

Exploring The Influence of Value Components on Learners' Motivation

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i7/21080>

DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i7/21080

Published Date: 02 July 2024

Abstract

In learning a foreign language, learners' motivation is always the centre of topic in the academic world. Most researchers seem to agree that motivation is responsible for determining human behaviour by energising it and giving it direction. The objective of this quantitative study is to explore the influence of value components on learner's motivation in learning French as a Foreign Language. The data collected from 124 undergraduates at public university in Malaysia. The finding is rooted from Fowler (2018) and this study used a 5-point Likert Scale instrument consisting of 4 sections. Section A has items on demographic profile. Section B has 12 items on expectancy. Section C has 14 items on value and section D has 12 items on social support. A strong positive correlation was found between all the variables to motivate learners in learning a foreign language. It is recommended that the studies on motivation to learn French as a foreign language in Malaysia be further explored from a variety of perspectives and theories.

Keywords: Motivation, French as a Foreign Language, Expectancy, Value, Social Support

Introduction

Background of Study

What motivates learners to learn a foreign language can be seen as an internal and external factor. There are two types of motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic. Deci & Ryan (2000) defined intrinsic motivation as motivation that comes from the individual and leads to enjoyment of the learning process and increases student competence in learning an academic task; extrinsic motivation is the achievement or avoidance of something external to oneself. Students with extrinsic motivation work towards achieving a desired grade or external rewards such as

awards or money. As learning French in Malaysia can be a huge obstacle for learners, this will lead to demotivation. There are many other factors which determine learners' motivation. Despite the awareness of the higher authorities of the country, research studies on foreign languages seem to be lacking in Malaysia particularly regarding the learning of French as a foreign language. Thus, this study aims at investigating the influence of value components on learner's motivation.

Statement of Problem

Educators aspire for students who exhibit motivation and autonomy in their learning endeavors, as these qualities embody the ideal learner. In learning a new language, learners are propelled by extrinsic and/or intrinsic motivations. According to Ajmal et al (2021), both types of motivations co-exist and are crucial in helping students to overcome the challenges in learning a foreign language. In another study, Muñoz-Restrepo et al (2020) found that intrinsic motivation plays a more important role in ensuring students enjoyment and success in learning any subject. Motivation could also come from the instrumentality or practicality in learning a new language, the usefulness of the language (Rahmat, 2022).

Research findings regarding students' motivation and satisfaction in online learning amidst the pandemic exhibit divergent outcomes. Chen et al (2020) underscored the significance of platform accessibility over learners' individual characteristics in influencing motivation levels, while Rahmat et al (2021) identified differential perceptions among learners regarding the favorability of certain factors and the unfavorability of others in their online learning encounters.

Therefore, it is important that teachers can identify the diversity of learners' motivations and understand the reasons why they want to learn the language. Furthermore, it is crucial to keep in mind that learners' motivations could also change based on the situation. Hence, this study attempts to explore the relationship of expectancy, value, and social support as motivation for learning French as a foreign language in the context of tertiary education in Malaysia.

Objective of the Study and Research Questions

This study is done to explore perception of learners on their use of learning strategies. Specifically, this study is done to answer the following questions.

- How does expectancy influence learners' motivation?
- How do value components influence learners' motivation?
- How does social support influence learners' motivation?
- Is there a relationship between all motivational components?

Literature Review

Demotivation and Motivation to Learn Online

Described by Ely (1986) as "an internal state that arouses, directs and maintains behaviour", students who obtain higher motivation levels tend to be more successful and efficient in their learning. Plus, motivation is regarded as a vital role in both the process of language: learning and teaching. It is a concept defined as a motivating force that boosts human behaviour. By referencing a milieu of Language Second (L2), the notion of motivation portrayed a positive influence in initiating an interest in learning a new language. In addition, Reinders and Beson (2017) underline that by using technology-enhanced learning, students can develop motivation and effective support from other learners and also be able to make language

learning interaction more meaningful. However, in the education domain, there exists a study concerning the antonym for the word “motivation” which is “demotivation”. Nowadays, demotivation has become an area of research that captivates the attention of educationalists (Jahedizadeh & Ghanizadeh, 2015; Molavi & Biria, 2013; Zhang, 2007). Demotivation, as outlined by Dornyei (2001), is a “definite exterior force that weakens and eliminates the motivation basis of a behaviour intention or a continuing action”. Demotivation can occur in a situation where students develop different language skills, specifically speaking skills. In class, in a particular context like Iran, most teachers tend to employ the Grammar Translation method. Moreover, in foreign language education, speaking is categorized as an ignored skill and is considered the most complex and difficult skill to acquire (Ur, 1996).

Past Studies on Online Learning Motivation

Accentuated by Mayer (2013), effective motivational features can be developed by adding appealing graphics or by inserting a challenging scenario that does not perturb the process of learning. Thus, this highlights the importance of implementing captivating content in online courses because it somehow influences the level of students’ motivation (Ayan, 2015). Many studies shine a light on online learning motivation. Isiguzel (2014) has led a study that addresses the identical concept, focusing on motivation in online learning. The primary objective of this investigation is to define the outcomes of motivation and success in the integration of blended learning environments within the domain of foreign language classes, specifically German language. The study involved the selection of 62 students who were subsequently categorized into two groups: the experimental group, comprising 35 students, and the control group, consisting of the remaining 27 students. The experimental group underwent a regimen of 14 hours of online instruction and 6 hours of conventional face-to-face learning, while the control group received exclusively 6 hours of traditional face-to-face instruction. The empirical data were collected subsequent to a 10-week application, employing both the auxiliary German course achievement test and the German Language Learning Motivation Scale. The outcomes indicate that participants in German language classes exposed to a blended learning environment exhibited heightened levels of success and motivation when juxtaposed with their counterparts experiencing traditional learning approaches.

