



GENDER DIFFERENCES IN MOTIVATION TOWARD LEARNING ENGLISH - THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS OF UNIVERSITY MOHAMMED V AND CADI AYYAD UNIVERSITY AS A CASE STUDY

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Abstract:

Motivation is arguably the most important factor for success in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), especially in higher education environments where students' involvement and determination are the key factors to their learning results. This paper illustrates how gender is related to different motivational orientations for learning English among students of English departments at University Mohammed V and Cadi Ayyad University. Based on Self-Determination Theory, the study investigates the two primary categories of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Using a quantitative, descriptive-correlation research design, a structured questionnaire was distributed among undergraduate and graduate students who have been studying English for more than two years to collect data at the university level. The data collected were processed with descriptive statistics, independent samples t-tests, and regression analysis in order to assess students' motivational levels and the differences. These findings underscore the multifaceted and context-dependent nature of motivation in SLA and stress the significance of taking individual differences in language learning, self-concept, and sociocultural factors into account. Future research directions and pedagogical implications are explored.

Keywords: gender; motivation; intrinsic motivation; extrinsic motivation; English as a foreign language (EFL); self-determination theory; language learning motivation; second language acquisition (SLA)

1. Introduction

This study investigates gender differences in motivation toward learning English among students enrolled in the English departments of Mohammed V University and Cadi

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Ayyad University. Using a quantitative research design, it examines the relationship between gender and two dimensions of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. They used a questionnaire to survey people, and all the data were numbers based on quantitative stuff. The main thing was motivation, split into extrinsic and intrinsic parts.

The findings suggest that motivation plays a big role in learning a second language. It affects how much effort learners put in, if they stay engaged, keep going when it is tough, and what they end up achieving. In Second Language Acquisition, or SLA, it always is widely recognized as one of the key things that make a difference for each person. Highly motivated learners tend to participate more actively in classroom activities and demonstrate greater persistence when encountering learning challenges.

Higher levels of motivation are generally associated with greater language proficiency. Extrinsic motivation might be from outside reasons, like grades or jobs, while intrinsic is more about enjoying it for itself. The research focused on both, trying to see connections with gender. It seems that highly motivated ones do better, but maybe not everyone agrees on how strong that link is.

When it comes to learning a foreign language, motivation can differ extensively between people, and gender seems to play a role in that. I mean, males and females might approach it differently because of all the social stuff, like what culture expects or how schools treat them. That could make some more motivated than others for something like English.

It appears that understanding this gender thing is important, especially for teachers in EFL classes. If you get how it affects motivation, you can maybe make lessons that keep everyone engaged more, but It remains unclear how deep that connection goes yet. Nevertheless, motivation in language learning usually breaks down into two kinds: intrinsic and extrinsic. The intrinsic one is when you learn because you actually enjoy it or find it interesting on your own. Like, the satisfaction comes from the process itself.

Extrinsic is more about outside stuff pushing you, such as getting good grades or even thinking about jobs later. Those rewards or pressures make a big difference. The relative influence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation varies among English language learners, and psychological factors, socio-cultural ones, and education influence it too. Some people lean one way, others do not, and it varies.

There are a few main theories that help explain motivation when it comes to learning a second language or SLA, as it is often called. Previous research indicates that Self-Determination Theory from Deci and Ryan back in 1985 is one that stands out, because it talks about how things like feeling autonomous, competent, and connected to others could build up that intrinsic motivation inside. It refers to an internal drive that originates from the individual.

Then there is Gardner's socio-educational model from 1985, which separates out integrative and instrumental orientations. The integrative one seems tied to intrinsic stuff, like wanting to fit in with the culture, while instrumental is more extrinsic, maybe for practical reasons like a job. It is evident that these two are opposites in a way.

Dörnyei came along later with his L2 Motivational Self System in 2005 and 2009, and he focuses on how learners see themselves in the future. Like the Ideal L2 Self, which is who you want to be speaking the language, and the Ought-to L2 Self, more about what you feel you should do. This framework provides a more comprehensive explanation of learners' motivational development, but it shapes how motivated you act, I suppose.

All of these frameworks broadly come together to give a base for looking at why gender might play a role in intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation for EFL students. Although no single theoretical framework fully explains language-learning motivation, these perspectives collectively provide a comprehensive foundation for the present study.

The present study aims to explore the relationship between gender and motivation toward learning English among Moroccan EFL learners by addressing the following research questions:

- 1) Do male and female learners differ significantly in their intrinsic motivation toward learning English?
- 2) Do male and female learners differ significantly in their extrinsic motivation?
- 3) Does gender significantly predict learners' overall motivation toward learning English?

By addressing these questions, the study seeks to provide deeper insights into how psychological, socio-cultural, and self-related factors interact with gender to shape motivational orientations in language learning. The findings are expected to contribute to research in SLA and to inform pedagogical practices aimed at enhancing learners' engagement and achievement in EFL contexts.

2. Background of the Study

Nowadays, mastering English has become one of the most important things in almost every field. There has been a massive and quite surprising upturn in interest in English, which is a bit overwhelming given that this language still plays a major role as a global language. One of the points made by Crystal is that around 400 million people speak English as their mother tongue; it is the third most widely spoken native language; more than 430 million people have it as their second language, and around 750 million people use it as a foreign language. The overall number goes as high as one and a half billion people all over the world. This is equivalent to saying that English is the language is the most widely chosen foreign language in the world.

