

# AN EXAMINATION OF EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION EFFECTS ON STUDENTS IN LEARNING ENGLISH IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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## **Abstract**

Researchers in developed countries have explored various types of motivation effects on students' English language learning, yet these are not broadly studied in developing country contexts, especially in higher education institutions. Hence, the objective of the current study is to examine four types of extrinsic motivation in order to evaluate which one is the most effective factor for motivating students to study English better than before. A quantitative method was employed, and data was collected through a survey questionnaire. 105 students were randomly selected from a university, which is one of the best private universities in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The findings show that all four types of extrinsic motivation were crucial in being catalysts to push students to learn English better than before. The findings also revealed that external regulation ( $M = 4.89$ ,  $SD = 0.17$ ) was the most important factor among the other three types of extrinsic motivation. The results are vital for teachers of English and relevant stakeholders to motivate students to learn English. Finally, similar topics with a larger sample size should be conducted at other institutions across the country. Qualitative and mixed-method designs should also be considered.

**Keywords:** Cambodia, Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation, Four Types of Extrinsic Motivation

## **INTRODUCTION**

English is the most significant language in the world, which is known as the international language. It is learned by billions of persons either as a mother language, second language, or foreign language (Husna & Murtini, 2019). In the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), English is a second language in Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore, and it is a foreign language in Indonesia, Thailand as well as Cambodia (Clayton, 2007; Gumartifa & Sirajuddin, 2021). English plays a key role in both non-native English speakers' and native English speakers' communication. Nowadays, English is the most preferred foreign language in Cambodia since it is used as a part of the national education system starting from Grade 4 in primary school (Hang, 2011). Also, English is studied in private educational organizations from general educational schools to higher education institutions (Başıbek et al., 2014; Dearden & Macaro, 2016). To improve English learning for students in higher education in the Cambodian context, motivation acts as the factor that brings them to be successful in the learning process. It is a major part that determines success in foreign language learning (Afzal, 2010; Daif-Allah & Aljumah, 2020). Motivation is a crucial factor that plays a key role in reaching many essential goals in a students' academic life (Husna & Murtini, 2019; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Motivation is like a chemical drug that can push students to overcome obstacles in their studies, and it can encourage and guide students to reach desired outcomes (Gumartifa & Sirajuddin, 2021). Many educational leaders such as presidents, directors, principals, and teachers address that high motivation can inspire and encourage young Cambodian students from one generation to another one to study English and other subjects, and fulfill other activities (Hang, 2011). In addition, they believe that English is a significant

language for Cambodia's development and status (Moore & Bounchan, 2010), and it is important for international business, education, and other fields (Clayton, 2007). So, English is vital for students who are studying from general education to higher education institutions. Those who are fluent in English usually have full priority. They can get more benefits when they apply for a job, a scholarship, or request a promotion (Samokhina & Lertputtarak, 2017). Therefore, motivation is one of the most vital aspects influencing English and other foreign languages students, in terms of own-selves, families, community, and whole country improvement (Alizadeh, 2016).

Motivation is divided into two main dimensions which are intrinsic and extrinsic motivations which are dimensions of Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; 1991). Intrinsic motivation refers to motivation that stems directly from an action rather than a reward, while extrinsic comes from the influence from outside of oneself (Ryan & Deci, 2000; 2020). Ryan and Deci stated that extrinsic motivation refers to behavior that is driven by external rewards such as money, fame, grades, praise, or outcome. Extrinsically motivated behaviors are performed not out of interest but because they are believed to be instrumental to some separable consequence (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Extrinsic motivation comes from factors outside the individual, contrasting with intrinsic motivation which originates inside the individual (Lai, 2013; Ryan & Deci, 2020).

There are four types of extrinsic motivation included External regulation, Integrated regulation, Identified regulation, and Introjected regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2000; 2020; Samejon, 2015).