A similar concept of project was done by (Nishio et al., 2020). The study examines language learning motivation development in American student Jason through a Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) project with a Japanese institution. Utilizing activity theory, the qualitative case study analyzes Jason's artifacts, interviews, and fieldnotes, illustrating transformative processes. Findings show negotiation and transformation of pre-COIL motives, reversing linguistic demotivation by positively reassessing oral skills, fostering a greater desire for proficiency. Emphasizing social processes, the study underscores Jason's enhanced motivation for Japanese learning, emphasizing the transformation of motives with personal significance during the COIL project.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study. This study explores the relationship of expectancy, value and social support as motivation for learning. The components were rooted from Fowler (2018) who revealed that there are three motivational components and they are expectancy, value and social support. Expectancy components include (1) self-efficacy, and (ii) control of learning beliefs. These components are important as learners need

confidence and a sense of relevance to stay motivated (Rahmat, et.al. 2021). Next, value components include (i) intrinsic goal orientation, (ii) extrinsic goal orientation and (iii) task value. Social support includes (i) social engagement and (ii) instructor support.

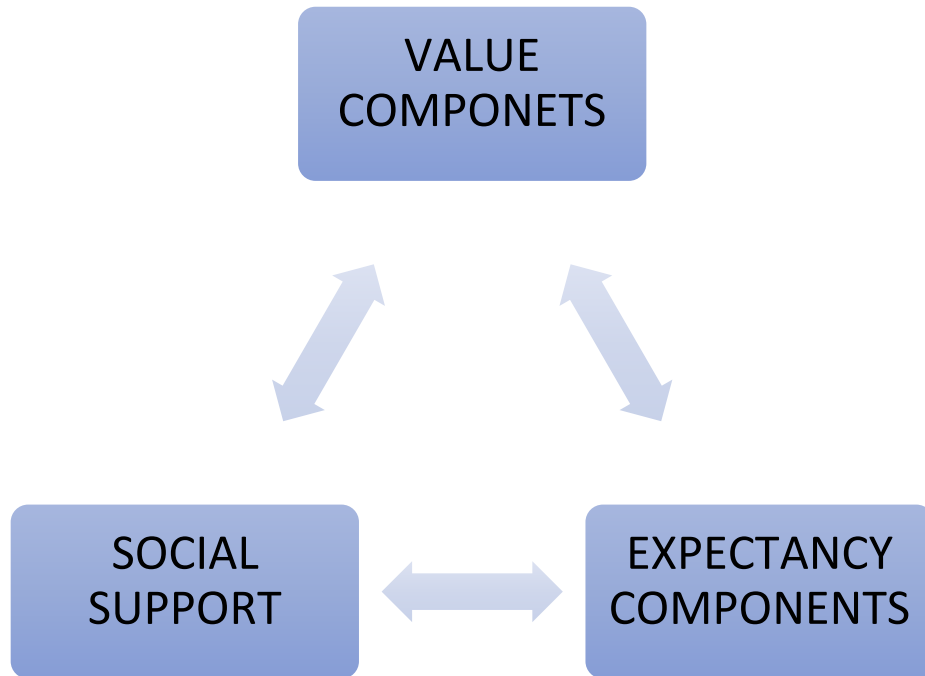


Figure 1-Conceptual Framework of the Study- Relationship between all Motivational Components

Methodology

This quantitative study is done to explore motivation factors for learning among undergraduates. A purposive sample of 124 participants responded to the survey. The instrument used is a 5 Likert-scale survey and is rooted from Fowler (2018) to reveal the variables in table 1 below. The survey has 4 sections. Section A has items on demographic profile. Section B has 12 items on expectancy. Section C has 14 items on value and section D has 12 items on social support.

Table 1
Distribution of Items in the Survey

SECTION	MOTIVATION (KEYWORD)	SUB-SCALES	NO OF ITEMS
B	EXPECTANCY	Self-Efficacy	8
		Control of Learning Beliefs	4
C	VALUE	Intrinsic Goal Orientation	4
		Extrinsic Goal Orientation	4
		Task Value	6
D	SOCIAL SUPPORT	Social Engagement	5
		Instructor Support	7
			38

Table 2

Reliability of Survey

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.934	38

Table 2 shows the reliability of the survey. The analysis shows a Cronbach alpha of .934, thus, revealing a good reliability of the instrument chosen/used. Further analysis using SPSS is done to present findings to answer the research questions for this study.

Findings

Findings for Demographic Profile

Q1. Gender

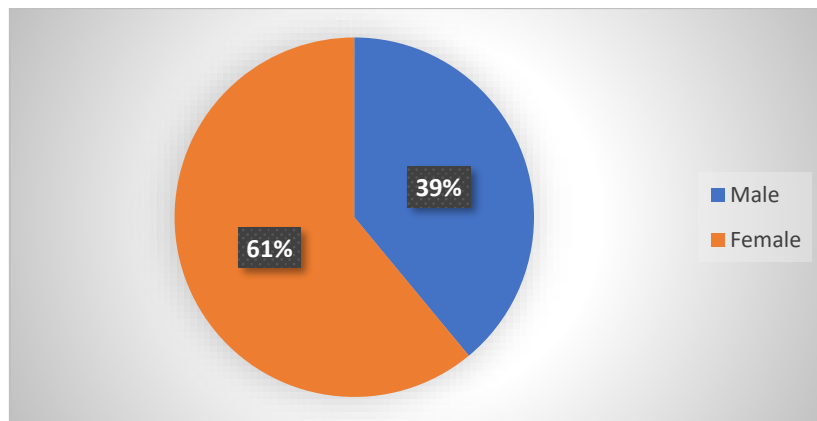


Figure 2 - Percentage for Gender

The first question for demographic profile concerns the gender of the respondents of which female respondents are the majority at 61% and their counterparts at 39%.