It highly becomes an interesting phenomenon, and it was taken into account by most countries, Indonesia included that a successful performance in English is as if a talisman because it can be a generator of material wealth by giving back the access that was previously confirmed to education, international issues, science, technology, economy, and substantially more for each individual. Language education is one of the most effective ways to achieve that goal, whereby one of the major purposes of education is to provide support for each student's learning. Put simply, the idea of no child left

behind should be the key issue in language learning. Hence, understanding that equality and students' motivation should be at the center of educators' attention in learning, as those factors can contribute to learning success.

The educational experience of learning the academic language shows a clear correlation with the stereotype of male-female gender roles. There is a stereotype that males are generally more self-assured and interested in the areas of mathematics and science than females, while there is also a stereotype that females generally prefer and feel more confident in the areas of language and linguistics than males. Various studies by researchers have sought to determine if these two motivational differences between sexes are substantiated by evidence.

Among the topics that require investigation is the influence of gender on students' motivation to learn a second language. This topic relates to numerous studies and cultural stereotyping regarding the varying levels of interest and success women and men exhibit when learning a second language. The concept of motivation is a very influential factor in how successful students will be when it comes to achieving their goals in language learning in a foreign context.

Motivations related to success in the area of foreign language acquisition can be categorized as either intrinsic or extrinsic. Extrinsic motivation means that people will perform a certain behavior (i.e., studying) for the sole purpose of receiving an external reward (i.e., receiving money or good grades). Conversely, intrinsic motivation is considered when someone participates in an activity (i.e., studying) simply because he enjoys it and does not necessarily anticipate receiving any type of external reward in return.

Numerous experts who studied how learning and motives affect students came to realize that a student's score on his/her motive scale typically will be the most important determining factor of how much actual learning will occur during that experience. A student's different scores on the motive scale may significantly influence their decisions on the following items: their field(s) of study in college and their career(s). Also, even if a student has equal learning outcomes on both the subject and the experience scale, the student's motive score can still be a factor in determining their life choices. Based on this theory of motive, we have a better understanding of why it is important to focus on a student's actual motives in each of the contexts identified.

Motivation influences the extent to which individuals successfully complete a given task. It follows that one of the principal facets of education is to produce positive outcomes through successful endeavours relating to learning, and subsequently provide assistance in producing favourable results in that area. If motivation is the determining factor in what children learn, then we should consider how gender differences regarding motivations could result in gender differences in what male and female learners learn presently and potentially in future years. According to Eccles, Wigfield, Harold, and Blumenfeld (1993), the differences in the perceived values (part of the motivational construct of interest) between various domains may affect adolescents' choices in participating in those domains. A highly influential factor cited by McTeer regarding the

accomplishments of students is their motivational and interest factors. By determining what motivates student or their interests, educators can use this information to develop curricula that appeal to their interests and motivation factors. The study by Walsh also identified gender differences in young people's preferences and aversions to learning within four subjects, as a component of their motivation. It may assist educators in providing best practice models, strategies, and motivation for educational success.

As an example illustrating the above-stated concerns regarding motivation, Language Studies: An Example of English as a Foreign Language in Spain, this is also a description of the research on the intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivations for students learning English, developed by Ryan and Deci (2015); to help provide further clarity regarding Competency-Based Language Instruction.

The concerns as described above have led to two specific goals of the research conducted by Ryan and Deci (2015), *Contemporary Educational Psychology*. The first is to identify the intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivations for students learning English based on gender. The second is to examine what the overriding motivator for male and female students in learning English is.

According to Ryan and Deci (2015), while individuals may differ in the quantity of motivation, they will also differ in the quality of motivation-specifically in the orientation of that motivation. The orientation of motivation refers to the attitudes and goals of the individual that drive an individual to take action toward achieving a specific goal. Thus, understanding why individuals take certain actions to reach a certain outcome is essential.

The researcher pursued research to gain empirical information about student motivation regarding English learning based on student gender and types of motivational factors. As such, this research will be conducted at English Education Departments, and therefore the research population consists of 91 students (graduate and undergraduate). This provides ample data and knowledge to conduct research about English learning experiences.

2.1 Problems of the Study

Motivation has long been recognized as one of several key elements in acquiring a foreign language successfully. When it comes to learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), the amount of student motivation affects how engaged and committed they will be in the learning process and, therefore, how well they will do academically in this area. Due to the magnitude of this factor, motivation itself is very complicated and changes every day among people and within different environments. If two students have the same experience at the university level while learning English (EFL), it does not necessarily mean that their motivational orientations will be identical, as students may vary dramatically in terms of their intrinsic/extrinsic motivation. The differences between students' motivation will influence their academic success and long-term ability to continue developing their second language.

The Moroccan university system fails to provide adequate empirical evidence concerning the influence of sex on English learner motivation in higher education, especially in English departments such as those at University Mohammed V (UMV) and University Cadi Ayyad (UCA). The limited amount of context-specific empirical evidence prevents educators and curriculum developers from fully appreciating student motivation and from developing more effective methods to teach based on the motivational differences that exist between male and female students.

2.2 Objectives of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to identify the factors that motivate students to learn English. In addition, it seeks to examine the extent to which gender influences the motivational orientations of male and female students among English department students.

