

Fahmida Akhter\*  
Rifat Ara Shova\*\*

## Investigating Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations in the Tertiary Level EFL Learners: A Survey Conducted on Private Universities in Bangladesh

### ABSTRACT

Motivations, both intrinsic and extrinsic, are known as stimulants for achieving success in EFL learning. As motivation is an individual learner difference, an EFL teacher's first step is to investigate the learners' motivational levels as well as types to understand the learners' concerns for learning. This study investigates whether and to what extent tertiary level students studying at private universities in Bangladesh are intrinsically and extrinsically motivated. It also examines whether intrinsic or extrinsic is a more fruitful motivation that fosters them to get success in learning English. This study is based on a questionnaire survey. The subjects in this study are one hundred and thirty students of three private universities located in Dhaka. The results of the study are meant to bring a deep insight of their motivational levels regarding intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. The study also discusses the limitations of the findings along with the implication for further studies.

**Keywords:** Motivation; intrinsic motivation; extrinsic motivation; teacher; learner; EFL

### 1. Introduction

**M**otivation is one of the key factors of mastering a second or foreign language. Gilakjani, Leong and Saburi (2012, p. 10) believe, "the success of any action is dependent on the extent to which persons try to get their goal along with their desire to do so." Due to the lack of motivation even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot

---

\* **Fahmida Akhter:** Assistant Professor, Department of English, Bangladesh, University of Business and Technology (BUBT), Dhaka, Bangladesh.

\*\* **Rifat Ara Shova:** Lecturer, Department of English, Bangladesh, University of Business and Technology (BUBT), Dhaka, Bangladesh.

accomplish long term goals, and appropriate curricula as well as effective teaching cannot ensure learner's achievement (Ng & Ng, 2015, p. 33). That is why motivation is an essential part of learning a second or foreign language. In Bangladesh, varieties in proficiency concerning English language of tertiary level learners in private universities are higher as they hardly face any admission test. Besides, they are from different backgrounds: some are from English medium, others are from Bangla medium. Moreover, their previous classroom cultures are different. Again, they are from rural as well as urban areas. In these circumstances, learners especially of rural areas and Bangla medium hardly cope up with the learning situations where the instructions are in English and selected texts are written in English (Zaman, 2015, p. 134). As a result, their anxiety grows up and this leads them towards demotivation. As motivation plays a vital role in the advancement of second and foreign language learning, teachers have a lot of accountabilities to initiate learners' motivation and keep it thriving throughout the learning process (Tonni, 2018, p.58). To activate students' motivation, teachers' initial step should be to determine their (students) motivational levels and types. If teachers know about students' motivational level, it assists them to apply fruitful materials and effective teaching strategies. Besides, they can choose the techniques to encourage the learners for ELL properly. Moreover, if students' motivational level is low, teachers can take initiative to enrich their level of motivation.

The purpose of the study is to examine the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of tertiary level students at the private universities in Bangladesh, with the aim of answering the question whether the students are intrinsically and extrinsically motivated and to what extent. It also investigates whether intrinsic or extrinsic is a more fruitful motivation that advances them to succeed in learning English.

### **1.1 Research Questions**

In order to fulfill the objectives, the study addresses the following research questions:

- Whether and to what extent are the tertiary level students at the private universities in Bangladesh intrinsically and extrinsically motivated?
- Which is more effective motivation, intrinsic or extrinsic, that advances them to get success in learning English?

## **2. Literature Review**

Motivation is considered as one of the most significant individual learner differences. It is quite complex to define motivation in one single sentence.

### 2.1 Definition of Motivation

In language learning, motivation has been defined in different ways. According to Oxford and Shearin (1994), motivation is a desire to gain an objective, combined with the energy to work towards that objective. Motivation, as Gredler, Broussard and Garrison (2004) stated, is the attribute that moves as to do or not to do something. According to Gardner (1985), motivation is a combination of attempt plus desire to obtain the aim of learning the language plus favorable attitudes toward learning the language (cited in Tonni, 2018, p. 57). Dornyei (2001, p. 169) states,

“The motivational individual is persistent and attentive to the task at hand, has goals,

desires and aspirations, enjoys activity, experiences reinforcement from success and

disappointment from failure, makes attribution concerning success or failure, is aroused and makes use of strategies to aid in achieving goals.”