Q2. Level of Study

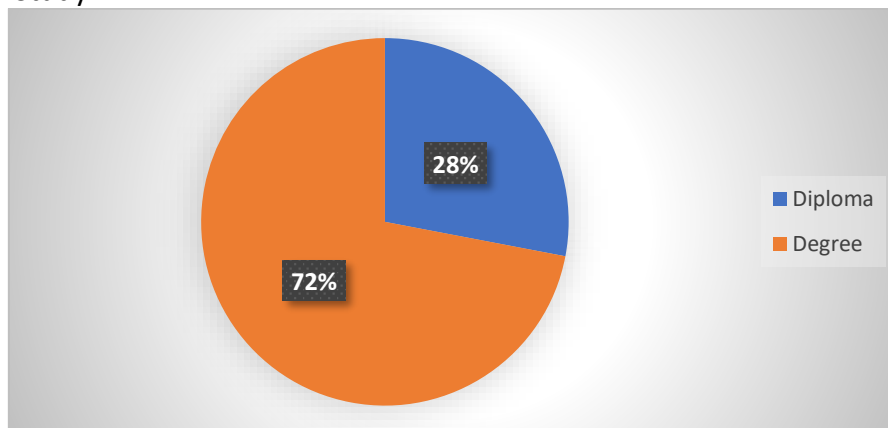


Figure 3 - Percentage for Level of Study

The second question for demographic profile concerns the level of study of the respondents of which degree students are the majority at 72% and diploma students at 28%.

Q3. Discipline

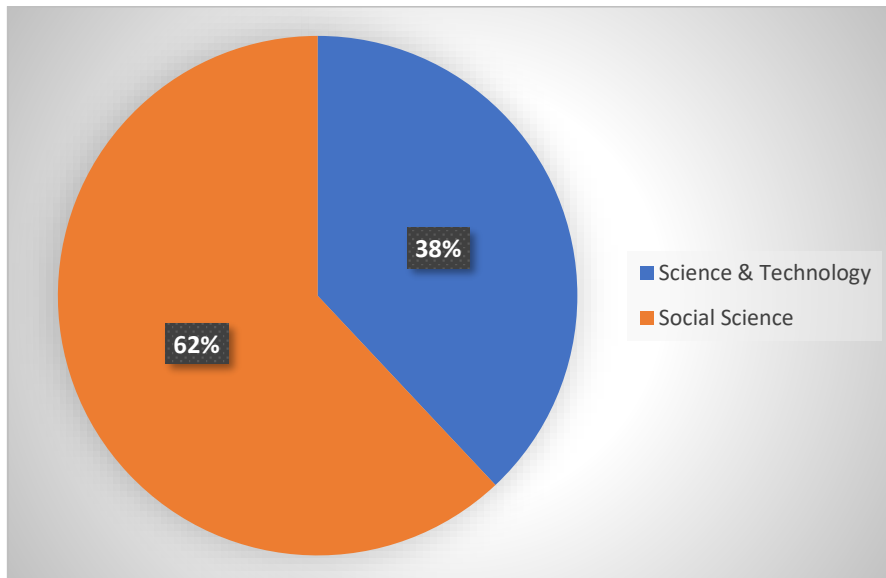


Figure 4 - Percentage for Discipline

The third question for demographic profile concerns the discipline of studies taken by the respondents of which 62% of them come from the social science field whereas 38% from the science and technology field.

Findings for Expectancy

This section presents data to answer research question 1 - How does expectancy influence learners' motivation? In the context of this study, expectancy is measured by (1) self-efficacy, and (ii) control of learning beliefs.

(i) SELF- EFFICACY (ESE)