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. To examine the extent to which **gender influences learners' motivational orientations**, with particular focus on **intrinsic and extrinsic motivation**.
2. To identify the **dominant type of motivation (intrinsic or extrinsic)** among male and female EFL students in the Moroccan higher education context.
3. To contribute empirical, context-specific data on **gender and motivation** in Moroccan EFL settings, addressing the existing gap in local SLA research.
4. To provide pedagogical insights that may assist EFL teachers and curriculum designers in developing **gender-sensitive instructional practices** that enhance learner motivation and engagement.

2.3 Scope and Limitations

The scope of the study is confined to English as a Foreign Language contexts, where English is not the primary language of daily communication and where learning occurs mainly through formal instruction. Within this context, the study concentrates exclusively on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and does not examine other motivational dimensions such as integrative or instrumental motivation separately, as these are conceptually integrated within the intrinsic–extrinsic framework adopted in the study.

Although the findings of this study are insightful, the investigation suffers from a number of constraints. The sample for the research is limited only to the students of the English Department at UMV and UCA. As a result, the findings may not be applicable to students of other academic disciplines or institutions. In addition, the current study is solely dependent on self-reported data through questionnaires, which may be influenced by the respondents' subjective interpretations, social desirability, or lack of awareness of their motivational experiences.

Methodologically, the study employs a quantitative research design using a structured questionnaire to measure students' motivational orientations. Statistical analyses, including descriptive statistics, independent-samples t-tests, and linear

regression, are used to examine gender differences and the predictive role of gender in motivation toward learning English.

2.4 Significance of the Study

This research is important as it helps to comprehend the influence of gender differences on students' motivation in learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in the university context, especially in the faculties of English at UMV and UCA. Although motivation is generally regarded as the main factor that determines academic achievement and success in language acquisition, there is still a shortage of empirical studies that elucidate how male and female students differ in their orientation towards learning English in these particular academic settings. This study, by investigating the use of extrinsic, integrative, and extrinsic motivation among students with a substantial background of English, bridges a crucial gap in the literature and is a timely response to the dearth of local, context-sensitive research studies on this issue.

3. Definition of the Key Term

3.1 Gender

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, expectations, identities, and behaviors associated with being male or female within a particular society, and it differs from biological sex, which is based on physiological characteristics. Gender is shaped through cultural norms and social interactions, influencing how individuals behave, learn, and participate in academic contexts. In education, gender can affect students' motivation, learning attitudes, and engagement, leading to variations in learning behaviours and outcomes between male and female learners (WHO, 2011; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2013). Therefore, understanding gender as a social construct is essential when examining how students develop motivation toward learning English.

3.2 Motivation

Motivation is the internal psychological force that stimulates individuals to initiate, direct, and sustain effort toward achieving a particular goal. In the context of education and language learning, motivation determines how much energy, persistence, and attention learners dedicate to learning activities. Highly motivated learners tend to show stronger effort, greater persistence, and higher achievement in comparison to less motivated learners. This makes motivation a critical factor influencing success in acquiring a second or foreign language (Gardner, 1985; Dörnyei, 2001). Thus, understanding students' motivation levels is essential for improving learning outcomes in English language education.

3.3 Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation in Language Learning

In language learning, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation represent two complementary but distinct motivational orientations that shape students' learning behavior. Intrinsic

motivation arises from learners' personal interest, curiosity, and enjoyment in learning English, while extrinsic motivation results from external pressures or rewards such as academic success, employment needs, or social expectations. Both types of motivation influence students' effort and achievement, although intrinsically motivated learners often show deeper engagement and stronger self-regulation, whereas extrinsically motivated learners may be driven more by achievement-oriented goals (Noels, 2001; Lamb, 2017). Exploring these orientations helps explain differences in how students approach learning English.

3.4 English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) refers to the learning and use of English in contexts where it is not the primary language of daily communication and is mainly used in academic, professional, or international settings. In EFL environments, students have limited exposure to English outside the classroom, meaning that learning depends largely on formal instruction, motivation, and intentional learning opportunities. Because authentic English-use contexts are scarce, learners' motivation and engagement become even more crucial for successful language development (Richards & Schmidt, 2010; Harmer, 2007). Understanding EFL contexts is therefore essential when examining motivation in English learning.

4. Theoretical Part

4.1 Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation in Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Deci and Ryan (1985, 2000), provides a comprehensive framework for understanding human motivation. According to SDT, motivation exists along a continuum from autonomous to controlled, and it is closely linked to the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Within this framework, motivation is broadly categorized into **intrinsic** and **extrinsic** types.

Intrinsic motivation refers to engaging in an activity for its inherent satisfaction, interest, or enjoyment, rather than for external rewards or pressures (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Individuals are intrinsically motivated when they perform tasks that are challenging or enjoyable, such as reading for pleasure, solving a puzzle, or learning a language out of curiosity. Research indicates that intrinsic motivation is associated with higher engagement, persistence, creativity, and overall well-being (Deci, 1971; Ryan & Deci, 2000). It is fully self-determined, with the activity itself serving as the primary reward.

In contrast, **extrinsic motivation** involves performing an activity to achieve a separable outcome, such as rewards, recognition, or avoiding punishment (Deci & Ryan, 1985). SDT further categorizes extrinsic motivation into four types: External, introjected, identified, and integrated regulation, varying in the degree to which the behavior is internalized. While controlled forms of extrinsic motivation (e.g., acting to avoid guilt or gain approval) may undermine engagement, autonomous forms (e.g., integrated

regulation) can support long-term commitment and personal growth (Vansteenkiste et al., 2004).