- a. External regulation refers to an intention to receive compliance, reward, and positive punishment. It refers to behaviors for which the locus of initiation is external to the person, for example, the offer of a reward or the threat of punishment or it refers to rules or behavior being practiced to avoid punishment or to gain rewards.
- b. Integrated regulation-identified strategies are congruent (similar/paralleled) with the person's values and needs. It refers to the individual's coherent sense of self; that is, the identifications are reciprocally integrated with the individual's values, needs, and identities.
- c. Identified regulation refers to the recognition of the importance of an action to achieve a goal. It occurs when the person has come to value the behavior and has identified with and accepted the regulatory process. The regulatory process in this identification has developed more completely a part of oneself, so the individual performs the activity more enthusiastically.
- d. Introjected regulation refers to the avoidance of guilt or anxiety. It refers to taking in but not accepting a regulation as one's own is the basis of introjected regulation. This type of extrinsic motivation refers to internalized rules or commands that force an individual to behave and are reinforced with threatened sanctions (e.g., guilt) or promised rewards (e.g., self-aggrandizement).

Moreover, many studies support that motivation, especially extrinsic motivation, is one of the most crucial factors in improving students learning of English (Ormrod & Jones, 2012). Gumartifa and Sirajuddin (2021) stated that students with high extrinsic motivation can learn English better than students with low extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation such as integrative and instrumental can also push students to learn English effectively. Also, students' outcome in learning English as a foreign language varies depending on different factors such as learning methodology, teachers' competence, family status, culture, and purpose in learning

English which are the factors of extrinsic motivation. Besides, Daif-Allah and Aljumah (2020) stated in their descriptive and correlational research which surveyed 247 Saudi male and female university students, that university students are highly motivated to learn English when they receive integrative and instrumental motivation.

Additionally, Alizadeh (2016) overviewed the role of motivation in second or foreign language learning. The review of the literature pointed out that motivation has a very essential role in learning English successfully. In addition, Samejon conducted a descriptive study related to the four types of extrinsic motivation in students' learning English. The result is presented as followingly: integrated regulation got the highest mean score ( $M = 4.37$ ) among the four extrinsic motivation factors, followed by external regulation ( $M = 4.16$ ), identified regulation ( $M = 4.15$ ), and introjected regulation ( $M = 4.01$ ). He further stated that external regulation happens when an activity is externally regulated through rewards or constraints (Samejon, 2015). Similarly, Rehman and colleagues surveyed 50 Pakistani intermediate students from a private college, they found out that students with highly instrumentally or extrinsically motivated received better outcomes in learning English (Rehman et al., 2014). Moreover, Moskovsky and colleagues addressed that instrumental motivation is the best factor for inspiring students in learning English (Moskovsky et al., 2013). In addition, quantitative research by Dital (2012) which surveyed language students at Mindanao State University, found that students who have a positive attitude toward English language learning are highly motivated both instrumentally and integratively. Also, Engin (2009) pointed out that the integrative motivation of English students depends on self-willingness and desire to achieve something. This shows that students who are enthusiastic about learning English have strong integrative motivation. Furthermore, Moiiinvaziri (2009) expressed that instrumental and integrated motivation are the major catalysts in motivating students to learn English better than before.

In the Cambodian context, there have been some studies regarding motivation in learning English. For example, Em et al. (2018) conducted a study with 60 high school students at a private high school in Phnom Penh to explore their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (see also Em et al., 2022). Another current study was conducted by Keo et al. (2022) with 93 Buddhist monk students to explore their motivation for learning English concerning motivation extent and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In another very recent study, Sor et al. (2022) conducted a study with 265 high school students in a province to explore their motivation for learning English with respect to overall motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and gender. As shown by the aforementioned evidence, intrinsic motivation alone does have a major impact on students' English learning. Once the students experience any kind of extrinsic motivation, their learning can somehow be improved. Even though numerous studies have looked into the four categories of extrinsic motivation, their findings have not been extensively discussed (Alizadeh, 2016). Similar to this, none of the extrinsic motivation types for learning the English language, particularly in higher education institutions, has been studied in the Cambodian context. As a result, the objective of this study is to evaluate the four types of extrinsic motivation in order to determine which one is the most successful in encouraging students to study English more effectively than they previously did. The study's findings will also be able to close some existing knowledge gaps.