So, motivation is a type of psychological device that comprises energy, want, task enjoyment and achievement of an aim.

### 2.2 Types of Motivation

There are different types of motivation identified by different ELT practitioners. According to Brown (1981), there are three types of motivation: (i) global motivation consists of a general orientation to the goal of learning an L2, (ii) situational motivation varies according to the situations in which learning takes place, (iii) task motivation refers to the encouragement of participating in specific learning tasks. Besides, the other forms of motivation are integrative and instrumental motivations. Integrative motivation indicates learners' interest concerning the culture of the target language. Gardner and Lambert (1959) state that integrative motivation refers to learn a foreign language for personal growth and cultural enrichment (as cited in Alizadeh, 2016, p. 12). Integrative motivation as Brown (1987, p. 85) points out is “typical of a learner who wishes to integrate him or her within the culture of second language group with the intention of entering the community.” In other words, an integratively motivated learner tries to find out opportunities to know about the language, the target culture, its people etc. On the contrary, instrumental motivation arises to get good marks, to get good results etc. Instrumentally motivated learners involve in learning the target language so that they can develop their careers, achieve prestige and power or pass a course (Savile-Troike, 2006, p. 86). According to Gardner and Lambert (1959) instrumental motivation arises out of a desire to study the L2 for functional or external reasons. They involve the success of functional aims like passing exams and financial rewards (as cited in Alizadeh, 2016, p. 12).

Dornyei (1998) identifies two types of motivation: (i) extrinsic motivation and (ii) intrinsic motivation (as cited in Alizadeh, 2016, p.12). Dornyei (1998, p. 126) postulates, “Intrinsic motivation refers to the motivation to engage learners in an activity that is enjoyable and satisfying to do.” It occurs when learners move to do something for fun, as a challenge, or as an internal desire towards the task, rather than for external outcomes” (Alqurashi, 2019, p. 89). For intrinsically motivated learners “learning is a goal in itself” (Ng & Ng, 2015, p. 98). So, in intrinsic motivation the pleasure of participating in the task itself is considered as the reward. On the other hand, “Extrinsic motivation is the motivation that achieves some instrumental end, such as earning a reward, or avoiding a punishment” (Dornyei, 1998). So, this type of motivation that “comes from outside the individual” (Ng & Ng, 2015, p. 98) is related with specific goal and achievement of the individual.

### **2.3 The Importance of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations in EFL Learning**

Pardee (1990) says that a motive is what encourages the person to act in a certain way or develop an inclination of particular behavior. So, motivation is a process which needs to be activated always and it leads individuals to show or prove their potentiality. Studies show that a balance between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation helps a learner to get success in ELL. Extrinsic motivation assists learners to be focused and competitive. On the contrary, intrinsic motivation is related to inner aspiration to achieve the goal. According to Dornyei (1998, p. 130), stimulating learners’ intrinsic motivation is an urgency because they learn better when they are motivated intrinsically . However, promoting both types of motivation help students “develop good study habits and an investment in learning” (Gardner, 2010).

### **2.4 Studies on Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations in EFL Learning**

Some studies revealed that most of the learners had extrinsic (outside of themselves) motivation in comparison with intrinsic motivation to learn English because their parents wanted them to learn. Manap’s study (2018, p. 145) found that the tertiary level of students of Afghanistan rely more on extrinsic motivation than intrinsic motivation in learning EFL. However, some researches show that the EFL learners possess intrinsic motivation rather than extrinsic motivation to learn English. Ziahosseini and Salehi’s study in 2008 found out on their study in the tertiary level of students of Iran that they are more intrinsically motivated than extrinsically motivated. This study investigates whether and to what extent the students of private universities of Bangladesh are extrinsically or intrinsically motivated to learn English in the tertiary level. It also explores whether and to what extent

intrinsic or extrinsic is a more effective motivation that leads them to be more successful in English language learning.

