where learners may feel an inability to perform tasks like speaking, reading, or presenting in the second language. This type of anxiety is closely tied to the context and can severely hinder learners' participation, self-expression, and overall classroom performance. The fear of making mistakes or being judged by others often contributes to this anxiety, which, in turn, can undermine learners' confidence and disrupt their ability to engage meaningfully in language learning activities.

Research in the field of second language acquisition has extensively explored the concept of language anxiety, recognizing it as a key factor influencing learners' success and performance. Early studies by Alpert and Haber (1960) and later by Sellers (2000) introduced a distinction between two forms of anxiety: facilitating anxiety, which can enhance academic performance by increasing alertness and focus, and debilitating anxiety, which hinders learning by generating stress and reducing cognitive efficiency. Building on this distinction, Scovel (1978) and Bailey (1983) emphasized the role of the emotional system of the brain in mediating these differing effects, suggesting that both positive and negative forms of anxiety are rooted in emotional and psychological responses. Bailey (1986) further explored the psychological underpinnings of learner anxiety, highlighting competition and self-comparison as major sources. She argued that when learners constantly compare themselves to others, particularly in highly competitive environments, it can result in heightened anxiety that negatively affects classroom participation and motivation.

Oxford (1999) supported these insights by noting that some learners respond to high-pressure academic tasks with fear and withdrawal, effectively giving up when overwhelmed by anxiety. However, others demonstrate resilience and continue to push through anxiety-provoking situations by developing coping strategies. Hilleson (1996) also contributed to this body of work by examining learners from various educational backgrounds and identifying

three major sources of anxiety: language shock, classroom stress, and foreign language anxiety. His findings led to a recommendation for creating low-stress, calming classroom environments to mitigate the impact of these anxieties. Collectively, these studies highlight the importance of understanding not just the beneficial aspects of anxiety, but also its detrimental effects, in the context of language education. A comprehensive understanding of both sides enables educators to create more supportive and effective learning environments that accommodate the emotional needs of language learners (Alpert & Haber, 1960; Scovel, 1978; Bailey, 1983, 1986; Hilleson, 1996; Oxford, 1999; Sellers, 2000).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory offers a socio-cultural framework through which the language learning environment can be systematically examined. This model conceptualizes human development as occurring within a set of interrelated, nested systems, each representing a layer of influence. These systems identified as the microsystem, meso-system, exosystem, and macro-system together provide a comprehensive lens for analyzing the complex interactions that shape language acquisition (Van Lier, 2004). Van Lier adapted Bronfenbrenner's theory to the context of second language learning, viewing language acquisition as part of a broader ecological system, in which various environmental layers interact with one another. In this adapted model, the microsystem refers to the immediate environment where language learning takes place, such as classrooms and direct instructional settings. The mesosystem encompasses the interrelationships among the microsystems such as connections between home, school, and peer groups which collectively impact the learner's linguistic development. The exosystem involves indirect external factors, such as parents' employment or community policies, which influence the learner's environment without directly involving them. Lastly, the macro-system represents the broader cultural, societal, and ideological context, including prevailing norms, values, and language ideologies that shape attitudes toward language learning (Nazari, 2017).

According to Van-Lier (2004, p. 208), this ecological perspective situates language learning within a dynamic and interconnected context, acknowledging the fluidity and interdependence of these multiple layers. Nazari (2017, p. 177) further emphasizes the importance of maintaining analytical continuity across all levels of the ecological system to fully understand the complexity of language learning experiences. Activity Theory conceptualizes learning as a process that is both socially and culturally mediated, shaped significantly through

interaction and dialogue within historical and situational contexts (Haught, 2006, p. 93). Rooted in the theoretical foundations laid by Vygotsky, this perspective views cognition not as an isolated mental function, but as a dynamic developmental process that emerges through an individual's engagement with their environment using various cultural tools (Devane, 2012, p. 243).