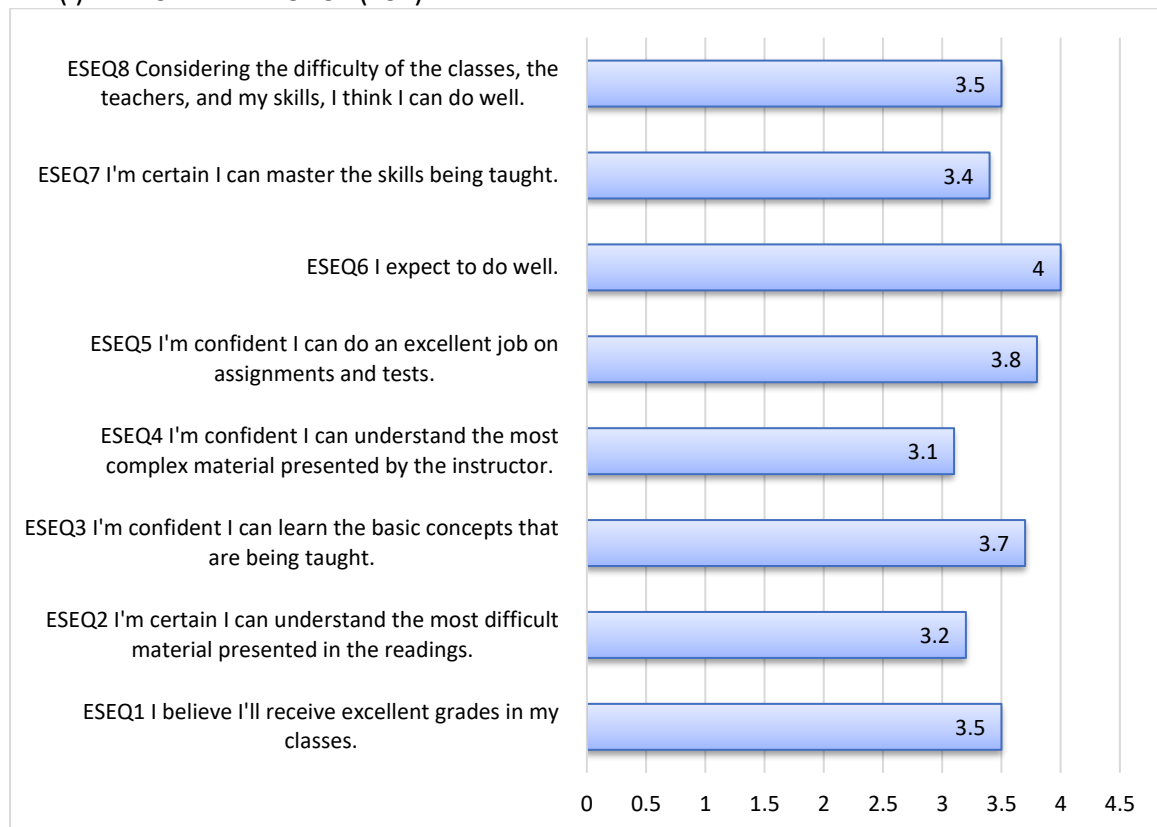


Figure 5- Mean for Self-Efficacy

The highest mean value for self-efficacy scale is 4 which relates to the fact that the students expect to do well in learning French as foreign language. However, the lowest mean value which is at 3.1 shows that the students are not confident that they can understand complex material presented by the instructor. This aligns to the statement of the second lowest mean value which is at 3.2 that they are not certain they can understand the most difficult material presented in the readings. This result shows that while students consider themselves as capable of performing well in class and in assignments and tests, they become less confident when introduced to higher levels of complexity and difficulty materials. It is noteworthy to consider, from the point of view of the instructor, the level of difficulty of topics brought in when teaching French language and its limit to ensure the students stay motivated.

ii) Control of Learning Beliefs (ECB)

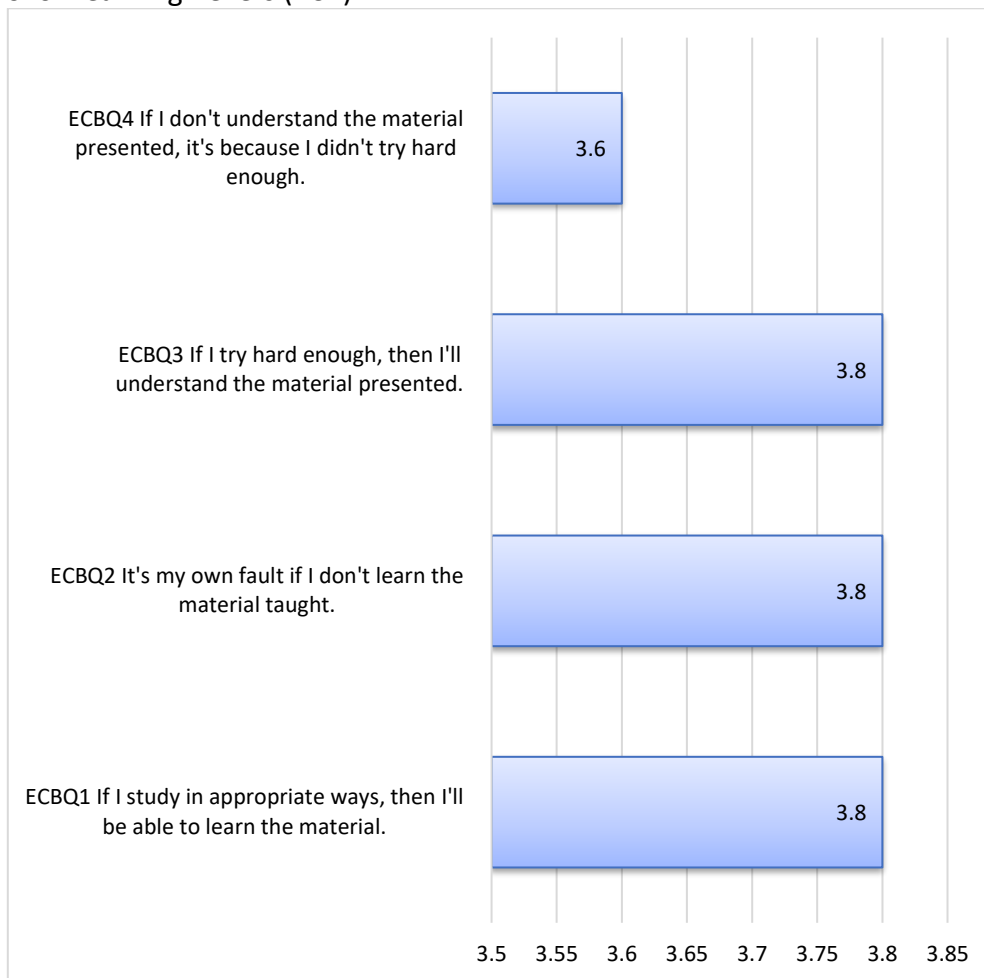


Figure 6- Mean for Control of Learning Beliefs

Figure 6 presents the mean score for Control of Learning Beliefs. The highest mean is 3.8 for 3 items. The items are “If I study in appropriate ways, then I'll be able to learn the material”, “It's my own fault if I don't learn the material taught” and “If I try hard enough, then I'll understand the material presented”. Next the lowest mean score is 3.6 for item “If I don't understand the material presented, it's because I didn't try hard enough”.

Findings for Value

This section presents data to answer research question 2- How do value components influence learners’ motivation? In the context of this study, value is measured by (i) intrinsic goal orientation, (ii) extrinsic goal orientation and (iii) task value.