### 3. Methodology

This is a quantitative study in which the researchers have used a questionnaire as a data collection tool because it is easy to collect a wide range of data within a short time by a questionnaire.

#### 3.1 Measures

The participants have responded to a likert-type questionnaire. The self-tailored survey instrument consists of 16 items. The items are designed to bring out responses following a five-point likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The questionnaire has been administered by the researchers themselves where they distributed the copies of it among the participants. Before distributing the questionnaire, the researchers have clarified the purposes of the study. The participants have filled in the copies of questionnaire in front of the researchers and returned to them after completion.

#### 3.2 Procedure

The data have been analyzed using the SPSS program. The researchers have used the descriptive statistics (percentages, means, and grand means) to measure each item. In this study, a five point Likert type scale has been used to specify participants' levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. The researchers have used the scale in the questionnaire to measure the levels of the agreement and disagreement based on the following criteria:

Mean range	Interpretation
3.68- 5.00	High degree of motivation
2.34-3.67	Moderate degree of motivation
1.00-2.33	Low degree of motivation

#### 3.3 Sampling

The researchers used the convenience sampling technique to select the respondents in the study. A number of one hundred and thirty undergraduate students of first year in the Department of English at BUBT (Bangladesh University of Business and Technology), PU (Prime University) and GUB (Green University of Bangladesh) were used as samples.

### 4. Results of and Discussion on the Findings

Results of and discussion on the findings based on the quantitative data are given below:

#### 4.1. Measurement of Participants' Intrinsic Motivation towards English Language Learning

Items 1 to 8 have been applied by the researchers to measure whether and to what extent the participants of the study are intrinsically motivated towards English language learning.

**Table 1**

Item no	Statement	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	Meaning
1	I have a great desire to learn English.	10.35%	1.24%	6.15%	50%	32.31%	2.07	Low
2	I enjoy learning English.	5.03%	3.85%	4.62%	46.50%	40%	1.87	Low
3	In English classes, I enjoy working in pairs or small groups.	6.82%	13.85%	20.08%	14.07%	45.2%	2.23	Low
4	In English classes, I like reading extracts from English books, articles, newspapers, magazines, etc.	2.32%	6.15%	20.77%	44.62%	26.15%	2.14	Low
5	The pictures used in the English books draw my attention to learn English.	13.28%	47.69%	27.49%	6.16%	5.38%	3.57	Moderate
6	In English classes, I ask questions for learning new things.	4.61%	6.15%	8.46%	37.7%	43.08%	1.92	Low

7	In English classes, I love to participate in tasks which are more complex.	13.28%	3.84%	23.08%	32.31%	27.49%	2.43	Moderate
8	In English classes, if I get stuck in any activity, I try to solve individually.	3.84%	13.85%	16.92%	37.70%	27.69%	2.28	Low
Grand Mean							2.31	Low

5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=undecided, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree

Table 1 depicts that the participants possess a low degree of intrinsic motivation to learn English with the average mean score of 2.31. The statement number 5 (The pictures used in the English books draw my attention to learn English.) has the highest mean score which is 3.57 and is considered as a moderate level of intrinsic motivation for learning English. In addition, the statement number 7 (In English classes, I love to participate in tasks which are more complex.) shows participants' moderate levels of intrinsic motivation concerning English language learning with the mean score of 2.43. However, the statement number 8 (In English classes, if I get stuck in any activity, I try to solve individually.), 3 (In English classes, I enjoy working in pairs or small groups.), 4 (In English classes, I like reading extracts from English books, articles, newspapers, magazines, etc.), 1 (I have a great desire to learn English.) and 6 (In English classes, I ask questions for learning new things.) show participants' low levels of intrinsic motivation concerning English language learning with the mean scores of 2.28, 2.23, 2.14, 2.07 and 1.92 respectively. Again, the statement number 2 (I enjoy learning English.) has the lowest mean score of 1.87 which is regarded as a low degree of intrinsic motivation towards English language learning.