Expanding upon Vygotsky's original emphasis on individual mediation, scholars such as Engeström and Miettinen extended the theory to encompass collective human activity, recognizing the importance of group interactions in shaping learning processes (Shirvan, 2016, p. 64). This led to the development of Engeström's (1987) Activity System Model, which provides a more holistic representation of learning by including seven interrelated components: subject (the learner), object (the learning task or goal), outcome, tools (e.g., teaching strategies, technologies), rules (norms and expectations), community (the social context or learning group), and division of labor (roles and responsibilities within the activity system) (Shirvan, 2016, p. 65). In educational settings, this framework situates the learner as the subject, the instructional objective or task as the object, and pedagogical methods or materials as the mediating tools. Recognizing the complexity of these interactions, Mwanza (2002) further refined Engeström's model into an eight-step analytical framework designed to guide the examination of educational practices, particularly in the context of interview-based research and classroom investigations. This model supports a structured analysis of how learners, tools, and contexts interact in shaping the learning experience.

RESEARCH ON LANGUAGE LEARNING ANXIETY IN PAKISTAN

Numerous studies have explored English language learning (ELL) anxiety within the Pakistani context, shedding light on various underlying causes. At Abdul Wali Khan University, Khattak (2011) utilized Horwitz's Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) along with interviews and identified key anxiety-inducing factors such as fear of being judged, low socio-economic status, and learner-centered pedagogical practices. Similarly, Adeel (2011) highlighted that formal and rigid classroom settings, as well as students' self-perceptions, were significant contributors to anxiety among English language learners. Sultan (2012) found a negative correlation between perceived language competence and anxiety levels, indicating that students who considered themselves more proficient in English reported less anxiety. Nazir (2014) also emphasized the impact of classroom environment as a significant factor influencing

anxiety. In a separate study conducted at the University of Balochistan, Nazari et al. (2017) reported no statistically significant gender differences in language learning anxiety. Meanwhile, Bhatti (2018) found that nervousness and fear of negative evaluation were prevalent among students at a public university in Sindh.

Although these investigations have provided valuable insights, most of them have predominantly relied on quantitative methodologies and have narrowly focused on the microsystem level, such as classroom dynamics and immediate learning environments. In contrast, global trends in language learning research have increasingly moved toward qualitative and ecological approaches. In response to this shift, the present study aims to address this methodological and conceptual gap by adopting an ecological systems framework. This research seeks to extend the analysis beyond the microsystem to also include meso-system (e.g., family-school relationships), exo-system (e.g., parental employment, media), and macro-system (e.g., societal attitudes and cultural norms) influences on English language anxiety among Pakistani students. By doing so, the study endeavors to offer a more holistic and context-sensitive understanding of how various environmental layers shape learners' emotional experiences with English language acquisition.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MOTIVATION AND ANXIETY FOR LEARNING LANGUAGE

According to the findings of Brown, Robson, and Rosenkjar (2001), there exists an inverse relationship between motivation and anxiety in the context of language learning, whereby diminished motivation tends to result in heightened anxiety. Liu (2006) further supports this by emphasizing a positive association between students' motivation and their proficiency in English, suggesting that more motivated learners are likely to attain better language outcomes. Similarly, Aida (1994) found a negative correlation between language learning anxiety (in both native and foreign language contexts) and academic achievement, indicating that increased anxiety can significantly hinder learning success.

Although numerous studies have examined the individual roles of motivation and language anxiety in second language acquisition, relatively fewer have directly explored how these two affective factors interact and influence one another. The existing literature consistently points out that both motivation and anxiety are critical psychological constructs that significantly impact English language learning. As highlighted by Liu and Huang (2011),

these two variables are interconnected, forming a complex emotional framework that underpins second and foreign language learning experiences. Their combined effect can lead to varying levels of learning performance, depending on how they manifest in learners.

Given the substantial influence that both factors exert on English learning outcomes, Cohen (2010) argues that it is crucial to investigate the correlational relationship between motivation and anxiety in relation to students' English language proficiency and achievement. Research has shown that learners who exhibit high motivation, positive self-image, strong self-confidence, and minimal anxiety are more likely to succeed in acquiring a second language. In contrast, elevated levels of anxiety, coupled with low self-esteem and poor self-perception, are likely to act as barriers to effective language acquisition, possibly more so than a simple lack of motivation.