## METHOD

The current study utilized the quantitative research design and a statistical package for the social sciences (version 23) for analyzing the data. Besides, this research mainly used descriptive

statistics to show the value of mean (M) and standard deviation (SD). Also, the simple random sampling technique is applied in this study. 105 respondents who were randomly selected, were bachelor’s degree students in one of the best private universities in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, in the academic year 2021-2022. In addition, the survey questionnaire contained two sections. The first section is the demographic data, and the second section encloses four types of extrinsic motivation. The researcher suggested respondents read each statement and circle the number that applies to them based on the rating scales such as 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. The researcher addressed that there are no correct or incorrect answers since the information gathered from the individual questionnaire is analyzed for research purposes only. Furthermore, the questionnaire was distributed to respondents physically based on Standard Operation Procedures required by the Ministry of Health in fighting with the Covid-19.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

There are two sections in the questionnaire. The first section contains three questions that seek demographic data from respondents. The second section encloses the extrinsic motivational factor. The proportions are identified in the following.

#### Demographic Information (N = 105)

**Table 1.** Participants’ Demographic Information

Demographics	Values	N	Percentages
Genders	Male	59	56.20
	Female	46	43.80
Ages	17-19	20	19.00
	20-22	68	64.80
	23-25	15	14.30
	26 and over	2	1.90
Education Levels	First Year	24	22.90
	Second Year	21	20.00
	Third Year	41	39.00
	Fourth Year	19	18.10

As shown in Table 1 above, 105 students participated in the study. Based on the table, among 105 respondents, 56.20% or 59 respondents are males, and 43.80%, or 46 respondents are females. Also, the majority of respondents are males. Besides, the age group includes 17 to 19 years old equals 20 respondents or 19%; 20 to 22 years old equals 68 respondents or 64.80%; 23 to 25 years old is 15 respondents or 14.30%, and 26 years old and over equals 2 respondents or 1.90%. The majority of respondents age between 20-22 years old. In addition, there are 24 respondents, or 22.90% who are in the first year, 21 respondents, or 20% who are in the second year, 41 respondents, or 39% who are in the third, and 19 respondents, or 18.10% who are in the fourth year.

**The Four Types of Extrinsic Motivation**

**Table 2.** External Regulation

No.	Statements	M	SD
1.	Studying English is important because I will need it for my career.	4.99	0.09
2.	Knowing English is a really important goal in my life.	4.84	0.37
3.	Studying English is important because it will make me more educated and get scholarships.	5.00	0.00
4.	I want to learn English so well that I may promote to my position and increase my salary.	4.71	0.48
Total External Regulation		4.89	0.17

Note: Mean score of 1.00-1.80 = Lowest, 1.81-2.60 = Low, 2.61-3.40 = Moderate, 3.41-4.20 = High, and 4.21-5.00 = Highest

Table 2 shows the external regulation. The overall mean score of M = 4.89 and the small Standard Deviation (SD) of 0.17 shows a positive point that external regulation has significant influences on students to learn the English language since it is vital for their future career, to achieve important life goals, to get scholarship abroad, to be promoted at the workplace as well as to increase salary.

**Table 3.** Integrated Regulation

No.	Statements	M	SD
5.	Studying English is important because it will be useful for getting a good job and easy to talk with people who speak English.	4.68	0.49
6.	Studying English is important because it will allow me to meet and converse with more varied people.	4.05	0.66
7.	I always keep up to date with English to develop my work to be better.	4.35	0.55
8.	I plan to learn as much English as possible for developing my study.	4.69	0.51
Total Integrated Regulation		4.44	0.30

Table 3 identifies the integrated regulation. The overall mean score of M = 4.44, SD = 0.30 exhibits a positive point that integrated regulation has major effects on students to learn the English language since it is significant for them to get a good job and talk to people who speak English, to meet and converse with various people, to improve their work and to develop their study.