#### 4.2. Measurement of Participants' Extrinsic Motivation towards English Language Learning

Items 9 to 16 have been applied by the researchers to measure whether and to what extent the participants of the study are extrinsically motivated towards English language learning.

**Table 2**

Item no	Statement	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	Meaning
9	In English classes, I participate in exercises or activities actively to avoid being scolded by teachers.	29.23 %	30.77 %	15.38 %	13.07 %	11.55 %	3.53	Moderate
10	I try to learn English very well; otherwise, my parents rebuke me.	34.62 %	27.69 %	8.46 %	12.30 %	16.93 %	3.51	Moderate
11	I am interested in learning English to get praise from my parents.	31.54 %	30%	10%	10.77 %	17.69 %	3.47	Moderate
12	In English classes, I perform well so that I can achieve praise from my teachers.	50%	16.92 %	11.55 %	15.38 %	6.15 %	3.81	High
13	In English classes, I ask questions in order to please my teachers.	34.62 %	23.08 %	9.22 %	13.08 %	20%	3.39	Moderate
14	In English classes, I dislike to participate in difficult activities.	21.54 %	34.62 %	6.92 %	19.23 %	17.69 %	3.23	Moderate
15	If I do not comprehend something right way in English classes, I prefer teachers to solve the problem.	26.15 %	29.23 %	10%	22.31 %	12.31 %	3.35	Moderate
16	I try to perform well in English classes to get good grades.	39.23 %	25.38 %	18.47 %	10.77 %	6.15 %	3.89	High
Grand Mean							3.52	Moderate

5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=undecided, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree

Table 2 reveals that the respondents have a moderate degree of extrinsic motivation concerning English language learning. This is shown clearly by the average mean score of 3.52. The statement number 12 (In English classes, I perform well so that I can achieve praise from my teachers.) and 16 (I try to perform well in English classes to get good grades.) have the high mean scores which are 3.81 and 3.89 respectively. Afterwards, the statement number 9 (In English classes, I participate in exercises or activities



actively to avoid being scolded by teachers.), 10 ( I try to learn English very well; otherwise, my parents rebuke me.), 11 (I am interested in learning English to get praise from my parents.), 13 (In English classes I ask questions in order to please my teachers.) and 15 (If I do not comprehend something right way in English classes, I prefer teachers to solve the problem.) depict respondents' moderate levels of extrinsic motivation for learning English with the mean scores of 3.53, 3.51, 3.47, 3.39 and 3.35 respectively. However, the statement number 14 (In English classes, I dislike to participate in difficult activities.) shows the lowest mean score of 3.23 which is considered as a moderate degree of extrinsic motivation regarding English language learning.

#### 4.3. The comparison between participants' intrinsic and extrinsic motivations towards English language learning

**Table 3**

<b>Motivation</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Intrinsic motivation	2.31	Low
Extrinsic motivation	3.52	Moderate
Grand mean	2.92	Moderate

Table 3 presents the comparison between participants' intrinsic and extrinsic motivations to learn English. The average mean score of their extrinsic motivation (3.52) is higher than that of intrinsic motivation (2.31) for learning English. It can be stated that extrinsic motivation is more effective that promotes them to get success in learning English than intrinsic motivation. However, the average mean score of both types of motivation is 2.92 that demonstrates their moderate level of motivation towards English language learning.

#### 5. Limitations of the Study, Implications for Further Study and Conclusion

This quantitative study investigates whether and to what extent students of selected private universities in Bangladesh are intrinsically and extrinsically motivated for learning English. It also finds out whether intrinsic or extrinsic motivation is more fruitful for encouraging them to get success in learning English. The findings reveal that the participants possess a moderate degree of extrinsic motivation, and have a low degree of intrinsic motivation. Besides, based on the evaluation it is seen that extrinsic motivation is more efficient that advances the participants to achieve success in learning English than intrinsic motivation. The educators get a better understanding of tertiary level students' motivational level from the findings of the study, and they

can take initiatives to enhance their intrinsic motivation since this type of motivation is significant in achieving a goal. Besides, they can apply teaching strategies that focus on students' extrinsic motivation as this is more effective to succeed in English language learning. However, this study is not out of its limitations. The results might have been different if the study had received more participants. Besides, sometimes the subjects of the quantitative studies do not fulfill the questionnaires indifferently that make the findings unreliable. If the study had dealt qualitative data together with quantitative data, the results may have been more valid. So, further studies can be conducted including these issues. It can be stated that in spite of its limitations this study provides an edifying picture regarding levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of tertiary level students at the selected private universities in Bangladesh.