SDT highlights that the boundary between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is not rigid. Extrinsic motivation can become more self-determined when it aligns with an individual's values and satisfies psychological needs, thereby enhancing engagement and learning outcomes. Overall, understanding the interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is essential for fostering effective learning and personal development.

Gardner's socio-educational model distinguishes between integrative and instrumental orientations. Integrative motivation reflects learners' interest in the target language and culture, often aligned with intrinsic motivation, while instrumental motivation relates to external rewards such as employment or academic success, corresponding to extrinsic motivation. Gardner's model has been widely applied to explore how socio-cultural factors, including gender, influence learners' motivational profiles in SLA.

Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System offers a more dynamic approach by emphasizing the role of self-concept in motivation. The Ideal L2 Self represents the learner's aspirational image of themselves as a competent English user, often fostering intrinsic motivation. In contrast, the Ought-to L2 Self reflects obligations and external expectations, more closely linked to extrinsic motivation. This framework highlights how individual differences, including gender, can shape the sources and intensity of motivation in language learning.

By integrating these three frameworks, the present study examines how gender influences intrinsic and extrinsic motivation among EFL learners. Gardner's model helps conceptualize motivational orientations in socio-cultural terms, SDT explains the psychological mechanisms underlying intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System accounts for the influence of self-perception and future-oriented goals. Together, these theories provide a comprehensive foundation for investigating how male and female learners differ in their motivational profiles and how gender may predict overall motivation toward learning English.

Therefore, the study formulated three main hypotheses:

- 1) there is a significant difference between male and female learners in intrinsic motivation,
- 2) there is a significant difference in extrinsic motivation,
- 3) gender significantly predicts learners' overall motivation toward learning English.

By examining these hypotheses, the study aims to provide insights into the ways socio-cultural, psychological, and self-concept factors interact with gender to shape motivational orientations in second language learning. The following section presents the results obtained from the analysis of learners' responses, highlighting both the patterns observed and their implications in the context of SLA.

4.2 Empirical Work on Gender and Motivation

Previous empirical studies have widely examined the relationship between gender and motivation in second language learning, with consistent evidence highlighting gender-based differences in intrinsic motivation. Research across various educational and cultural contexts indicates that female learners generally demonstrate higher levels of intrinsic motivation, characterized by greater interest, enjoyment, and personal engagement in language learning. Early work by Vallerand et al. (1992, 1993) revealed that females tend to score higher on intrinsic motivation measures, a pattern later confirmed in EFL contexts by Mori and Göbel (2006). In Morocco, El Bouhali (2019), who observed stronger internal commitment and enjoyment among female learners of English, reported similar findings. Recent studies continue to support these trends, showing that female students often exhibit higher motivational engagement related to self-development and linguistic competence (Chen & Zhang, 2024; Selly Miranti & Siboro, 2025).

5. Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative descriptive and comparative research design to investigate gender differences in intrinsic and extrinsic motivation toward learning English. This design is appropriate for examining patterns, comparing groups, and identifying statistically significant differences between male and female learners.

5.1 Participants

The participants in this study were 91 Moroccan EFL students enrolled in English studies programs at universities in Marrakech and Rabat. The sample included both male and female learners from Bachelor's to PhD levels, representing diverse academic backgrounds. Participation was voluntary. The target population consisted of English studies students from bachelor's to PhD levels at universities in Marrakech and Rabat, with a total sample of 91 participants—47 females and 44 males.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 91)

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Male	44	48.4
Female	47	51.6
Educational Level 1	12	13.2
Educational Level 2	45	49.5
Educational Level 3	34	37.4

5.2 Data Collection Procedure

The data for this study were collected through the administration of a structured questionnaire designed to measure intrinsic and extrinsic motivation toward learning English. The questionnaire was distributed electronically to Moroccan EFL students enrolled in English studies programs at universities in Marrakech and Rabat. Online

platforms, including WhatsApp and Facebook groups related to English departments, were used to reach participants efficiently.

Prior to data collection, participants were informed about the purpose of the study and were assured that their participation was entirely voluntary. They were also informed that their responses would remain anonymous and confidential and would be used solely for academic research purposes. No personal identifying information was collected, and participants were given the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

The questionnaire was administered in English, as all participants were students majoring in English studies and possessed an adequate level of language proficiency to understand and respond to the items accurately. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaire independently and honestly. The data collection process took place over a limited period, giving participants sufficient time to complete the questionnaire.

After the completion of data collection, the responses were screened for completeness and accuracy. The collected data were then coded and entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. Ethical principles related to informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation were strictly respected throughout all stages of the data collection process. Ethical standards were respected throughout the research process. Participants were informed of the objectives of the study and their right to withdraw at any time. No personal identifying information was collected, and all data were used exclusively for academic research purposes.

5.3 Research Instrument

The research instrument used in this study was a structured questionnaire developed based on established theoretical constructs of motivation and validated measurement scales widely used in second language acquisition (SLA) research. Specifically, the division of motivation into intrinsic and extrinsic is based on Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985/2000). The Academic Motivation Scale conceptually influenced the items (Vallerand et al., 1992, 1993) and motivation-related components of Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (1985), and to a lesser extent, Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (2009). The instrument was adapted to be less complex and context-based to correspond to the aims and limitations of a master-level mini-project, as well as reflect the learners' English context.