(i) Intrinsic Goal Orientation (VI)

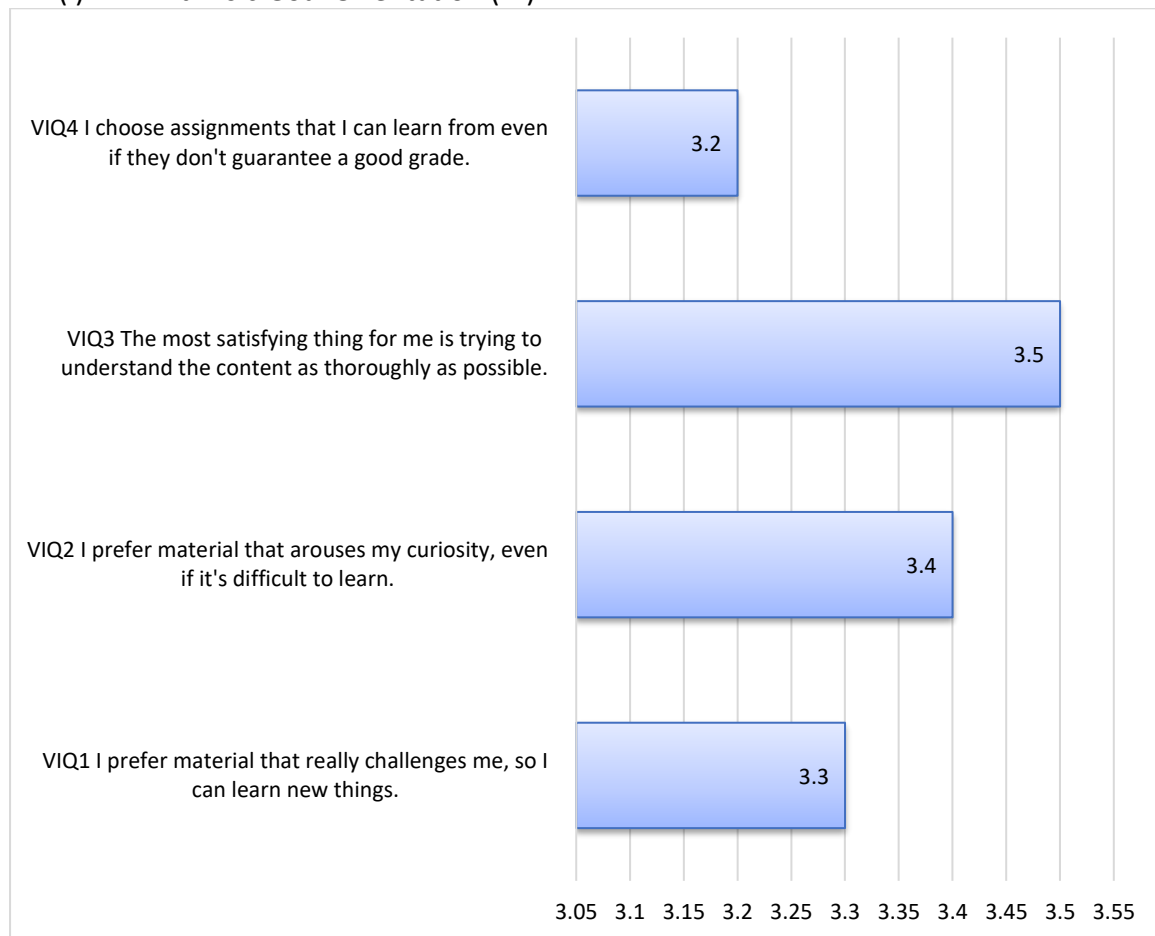


Figure 7- Mean for Control of Intrinsic Goal orientation.

Figure 7 presents the mean score for Control of Intrinsic Goal orientation. The highest mean is 3.5, “The most satisfying thing for me is trying to understand the content as thoroughly as possible”. Followed by mean score 3.4, “I prefer material that arouses my curiosity, even if it's difficult to learn” and mean score 3.3, “I prefer material that really challenges me, so I can learn new things”. The lowest mean score is 3.2, for item “I choose assignments that I can learn from even if they don't guarantee a good grade”.

(ii) Extrinsic Goal Orientation (VE)