Ultimately, among the various emotional and cognitive variables that influence second language learning, motivation emerges as one of the most significant determinants of success. Its role not only supports language development but also serves to buffer against the negative impacts of anxiety and low confidence. To explore the correlation between motivation and anxiety in ESL learning within the Pakistani context, it is important to consider more than just linguistic factors. The analysis should be grounded in sociolinguistic and economic perspectives. As noted by Jabeen et al. (2011), the perception of non-native varieties of English among Pakistani ESL learners is influenced more by sociolinguistic, political, geographical, and economic factors than by purely linguistic ones.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research was conducted within the framework of the positivist paradigm, as supported by the works of Kumatongo and Muzata (2021) and Phillips et al. (2000). This philosophical stance emphasizes objective observation, empirical evidence, and measurable outcomes. The study employed a quantitative research approach, specifically utilizing a descriptive-correlational and non-experimental design. Rather than manipulating variables or implementing interventions, the research focused on systematically observing and analyzing existing relationships between variables, aiming to identify patterns and correlations based on statistical data collected from the participants.

POPULATION AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

According to Hutchings (2021) and Wallen and Fraenkel (2013), the term population refers to the entire group of individuals from which a research sample is drawn. In the present study, the participants were selected through a process of random sampling from within this larger population (Muhammad et al., 2023; Muhammad et al., 2023; Siddique et al., 2021; Siddique et al., 2022; Siddique et al., 2023; Taseer, 2023). The research specifically targeted the full cohort of 10th-grade students enrolled in a public high school within the Lahore district during the 2022–2023 academic years. As reported by the School Education Department (2020), Lahore district comprises a total of 336 high schools, with an overall enrollment of 36,847 students in the 10th grade. Among these, 179 schools are designated for girls and 157 for boys. To derive the study sample, a total of 600 students comprising 300 boys and 300 girls were selected using a two-stage sampling strategy. In the first stage, disproportionate stratified random sampling was applied to ensure equal representation of genders. This involved selecting 10 boys and 10 girls from each selected school. In the second stage, 30 students were randomly chosen from each school to complete the sample. This method ensured a balanced and representative distribution of participants across gender and school types.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

To conduct the research, two structured close-ended questionnaires were utilized as primary data collection instruments. In addition to the standardized scales employed for measuring the core variables of the study, the questionnaire included several demographic items most notably, questions concerning the gender of the participants. To assess students' motivation levels, the study adopted a five-point Likert scale originally developed by Gardner (1985) and later revised by Gardner and colleagues in 1997. For measuring anxiety related to English language learning, the well-established Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), created by Horwitz in 1996, was employed.

Following data collection, the responses were subjected to inferential statistical analysis to examine relationships and differences among variables. Specifically, the study made use of the Pearson correlation coefficient to explore associations between variables, the independent samples t-test to compare group differences (e.g., gender-based differences), and linear regression analysis to determine the predictive power of anxiety on motivation. These statistical

techniques enabled a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between motivation and anxiety in the context of second language learning.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

TABLE 1: CORRELATION BETWEEN STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AND ANXIETY IN ENGLISH AS SECOND LANGUAGE

Variables	N	rvalue	Sig.
Students' Motivation and Anxiety	600	-.097*	.018

* $p < .05$ (2-tailed)

Table 1 presents the results of a Pearson correlation analysis conducted to examine the relationship between students' motivation and anxiety in the context of English language learning. The analysis revealed a statistically significant negative correlation between the two variables, with a correlation coefficient of $r = -.097^*$ and a p-value less than .05. This statistically significant result indicates that as students experience higher levels of anxiety while learning English, their motivation to engage with the language tends to decrease. In other words, increased anxiety is associated with diminished motivation among secondary school students. This inverse relationship highlights the important psychological interplay between emotional distress and academic drive in second language acquisition.

TABLE 2: EFFECT OF STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AND ANXIETY IN ENGLISH AS SECOND LANGUAGE

Variables	B	t-value	Sig.	Model R Square
Students' Motivation and Anxiety	-.097	-2.386	.018	.009

As presented in Table 2, the R Square value is .009, indicating that English language learning anxiety accounts for only 0.9% of the total variance observed in students' motivation at the secondary school level. This suggests that while anxiety has an effect on motivation, its overall explanatory power in this model is relatively small. Nevertheless, the analysis revealed a statistically significant beta coefficient ($B = -.097$), accompanied by a p-value of .018, which confirms the existence of a meaningful negative relationship between anxiety and motivation. In other words, as students' levels of anxiety related to learning English increase, their motivation to engage in the language-learning process tends to decline. These findings

reinforce the idea that anxiety, although a minor predictor in terms of variance explained, exerts a statistically significant and detrimental influence on learners' motivation in the context of second language education.