The questionnaire included two 8-item subscales: Intrinsic Motivation (e.g., "I enjoy learning English for its own sake") and Extrinsic Motivation (e.g., "I study English to get good grades"). Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. To ensure the reliability of the research instrument, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated. The reliability results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Reliability Statistics for Motivation Scales

Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Intrinsic Motivation	8	0.817
Extrinsic Motivation	8	0.795

For data analysis, SPSS was used to compute descriptive statistics to summarize motivation levels (Table 5), independent-samples t-tests to examine gender differences in intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Tables 6 and 7), and linear regression analysis to assess whether gender predicts overall motivation (Table 8).

The questionnaire consists of **five sections**:

- Section A: Demographic information (gender, university, level of study),
- Section B: Intrinsic motivation items,
- Section C: Extrinsic motivation items.

Table 3: Participant Distribution by Gender and Educational Level (N = 91)

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Male	44	48.4
Female	47	51.6
Educational Level 1	12	13.2
Educational Level 2	45	49.5
Educational Level 3	34	37.4

Table 4: Operationalization of the Motivation Constructs

Construct	Measurement Items
Extrinsic Motivation ⁱⁱ	1. I learn English because it is important for my future career. 2. I study English to achieve good academic results. 3. Learning English will help me get a better job. 4. I learn English because it is required in my academic program. 5. I study English to meet external expectations (teachers, family, and society).
Intrinsic Motivation ⁱⁱⁱ	1. I learn English because I enjoy learning it. 2. Studying English is interesting and enjoyable for me. 3. I feel satisfied when I improve my English skills. 4. I learn English because it gives me a sense of personal fulfilment. 5. I feel motivated to learn English even without grades or rewards.

All motivation items were measured using a **five-point Likert scale**, ranging from:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree,
 2 = Disagree,
 3 = Neutral,
 4 = Agree,
 5 = Strongly Agree.

5.4 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analyzed using the **Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)**. The following statistical techniques were employed:

ⁱⁱ **Measurement Scale:**

Based on extrinsic motivation concepts in SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

ⁱⁱⁱ **Measurement Scale:**

Adapted from Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

- **Descriptive statistics** (means, standard deviations, frequencies) to determine students' levels of motivation.
- **Independent samples t-tests** to examine gender differences in intrinsic, extrinsic motivation.
- **Correlation analysis** to explore relationships between motivational variables.
- **Regression analysis** to examine the effects of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on overall motivation toward learning English.

These analyses were conducted to test the research hypotheses and answer the research questions.

6. Literature Review

6.1 Introduction

Motivation occupies a central position in the field of second and foreign language learning, as it plays a decisive role in shaping learners' attitudes, effort, and achievement. This importance becomes particularly evident in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, where exposure to English outside the classroom is limited, and learning progress depends largely on learners' motivational orientations and engagement. The literature indicates that motivation is a multidimensional construct, encompassing not only the *intensity* of learners' effort but also the *nature and direction* of the motives underlying their learning behavior. These motivational orientations may further intersect with gender-related differences in learners' beliefs, expectations, and learning experiences, especially within academic environments such as university English departments.

This chapter reviews the principal theoretical and empirical contributions that inform the present study. It discusses the concept of motivation in language learning, examines intrinsic and extrinsic motivation within the framework of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), explores motivation in EFL learning contexts, and considers the role of gender in shaping learners' motivational orientations. The aim of this review is to establish the conceptual foundations on which the investigation of gender differences in intrinsic and extrinsic motivation among English department students at UMV and UCA is grounded.

6.2 Motivation in Second and Foreign Language Learning

Earlier theoretical models, particularly Gardner's socio-educational framework, distinguished between integrative and instrumental orientations, emphasizing the social and cultural dimensions of language learning motivation. While these contributions remain influential, subsequent developments in motivational theory have shifted attention toward learners' internal psychological processes, including autonomy, interest, and self-regulation. This shift paved the way for Self-Determination Theory, which provides a broader and more dynamic account of motivational orientations in educational settings.

6.3 Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation within Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory, developed by Deci and Ryan, offers a comprehensive framework for understanding intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and their implications for learning. Within this framework, intrinsic motivation refers to engagement in an activity for its inherent satisfaction, interest, or personal value. Learners who are intrinsically motivated study because they find the learning experience enjoyable or meaningful. By contrast, extrinsic motivation is associated with engagement driven by external rewards, obligations, or expectations, such as grades, career prospects, or academic requirements.

SDT further proposes that extrinsic motivation varies in the degree to which it is internalized, ranging from externally regulated behavior to more autonomous, self-endorsed forms of regulation. In educational contexts, intrinsic motivation is generally linked to deeper cognitive engagement, autonomy, and long-term learning benefits, whereas extrinsic motivation may contribute more strongly to performance-oriented learning behaviors. Both forms of motivation are therefore essential for understanding students' approaches to learning English in structured academic environments such as university English departments.

6.4 Gender Differences in Motivation Toward Learning English

Studies conducted in EFL and ESL contexts have produced mixed findings regarding the influence of gender on motivational orientations. Some research indicates that female students tend to demonstrate higher levels of motivation, stronger commitment to language learning, and a greater affinity with intrinsic motives such as enjoyment and personal development. Other studies suggest that male learners may be more strongly influenced by extrinsic motives, including career advancement and academic achievement. These inconsistencies highlight the need to interpret gender-related motivational patterns within specific sociocultural and institutional contexts rather than assuming universal trends.