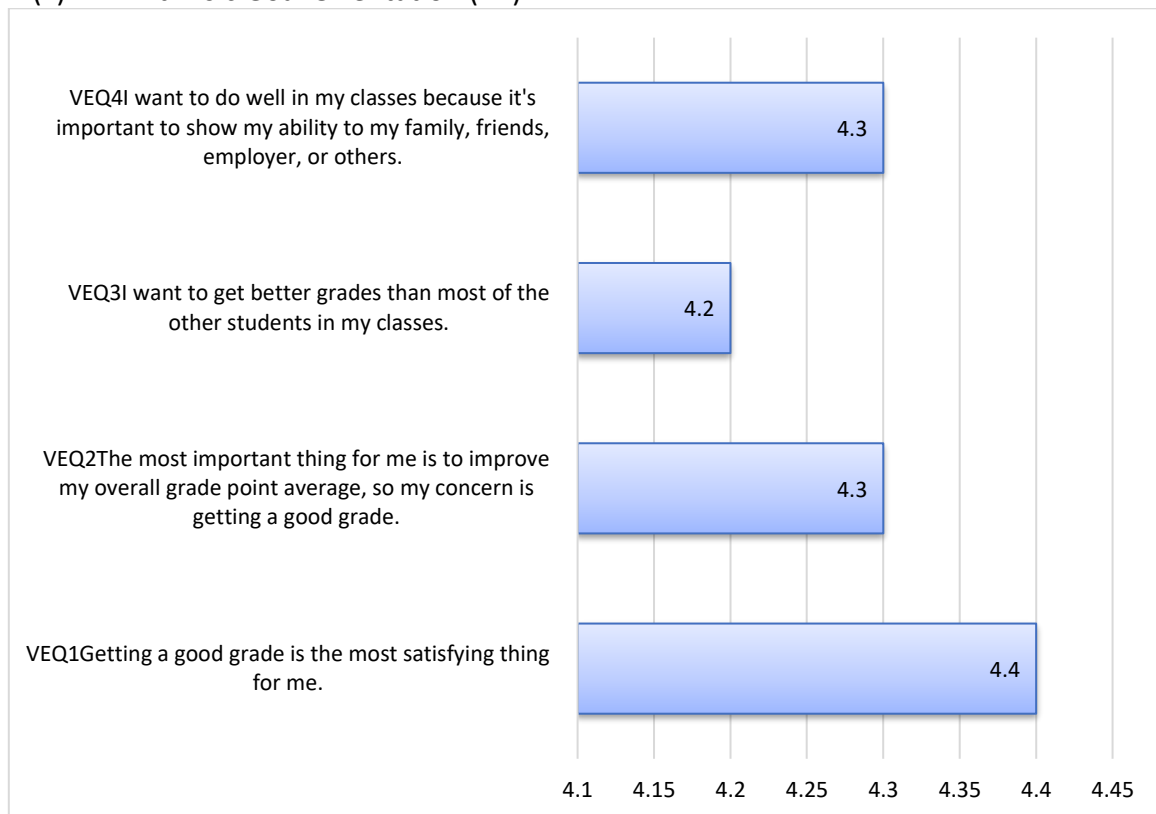


Figure 8- Mean for Control of Extrinsic Goal orientation.

Figure 8 presents the mean score for Control of Extrinsic Goal orientation. The highest mean score is 4.4, for item “Getting a good grade is the most satisfying thing for me”. Followed by 2 items with mean score of 4.3, “The most important thing for me is to improve my overall grade point average, so my concern is getting a good grade” and “I want to do well in my classes because it's important to show my ability to my family, friends, employer, or others”. The lowest mean score is 4.2, “I want to get better grades than most of the other students in my classes”.

(iii) Task Value (VT)

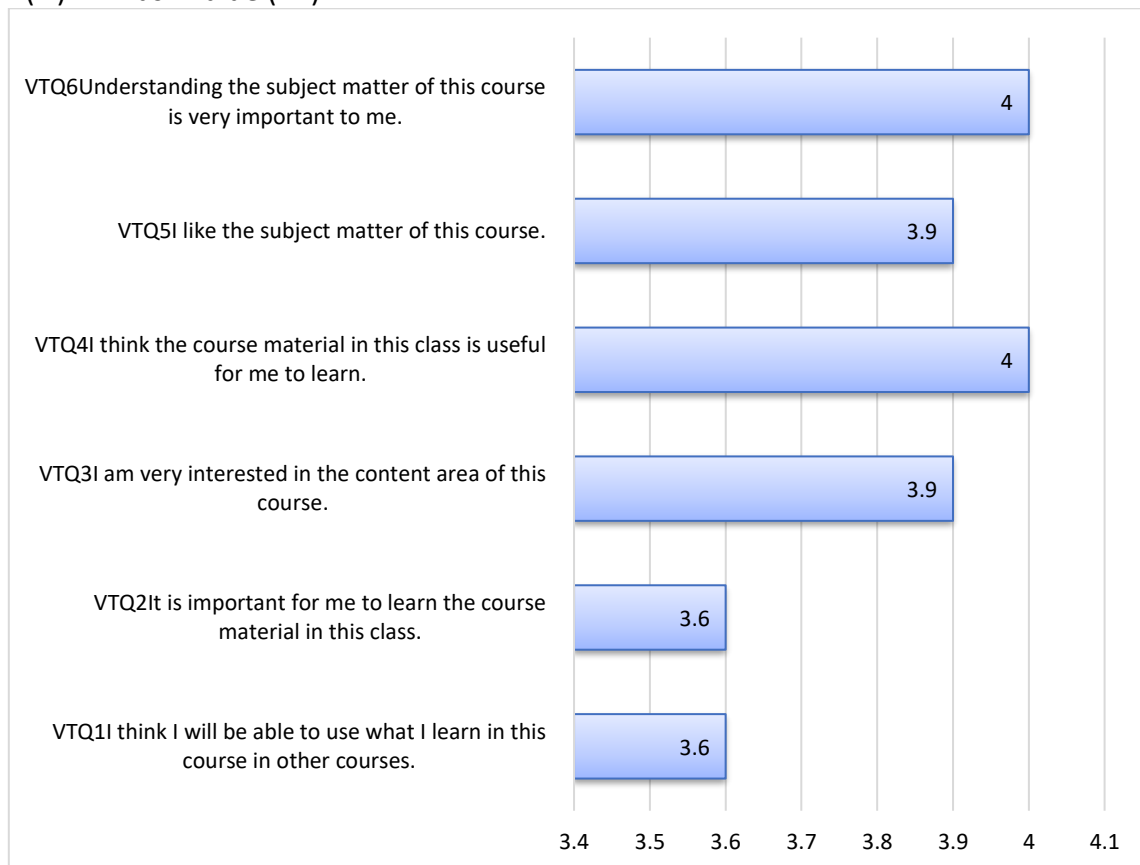


Figure 9- Mean for Task Value

By referencing the mean for task value illustrated via Figure 9, the highest mean (4), which shared the same mean for 2 statement items shows that the majority of respondents think that the course material in this class is useful for them to learn and they need to understand the subject matter of this course. Next, the second highest mean (3.9), which shared a similar mean for 2 statement items portrays that the respondents are interested in the content area and like the subject matter of this course. Lastly, with the lowest mean (3.6), which shared the same mean for 2 statement items, the respondents disagree with the fact that they can use what they learned in this course in other courses and the fact that they need to learn the course material in this class.

Findings for Social Support

This section presents data to answer research question 3- How does social support influence learners’ motivation? In the context of this study, this is measured by (i) social engagement, and (ii) instructor support.