TABLE 3: GENDER WISE COMPARISON IN STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AND ANXIETY

Variables	Gender	N	M	SD	T	df	P
Students' Motivation	Male	300	59.19	11.22	-4.93	598	.000
	Female	300	55.14	8.18			
Anxiety	Male	300	48.80	11.61	.771	598	.392
	Female	300	48.04	12.46			

Table 3 presents the results of an independent sample t-test conducted to examine gender-based differences in motivation and anxiety among secondary school students learning English. The analysis identified a statistically significant difference in motivation levels between male and female students. Specifically, male students demonstrated a higher mean motivation score ($M = 59.19$, $SD = 11.22$) compared to their female counterparts ($M = 55.14$, $SD = 8.18$). The t-test yielded a value of $t = -4.93$ with a p-value of .000, indicating that the observed difference is highly significant. These results suggest that gender significantly influences students' motivation toward learning English, with male students exhibiting greater motivation than females. In contrast, the results related to anxiety levels did not show a statistically significant difference between the two groups. Male students had a mean anxiety score of 48.80 ($SD = 11.61$), while female students reported a closely similar mean score of 48.04 ($SD = 12.46$). The t-value for this comparison was .771, with a p-value of .392, indicating no meaningful statistical difference in anxiety levels between genders. Therefore, while motivation appears to be affected by gender, anxiety associated with English language learning does not vary significantly between male and female students.

DISCUSSION

This study draws attention to the inverse relationship between learner motivation and anxiety within the framework of second language acquisition. Early foundational research by MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) was instrumental in establishing this connection. They proposed that language anxiety plays a detrimental role by decreasing learners' willingness to engage in communication and diminishing their motivation to learn the language. Building on

this, Aida (1994) provided empirical evidence showing that elevated levels of anxiety in the language learning environment significantly undermine students' intrinsic motivation. As a result, learners become more inclined to disengage from the learning process, often leading to avoidance behaviors and lower academic achievement.

Horwitz et al. (1986) further elaborated on the concept of foreign language anxiety, defining it as a unique and identifiable psychological construct. According to their findings, this form of anxiety not only disrupts the cognitive and emotional aspects of acquiring a new language but also severely affects learners' self-confidence and internal drive to succeed. These early contributions laid the groundwork for understanding anxiety as a critical psychological obstacle that can obstruct the motivational processes necessary for effective language learning.

Subsequent studies have consistently supported the negative correlation between anxiety and motivation. For instance, Liu and Huang (2011) found that students with lower levels of anxiety were more likely to participate actively in class and demonstrated higher levels of motivational engagement. These findings highlight how reduced anxiety can foster a more participatory and motivated learning environment. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) shifted the focus towards emotional variables in language learning, emphasizing that while positive emotions such as enjoyment enhance motivation, anxiety exerts the opposite effect by acting as a demotivating factor.

Additional insights come from the work of Toth (2010) and Shao et al. (2013), who examined the role of self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation in relation to anxiety. Their findings suggest that learners with stronger beliefs in their capabilities and higher levels of intrinsic motivation are less susceptible to language anxiety. Furthermore, these learners tend to perform better academically, implying that psychological readiness and emotional well-being are closely tied to academic success in language learning contexts. Taken together, these studies affirm that managing and minimizing anxiety in the language classroom is essential for cultivating student motivation, which is a crucial component in achieving linguistic competence and proficiency.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the inverse relationship between learners' motivation and anxiety within the context of second language acquisition, placing particular emphasis on the emotional and psychological factors that influence language learning outcomes. Both motivation and anxiety

are recognized as significant emotional constructs that play a critical role in shaping students' academic involvement and overall performance. The findings of the research revealed an inverse relationship between these two variables specifically, as learners experience higher levels of anxiety, their motivation to engage in second language learning tends to diminish. This inverse correlation suggests that anxiety acts as a barrier to maintaining or increasing learners' drive and enthusiasm for language study. In light of these findings, the existing body of literature underscores the importance of implementing strategies to reduce anxiety in language learning environments. Doing so could foster higher levels of motivation, thereby creating more supportive and effective conditions for learners, ultimately improving their academic achievement and proficiency in second language contexts.

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