

# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTIVATION AND PERCEIVED PARENTAL ENCOURAGEMENT FOR LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE WITH ENGLISH ACHIEVEMENT OF GRADES 6 TO 8 STUDENTS AT ST. JOHN'S PRIVATE SCHOOL, PATHEIN, MYANMAR

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**Abstract:** The purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between motivation and perceived parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language with English achievement of Grades 6 to 8 students at St. John's Private School, Pathein, Myanmar. The study was quantitative study, and motivation questionnaire was used to collected data from 157 students in academic year 2018-2019 at St. John's Private School, Pathein, Myanmar. For English achievement test, Grades 6 to 8 monthly test was used in this study. Means, standard deviations, and Pearson correlation coefficient were used to analyze the data. The findings showed that students' motivation for learning English as a foreign language was interpreted as very high, and perceived parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language was very high as well.

The final finding of this study showed that there was no significant between perceived parental encouragement and English achievement at Grades 6 to 8 students at St. John's Private School, Pathein, Myanmar.

**Keyword:** Motivation, parental encouragement, English achievement, Socio-Educational model, Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), St. John's Private School

## Introduction

Motivation has a fundamental role to play in classroom instruction. Motivation affects individual students' achievements, different abilities, various attitudes, and their characteristics. Parental encouragement plays very important role in children education. Parents play an important role in the need for higher achievement of their children. This research investigated the relationship between motivation and perceived parental encouragement with English achievement at St. John's Private School.

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## **Objectives**

The research objectives are addressed by this study:

1. To determine the level of motivation for learning English as a foreign language of Grades 6-8 students at St. John's Private School, Pathein, Myanmar.
  - 1.1. To determine the level of Grades 6-8 students' motivational intensity for learning English as a foreign language at St. John's Private School, Pathein, Myanmar.
  - 1.2. To determine the level of Grades 6-8 students' desire to learn English for learning English as a foreign language at St. John's Private School, Pathein, Myanmar.
  - 1.3. To determine the level of Grades 6-8 students' attitudes toward learning English for learning English as a foreign language at St. John's Private School, Pathein, Myanmar.
2. To determine the level of students' perceived parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language of Grades 6-8 students at St John's Private School, Pathein, Myanmar.
3. To determine the level of English achievement of Grades 6-8 students at St. John's Private School, Pathein, Myanmar.
4. To determine if there is a significant relationship between motivation and perceived parental encouragement with English achievement of Grades 6-8 students at St. John's Private School, Pathein, Myanmar.

## **Literature Review**

### **The Concept of Motivation**

Gardner and Lambert divided motivation into two types: integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation consists of the learner's positive attitudes toward the target language community and his or her desire to be a member of that group. Instrumental motivation identifies the learner's positive attitudes to learn the language for extrinsic reasons such as to get a job, to pass the exam, or to fulfill the requirements for a job. The findings of Gardner & Lambert (1959) suggested that Integrative motivation is better than instrumental motivation and leading to improve achievement in learning a second language.

### **Perceived Parental Encouragement**

Perceived Parental encouragement is an additional variable in Gardner's socio-educational model that influences language achievement for scenarios wherein a younger age population are in a study (Gardner, 2009). He added that in his studies aside from influencing achievement, it gave support to motivation

(Gardner, 2007). In the AMTB, parental encouragement assessed by asking students' perception toward the support they receive from their parents in learning L2.

### **English Achievement**

A study done by Jingji & Lynch (2017) reported that parental encouragement for students' learning was related to academic achievement for primary 5 and 6 students at an international school in Bangkok. The testing of the hypothesis showed the significant relationship between students' perception of parental encouragement and their Mandarin academic achievement. Parents' encouragement was linked with their children academic achievement.

### **Gardner's Socio-Educational Model**

The socio-educational model comprised four components namely; social milieu, motivation, formal and informal context and linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes (Gardner, 1985b).

In his study, he focused on foreign language classroom and studied about positive and negative influence success in language acquisition. His socio-educational model focused on the aspect of social dimensions which are motivation and the subscales that influence and support it (Gardner, 2005). Recent years ago, the model was modified to three variables, namely: ability, motivation and situational anxiety (Gardner, 1985a, 2005).