(i) Social Engagement (SSE)

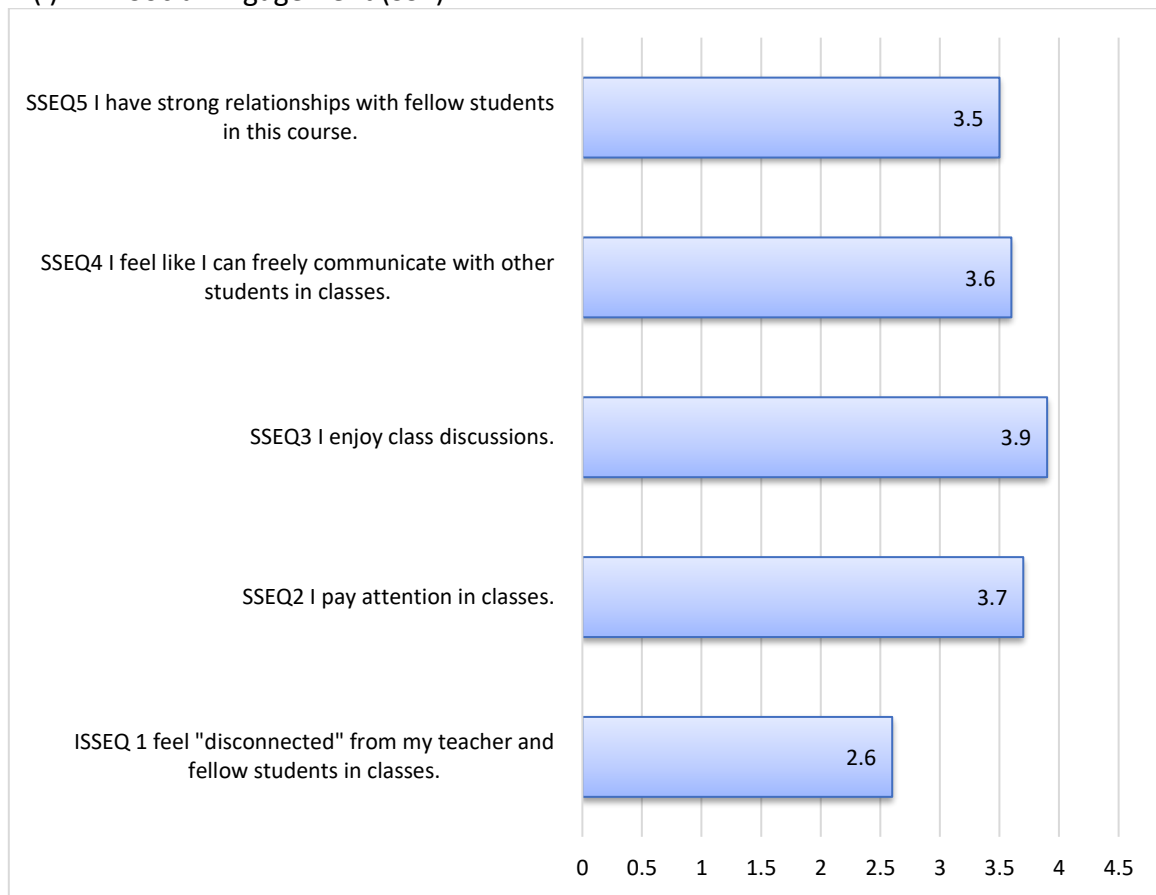


Figure 10- Mean for Social Engagement

As portrayed in Figure 10 concerning the mean for social engagement, the highest mean (3.9) reveals that a vast number of respondents enjoy class discussions. Followed with the second highest mean (3.7), illustrates that the respondents pay attention in classes and the third mean (3.6), it shows that the respondents can freely communicate with other students in classes. Next, the fourth mean (3.5), states that the respondents have a strong relationship with fellow students in this course. Unfortunately, with the lowest mean (2.6), the respondents do not agree with the feeling of being “disconnected” from their teacher and their fellow friends in classes.

(ii) Instructor Support (SIS)