At the university level, where students possess substantial exposure to English, motivational differences may be shaped by a combination of gender, academic experience, and contextual expectations. Investigating whether male and female students differ in intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is therefore essential for developing a more nuanced understanding of motivational dynamics in EFL higher-education settings

7. Findings and Discussions

This chapter presents the findings of the study on gender differences in motivation towards learning English among Moroccan EFL learners. Descriptive statistics are first reported to provide an overview of students' motivational levels. Independent-samples t-tests and regression analyses are then used to examine whether gender significantly predicts intrinsic, extrinsic, and overall motivation. The findings are interpreted in

relation to established motivational theories and previous research in Second Language Acquisition.

7.1 Descriptive Statistics of Motivation Towards Learning English

Descriptive statistics were computed to provide an overview of students' motivation prior to inferential analyses. The analysis focused on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation across the whole sample. As shown in Table 5, intrinsic motivation scores were higher than extrinsic motivation scores.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Motivation Variables

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Extrinsic	3,2308	,72431	91
Participant Information	1,52	,502	91

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Intrinsic	3,7005	,54673	91
Participant Information	1,52	,502	91

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Intrinsic Motivation	3.63	0.55
Extrinsic Motivation	3.23	0.72

These results indicate that learners generally exhibit moderate to high levels of intrinsic motivation, suggesting that internal factors such as interest, enjoyment, and personal satisfaction are important in English learning. Extrinsic motivation is slightly lower, indicating that although external factors such as grades, examinations, and future employment opportunities play a role in motivating learners, they are less influential than intrinsic factors. These descriptive results provide a foundation for examining gender differences using independent-samples t-tests.

7.2 Gender Differences in Motivation

A. Intrinsic Motivation

Table 6. Gender Differences in Intrinsic Motivation

Group Statistics					
	Participant Information	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Intrinsic	1	44	3,5313	,60107	,09061
	2	47	3,8590	,44049	,06425

An independent-samples t-test revealed that female learners reported significantly higher levels of intrinsic motivation ($M = 3.80$) than their male counterparts did ($M = 3.46$). The difference was statistically significant, $t(89) = -3.50$, $p = .003$, with a moderate effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.64$).

Linear regression analysis further examined the predictive role of gender. The results show that gender significantly predicts intrinsic motivation, $\beta = 0.30$, $R^2 = 0.09$, $p = .003$, explaining approximately 9% of the variance.

These findings indicate that female gender is associated with higher intrinsic motivation, suggesting that female learners are more internally driven by enjoyment, interest, and personal satisfaction when learning English.

B. Extrinsic Motivation

Table 7. Gender Differences in Extrinsic Motivation
Group Statistics

Participant Information		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Extrinsic	1	44	3,2102	,77044	,11615
	2	47	3,2500	,68614	,10008

The independent-samples t-test indicated no statistically significant gender difference in extrinsic motivation ($M = 3.25$ for females; $M = 3.21$ for males; $t(89) = -0.26$, $p = .795$). Regression analysis confirmed that gender does not significantly predict extrinsic motivation ($p > .05$).

These results suggest that both male and female learners are similarly influenced by external factors, such as examinations, grades, and future employment opportunities, reflecting the impact of shared institutional and socio-educational pressures rather than gender-specific differences.

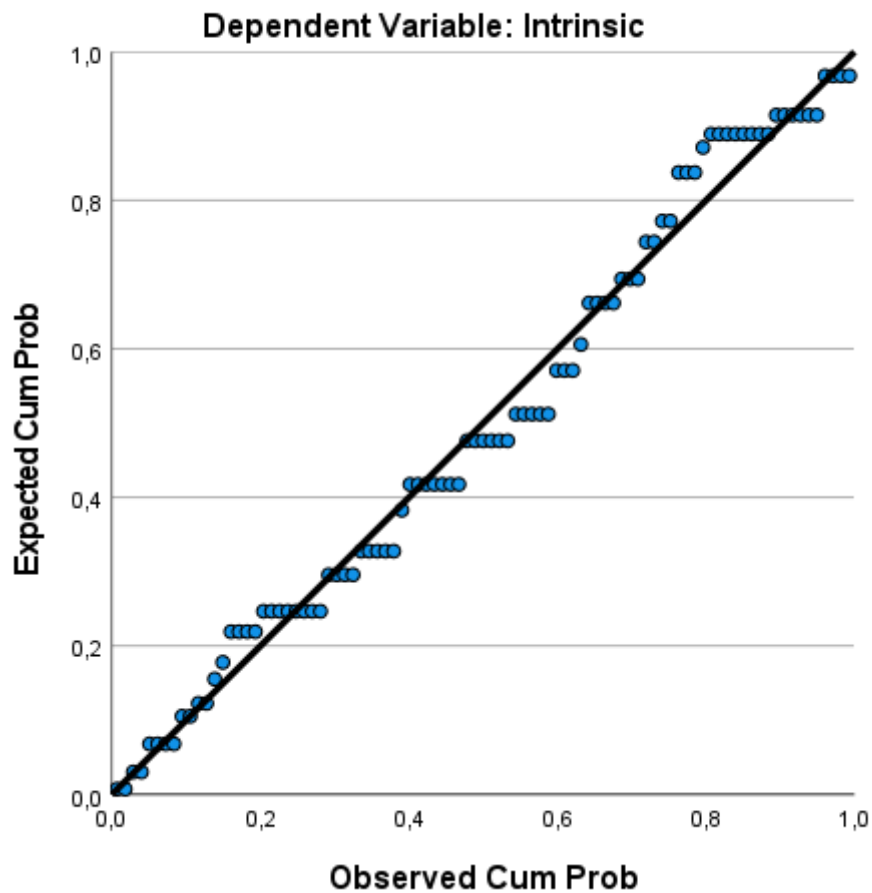
C. Overall Motivation

Table 8. Regression Analysis Predicting Overall Motivation

Coefficients^a					
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t
1	(Constant)	3,203	,176		18,244
	Participant Information	,328	,110	,301	2,981
					Sig.
					<,001
					,004