**Table 4.** Identified Regulation

No	Statements	M	SD
9.	Studying English is important because other people will respect me more if I know English.	3.98	1.07
10.	I don't bother checking my assignments when I get them back from my English teacher, and I feel confident when I am asked to speak English in my English and/or other classes.	4.27	0.91
11.	English is a very important part of the school program/curriculum.	4.73	0.54
12.	I look forward to class because my English teacher has good abilities and is well-prepared.	4.66	0.59
Total Identified Regulation		4.41	0.55



Table 4 displays the identified regulation. The overall mean score of  $M = 4.41$ , and  $SD = 0.55$  presents a positive result showing that identified regulation has crucial effects on students to learn the English language because they are aware of the importance of the English language in school, in the workplace, and society. Moreover, table 4 shows that students are enthusiastic to learn English when their teachers of English have good abilities and are well-prepared ( $M = 4.66$ ,  $SD = 0.59$ ).

**Table 5.** Introjected Regulation

No.	Statements	M	SD
13	My English teacher has a dynamic and interesting teaching style.	4.63	0.64
14	My English teacher is one of the best pleasant people I know.	4.48	0.74
15	My English teacher is a great source of inspiration for me.	4.59	0.88
16	My English teacher always interestingly presents the materials.	4.52	0.68
Total Introjected Regulation		4.53	0.61

Table 5 expresses the introjected regulation. The overall mean score of  $M = 4.53$  and  $SD = 0.61$  displays an optimistic outcome that introjected regulation has vital effects on learners learning the English language. In addition, the result shows that students can learn well depending on teachers' interesting teaching styles, personalities, inspiration, and knowledge.

## Discussion

As shown in the tables above, each type of extrinsic motivation is important to help students learn English better than before; furthermore, the outcomes indicate that external regulation ( $M = 4.89$ ,  $SD = 0.17$ ) has the most significant effects on higher education students learning English. Furthermore, the result states that introjected regulation ( $M = 4.53$ ,  $SD = 0.61$ ) has stronger effects on students' learning than integrated regulation ( $M = 4.44$ ,  $SD = 0.30$ ) and identified regulation ( $M = 4.41$ ,  $SD = 0.55$ ). Besides, identified regulation ( $M = 4.41$ ,  $SD = 0.55$ ) has the least effectiveness among the four types. Although it has the least mean score among other types, this identified regulation is also essential in improving students' learning of English in higher education. In addition, the current results show similar points that all four types of extrinsic motivation have significant effects on improving students learning of English successfully (Samejon, 2015). Similarly, a study by Rehman et al. (2014) also supports the current research result showing that extrinsic motivation can enhance English language students' learning outcomes (Ditual, 2012; Engin, 2009; Moiiinvaziri, 2008; Rehman et al., 2014). However, the current findings stated that external regulation is the strongest motivational factor whereas the previous studies by Gumartifa and Sirajuddin (2021), Daif-Allah and Aljumah (2020), and Alizadeh (2016), indicated that integrative and instrumental motivation factors can push university students to learn English effectively and successfully.

## CONCLUSION

Four types of extrinsic motivation such as integrated regulation, external regulation, identified regulation, and introjected regulation have significant effects on students' learning English. Notably, the outcomes indicate that external regulation is the most important effect on higher education students learning English. Moreover, other types of extrinsic motivation influence higher education students learning English, too. According to the current research results, teachers of English, the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport, and other relevant stakeholders should motivate students to learn English by using these four types of extrinsic motivation. Finally, the author suggests that teachers should always evaluate students' learning and academic achievement (Nhor et al., 2022), get ready in using technology to teach (Pang et al.,

2022), and develop their profession regularly (Em et al., 2021) so that they can improve their students' learning motivation. Limitations are typical in all studies. Similar to this, the present study suggests that studies on related topics be conducted at other universities across the nation with a bigger sample size. A qualitative and mixed-method approach should also be taken into account.

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