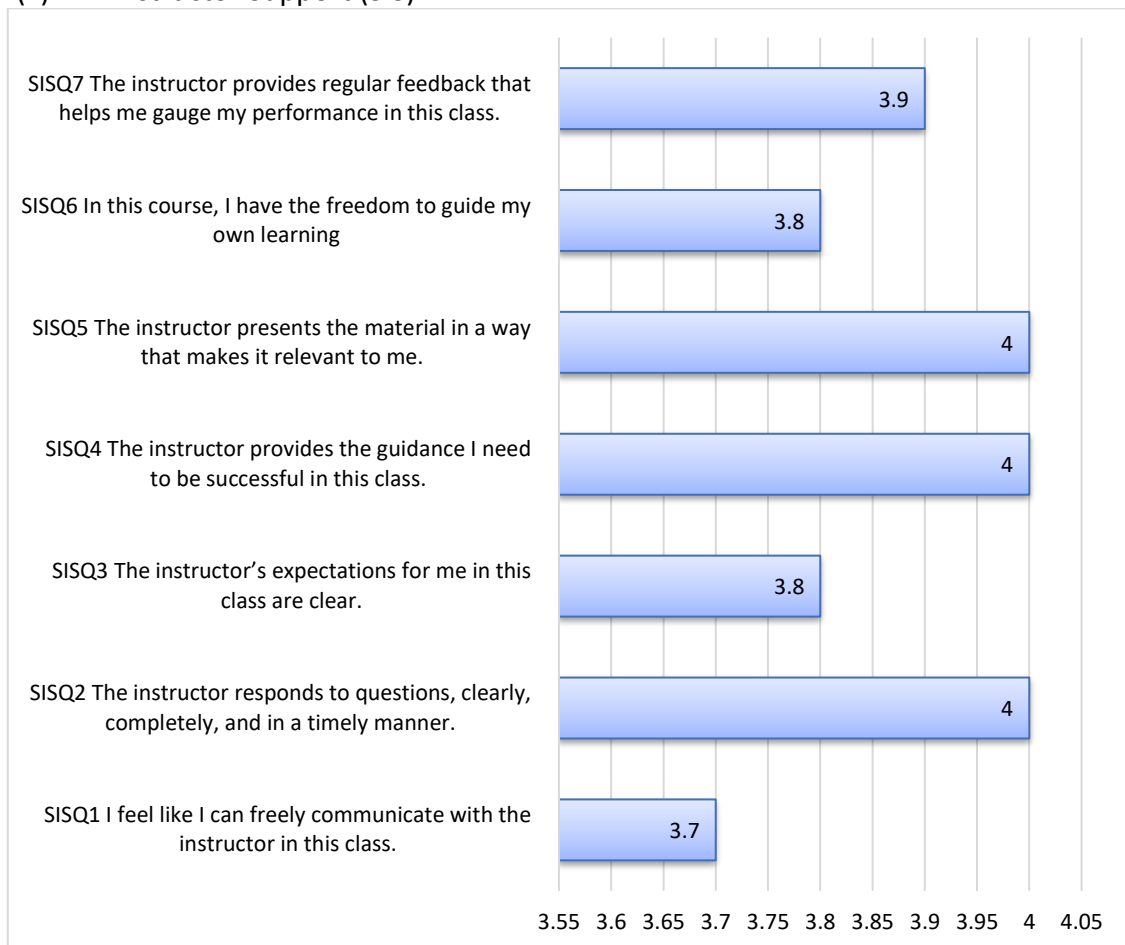


Figure 11- Mean for Instructor Support

According to Figure 11 regarding the mean for instructor support, the highest mean (4), which consisted of 3 statement items that shared a similar mean, portrays that most respondents agreed that the instructor responds to questions, clearly, completely, and promptly, the instructor provides the guidance that is needed to be successful in the class and the instructor presents the material in a relevant way. This is followed by the second highest mean (3.9) which reveals that the respondents found that the instructors provided regular feedback that helped them to gauge their performance in the class. Next, with the third mean (3.8), which shares the same mean for 2 statement items, the respondents illustrate that the instructor's expectations toward the respondents are clear, and they feel free to guide their learning. However, with the lowest mean (3.7), the respondents disagreed with feeling free to communicate with the instructors in the class.

Findings for Relationship between all motivational components.

This section presents data to answer research question 4- Is there a relationship between all motivational components? To determine if there is a significant association in the mean scores between metacognitive, effort regulation, cognitive, social, and affective strategies data is analysed using SPSS for correlations. Results are presented separately in table 3, 4, 5 and 6 below.

Table 3

*Relationship between Value Components and Expectancy Components***Correlations**

		VALUE	EXPECTANCY
VALUE	Pearson Correlation	1	.717**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	124	124
EXPECTANCY	Pearson Correlation	.717**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	124	124

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

Table 3 shows there is an association between value and expectancy components. Correlation analysis shows that there is a high significant association between value and expectancy components. ($r=.717^{**}$) and ($p=.000$). According to Jackson (2015), coefficient is significant at the .05 level and positive correlation is measured on a 0.1 to 1.0 scale. Weak positive correlation would be in the range of 0.1 to 0.3, moderate positive correlation from 0.3 to 0.5, and strong positive correlation from 0.5 to 1.0. This means that there is also a strong positive relationship between value and expectancy components.

Table 4

*Relationship between Expectancy and Social Support***Correlations**

		EXPECTANCY	SOCIALSUPPORT
EXPECTANCY	Pearson Correlation	1	.569**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	124	124
SOCIALSUPPORT	Pearson Correlation	.569**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	124	124

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

Table 4 shows there is an association between expectancy components and social support. Correlation analysis shows that there is a high significant association between expectancy components and social support. ($r=.569^{**}$) and ($p=.000$). According to Jackson (2015), coefficient is significant at the .05 level and positive correlation is measured on a 0.1 to 1.0 scale. Weak positive correlation would be in the range of 0.1 to 0.3, moderate positive correlation from 0.3 to 0.5, and strong positive correlation from 0.5 to 1.0. This means that there is also a strong positive relationship between expectancy components and social support.

Table 5

*Relationship between Social Support and Value Components***Correlations**

		SOCIALSUPPOR T	VALUE
SOCIALSUPPORT	Pearson Correlation	1	.640**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	124	124
VALUE	Pearson Correlation	.640**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	124	124

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

Table 5 shows there is an association between social support and value components. Correlation analysis shows that there is a high significant association between social support and value components. ($r=.640^{**}$) and ($p=.000$). According to Jackson (2015), coefficient is significant at the .05 level and positive correlation is measured on a 0.1 to 1.0 scale. Weak positive correlation would be in the range of 0.1 to 0.3, moderate positive correlation from 0.3 to 0.5, and strong positive correlation from 0.5 to 1.0. This means that there is also a strong positive relationship between social support and value components.

Conclusion*Summary of Findings and Discussions*

The investigation on expectancy influence learners' motivation showed that most students believed they would do well in the subject in terms of self-efficacy and desired motivation, and that control belief factors also led them to achieve desired outcomes, which is consistent with She et al (2021) who emphasised that self-efficacy and engagement enabled students to achieve academic goal in their research outcomes.

In the finding on how value components influence learners' motivation, it shows that the results obtained were influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of the respondents to perform better in the subject.

In the findings of how social support influences the learners' motivation, most respondents agreed the assistance and support given by the instructor is essential to motivate them to do well in their study.

There is also no doubt that teachers play an important role to increase students' motivation as suggested by Alrishan et al (2023), a teacher's personality affects students' motivation.

Finally, correlation analysis identified that there are strong and positive relationships between all the components. A strong positive correlation was found between all these variables to motivate learners in learning a foreign language. In other words, all components were closely related and interacted in students' learning.

Pedagogical Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

An immediate impact of this study is that instructors have a clearer plan to increase students' motivation to learn French as a foreign language in Malaysia. Various teaching methods should be implemented to improve learners' motivation. Future research could also examine the comparison of motivation theories in learning a foreign language in Malaysia.

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