a. Dependent Variable: Intrinsic

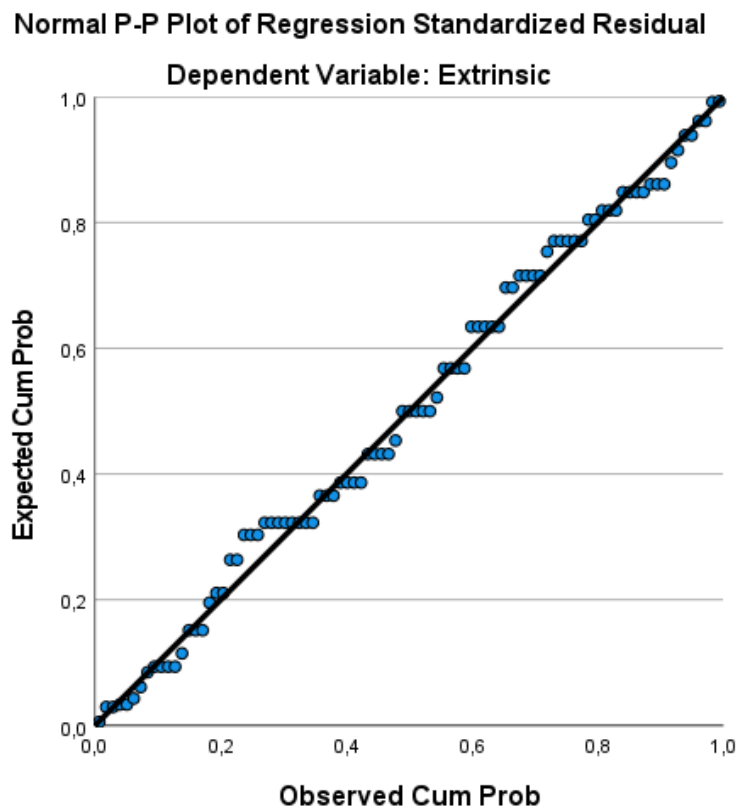
Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual



Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3,170	,244		13,001	<,001
	Participant Information	,040	,153	,028	,260	,795

a. Dependent Variable: Extrinsic



Regression analysis showed that gender does not significantly predict total motivation ($p > .05$), confirming that while gender influences intrinsic motivation, it does not affect overall motivational orientation.

7.3 Discussion

7.3.1 Intrinsic Motivation and Gender Differences

The present study found that female Moroccan EFL learners reported significantly higher intrinsic motivation than male learners, and that gender predicted intrinsic motivation in regression analysis. Descriptive statistics indicated a relatively high mean level of intrinsic motivation for the whole sample ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 0.55$), suggesting learners are generally driven by interest, enjoyment, and personal satisfaction in learning English. Female learners reported higher intrinsic motivation ($M = 3.80$) compared to male learners ($M = 3.46$), and an independent-samples t -test confirmed this difference as statistically significant, $t(89) = -3.50$, $p = .003$, with a moderate effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.64$).

These findings are consistent with previous research showing that female learners often exhibit stronger intrinsic engagement in language learning. For example, Mori and Gobel (2006) reported that Japanese female EFL learners demonstrated greater intrinsic interest than males, and Vallerand et al. (1992, 1993) found that females generally scored higher on intrinsic motivation scales across educational domains. Recent studies in the Moroccan context also support this pattern; El Bouhali (2019) found that female learners expressed greater enjoyment and personal commitment to English learning compared to

male learners. More recent research (Selly Miranti & Siboro, 2025) confirmed that female students in high-school EFL contexts exhibited higher motivational engagement for personal development and linguistic competence.

Socio-culturally, women in contexts like Morocco may perceive English proficiency as a route to social mobility and expanded career opportunities, which enhances internalized motivation (Benali, 2015). Psychologically, Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000) posits that intrinsic motivation is strengthened when learners' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are satisfied. Female learners may perceive English learning as personally meaningful, enabling them to internalize goals and engage deeply with the language. This is consistent with Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) L2 Motivational Self System, which emphasizes that learners' Ideal L2 Self — their vision of themselves as proficient English users in future academic or professional roles — can increase intrinsic motivation, particularly among females. Contemporary research also supports this, showing that learners with a clear future self-image exhibit stronger internal engagement (Chen & Zhang, 2024).

7.3.2 Extrinsic Motivation and the Absence of Gender Differences

In contrast to intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation showed no significant gender difference in the present study. Overall extrinsic motivation was moderate ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 0.72$), and both male ($M = 3.21$) and female learners ($M = 3.25$) reported similar levels, $t(89) = -0.26$, $p = .795$.

This aligns with recent findings showing that extrinsic motivation is largely context-driven. For example, a 2023 study on primary EFL learners reported no significant gender differences in extrinsic motivation when institutional pressures were uniform (Smith et al., 2023). Similarly, Mori and Göbel (2006) noted that extrinsic motives such as grades and career expectations often show minimal gender variation in structured educational contexts. In Morocco, both male and female university students face similar academic requirements and assessment systems (El Bouhali, 2019), which likely explains the absence of gender differences.