**Appendix 1**  
**Questionnaire**  
**On**  
**Investigating Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations in the Tertiary Level**  
**EFL Learners: A Survey Conducted on the Private Universities in**  
**Bangladesh**

Name: ..... Department: .....

Gender: ..... Semester: .....

Please give your opinion about the statements below by ticking one answer for each.

5= strongly agree, 4=Agree, 3=Undecided, 2=Disagree, 1=strongly disagree

**References**

- Alqurashi, F. (2019). The Effects of Motivation on EFL College Students' Achievement. *Studies in English Language Teaching*, 7 (1), 83-98.
- Alizadeh, M. (2016). The impact of motivation on English language learning. *International Journal of Research in English Education*, 1 (1), 11-15.
- Brown, A. L (1987). Metacognition, executive control, self-regulation, and other more mysterious mechanisms. In F. E. Weinert & R. H. Kluwe, (Eds.) *Metacognition, motivation, and understanding* (pp. 65-116). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Studies in English Language Teaching*, 7 (1), 83-98 . doi: 10.22158/selt.v7n1p83

- Brown, H.D. (1981). Affective Factors in Second Language Learning in J. Alatis, H. Altman, and P. Alatis (eds.). *The Second Language Classroom: Directions for the 1980s*. Oxford University Press: New York.
- Dornyei, Z. (1998). Motivation in second and foreign language learning. *Language Teaching*, 31, 117-135. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0261>.
- Dornyei, Z. (2001). *Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017>.
- Gardner, R. C., & Lambert, W. E. (1959). Motivational variables in second language acquisition. *Canadian Journal of Psychology*, 13, 266-272. doi:10.1037/h0083787
- Gardner, R. C. (2010). *Motivation and second language acquisition: The socio-educational modal*. New York, Peter Lang Publishing.
- Gilakjani, P. A., Leong, L. M., & Saburi, N. B. (2012). Study on the role of motivation in foreign language learning and teaching. *I.J. Modern Education and Computer Science*, 7, 9-16.
- Gredler, M.E., Broussard, S.C. and Garrison, M.E. (2004) The relationship between classroom motivation and academic achievement in elementary school aged children. *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal*, 33, 106-120. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077727X04269573>
- Manap, M. R. (2018). Motivation in English Language Learning: A Case Study of Afghanistan Students in Malaysia. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327835208>
- Ng, C.F. & Ng, P.K. (2015). The Motivation of English Language Teachers in a Language Center. Research Gate. 32-36.
- Oxford, R. & Shearin, J. (1994). Language Learning Motivation: Expanding the Theoretical Framework. *The Modern Language Journal*. 78 (1).
- Pardee, R. L. (1990). Motivation theories of Maslow, Herzberg, McGregor & McClelland.: A literature review of selected theories dealing with job satisfaction and motivation. *ERIC*.
- Saville-Troike, M. (2006). *Introducing Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tonni, K.R. (2018). Remembering the name of the students': A motivational factor for ELT learners at Dhaka University. *International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Scientific Research (IJAMSR)*, 1(3), 56-69.
- Zaman, J (2015). *Role of Motivation in Second Language Learning: A study of Private University Students in Bangladesh* (Master's thesis). BRAC Institute of Languages, Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- Ziahosseini, M., & Salehi, M. (2008). An Investigation of the Relationship between Motivation and Language Learning Strategies. *Pazhuhesh-e Zabanha-ye Khareji*, 41, 85-107.