From the perspective of SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2000), extrinsic motivation is governed primarily by external regulation and introjected regulation, including academic obligations and career expectations. Because these pressures apply equally to all learners, males and females experience similar extrinsic motivation. Recent studies also emphasize that extrinsic motivation in SLA is highly context-sensitive, reflecting institutional demands rather than gender-specific identity factors (Chen & Zhang, 2024; Selly Miranti & Siboro, 2025).

7.3.3 Gender as a Predictor of Motivation: Regression Analysis

Regression analysis indicated that gender significantly predicts intrinsic motivation ($R^2 = 0.09$) but does not predict extrinsic or overall motivation. This suggests that gender selectively influences internally regulated forms of motivation, while externally regulated or combined motivational dimensions are largely unaffected.

This finding is supported by previous research showing that gender differences are more pronounced in intrinsic motivational orientations than in extrinsic regulation. For instance, Vallerand et al. (1992, 1993) and Mori and Göbel (2006) reported higher intrinsic motivation among female learners, while extrinsic motivation remained similar across genders. Contemporary SLA research also demonstrates that gender differences influence internal engagement and self-concept, even when overall motivation scores are comparable (Chen & Zhang, 2024; Selly Miranti & Siboro, 2025).

The moderate proportion of variance in intrinsic motivation explained by gender indicates that other individual and contextual factors — such as teaching practices, learning environment, and socio-cultural influences — also play an important role (Dörnyei, 2005). In contrast, extrinsic and overall motivation appear primarily influenced by uniform external pressures. This supports the L2 Motivational Self System distinction between internally driven Ideal L2 Self and externally imposed Ought-to L2 Self (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009), highlighting that gender affects learners' internal engagement but not the total level of motivation.

7.3.4 Theoretical and Policy Implications

The findings of this study have important theoretical and policy implications for EFL education. They provide empirical support for major second language acquisition motivational theories, including Self-Determination Theory, Gardner's socio-educational model, and Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System, confirming their relevance in explaining gender-based differences in intrinsic motivation. The results also highlight the dynamic and context-sensitive nature of motivation, showing that it is shaped by cultural norms, educational practices, and social expectations within specific learning environments. Based on these findings, curriculum designers and teacher education programs should integrate motivation-oriented and gender-aware pedagogical approaches in order to enhance learners' engagement and improve learning outcomes in EFL contexts.

7.4 General Conclusion

This study set out to investigate the relationship between gender and motivation toward learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) among Moroccan university students, with particular emphasis on intrinsic and extrinsic motivational orientations. Anchored in Self-Determination Theory and complemented by Gardner's socio-educational model and Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System, the research sought to provide context-specific empirical evidence from English departments at Mohammed V University and Cadi Ayyad University.

The findings confirm that motivation plays a central role in EFL learning and that its nature is multidimensional. Overall, students demonstrated moderate to high levels of motivation toward learning English, with intrinsic motivation emerging as more prominent than extrinsic motivation. These findings suggest that learners are motivated not only by external rewards and academic requirements but also by intrinsic factors such

as interest, enjoyment, and personal satisfaction derived from learning English. A key contribution of this study lies in its examination of gender differences in motivational orientations. The results revealed that female learners reported significantly higher levels of intrinsic motivation than male learners, and that gender was a significant predictor of intrinsic motivation. This suggests that female students are more internally engaged in learning English, likely due to stronger personal identification with the language and clearer future self-images as competent English users. These findings align with previous empirical research and support theoretical assumptions within Self-Determination Theory and the L2 Motivational Self System, which emphasize autonomy, internalization, and self-concept as drivers of intrinsic motivation.

In contrast, no significant gender differences were found in extrinsic motivation, nor did gender predict overall motivation. This indicates that external factors such as grades, examinations, institutional requirements, and career expectations exert similar influence on both male and female learners. Such results highlight the context-dependent nature of extrinsic motivation and suggest that shared academic environments and uniform assessment systems play a more decisive role than gender in shaping externally regulated motivation.

From a pedagogical perspective, the findings underscore the importance of fostering intrinsic motivation in EFL classrooms, particularly by adopting learner-centered and autonomy-supportive teaching practices. Encouraging meaningful engagement, supporting learners' sense of competence, and helping students develop positive future self-images can enhance sustained motivation and long-term language development. At the same time, educators should aim to balance extrinsic demands with opportunities for intrinsic engagement to ensure inclusive and effective learning environments for both genders.

Despite its contributions, the study is not without limitations. The relatively small sample size and the focus on two universities limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, reliance on self-reported questionnaire data may not fully capture the complexity of learners' motivational experiences. Future research could expand the scope to include larger and more diverse samples, adopt qualitative or mixed-method approaches, and explore additional variables such as proficiency level, learning strategies, or classroom environment.

In conclusion, this research reinforces the pivotal role of motivation in EFL learning and provides valuable insights into how gender relates to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation within a Moroccan university context. By offering empirical evidence and pedagogical implications, the study contributes to the broader field of Second Language Acquisition and supports the development of more responsive, equitable, and motivation-sensitive EFL instruction.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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https://www.researchgate.net/publication/392420829_The_Impact_of_Intercultural_Complications_on_Interpreting

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