### **Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB)**

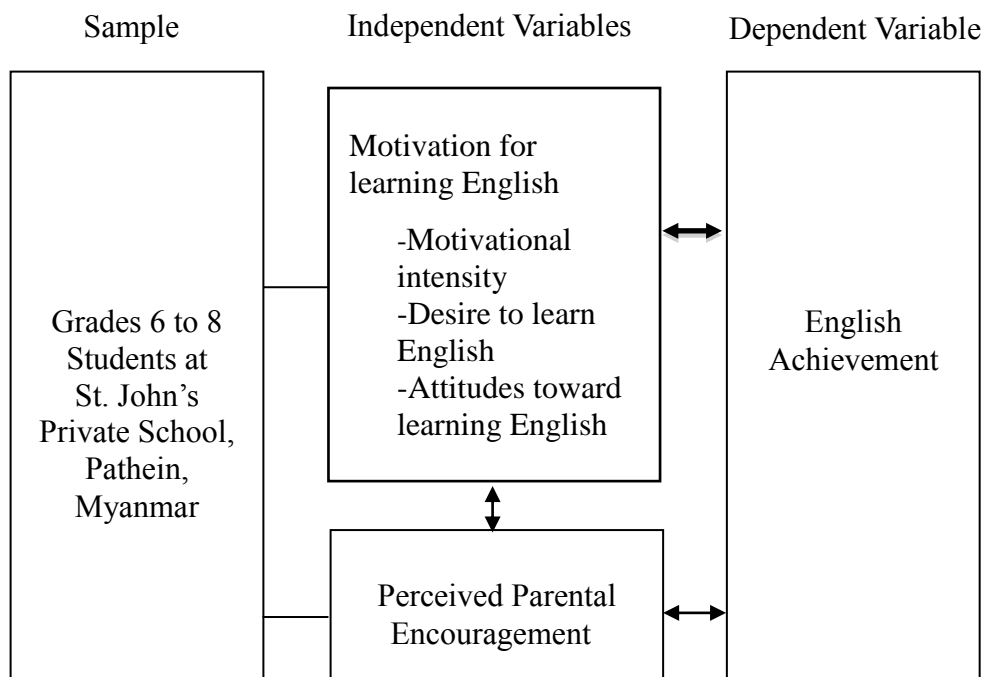
Basing on the results of the continuous research for more than 20 years, Gardner developed the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB). In the battery, the Attitudinal/Motivational variable was an effective factor, whereas language ability measured as a cognitive variable (Gardner, 1985a).

### **St. John's Private School**

St. John's Private School is located in Pathein, the southern part of Myanmar which has poor infrasture and limited to assess to education compare to Yangon and Mandalay. The proposed plan of establishing a school is a top priority among many other initiatives that we have been assuming since the foundation of Pathein Diocese, Myanmar. It is the first Catholic school of Pathien Diocese in Myanmar.

### Conceptual Framework

The purpose of the study was to determine if there was a significant relationship between Grades 6-8 students' motivation and perceived parental encouragement for learning English as a foreign language with English achievement at St. John's Private School, Pathein, Myanmar.



### Method

This research was a quantitative correlational study and the objectives were to determine the motivation and students' perceived parental encouragement in learning English as a foreign language. Descriptive statistics means, and standard deviations were used for Objectives 1 to 3, while multiple Pearson coefficients were used for Objective 4.

### Population

The population of this study was 157 students from Grades 6-8 studying at St. John's Private School during the academic year of 2018-2019.

### Research Instrument

There two research instruments were used this this study were motivation and perceived parental encouragement in learning English as a foreign language

questionnaire and the English achievement test for Grades 6 to 8 students at St. John's Private School, Patheingyi, Myanmar.

## Findings

Presented below were the findings of the research objective 1 to 4.

### Research Finding for Objective 1

The first Research Objective was to determine the level of motivation in learning English as a foreign language of Grades 6 to 8 students at St. John's Private School, Patheingyi, Myanmar. In order to focus the Research Objective 1, the following Tables (9, 10, 11, 12) showed the finding for the three subscales in motivation in learning English as a foreign language skills questionnaire. There are 30 items in the questionnaire including positive and negative items with 6-point Likert scale, and score within the range of 1.00-1.99 interpreted (very low), score range of 2.00-2.99 interpreted (low), score range of 3.00-3.99 interpreted (slightly low), score range of 4.00- 5.00 interpreted (slightly high), score range of 5.01-6.00 interpreted (high), and score range of 6.01-7.00 interpreted (very high).

For Objective 1, there were three subscales, motivational intensity, desire to learn English, and attitudes toward learning English. Table 9, 10, 11 displayed mean scores, standard deviations, and interpretation for motivational intensity, desire to learn English, and attitudes toward learning English subscales. Table 12 showed the average mean scores of motivation in learning English.

Table 9 *Interpretation of Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) for Motivational Intensity Subscale Items*

	Item No	Item statement of Motivational Intensity	M	SD	Interpretation
Positively-worded items	1	I make a point of trying to understand all the English I see and hear	6.25	.97	Very high
	2	I keep up to date with English by working on it almost every day	4.70	1.71	Slightly high
Positively-worded items	3	When I have a problem understanding something in	5.74	1.38	High

	Item No	Item statement of Motivational Intensity	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Interpretation
Negatively-worded items		English class, I always ask teacher for help			
	4	I really work hard to learn English	6.08	1.27	Very high
	5	When I am studying English, I ignore distractions and pay attention to my task	5.46	1.41	High
	6	I do not pay attention to the feedback I receive in my English class	5.72	1.64	High
	7	I do not bother checking my assignment when I get them back from my English teacher	5.87	1.60	High
	8	I put off my English homework as much as possible	5.19	2.11	High
	9	I tend to give up and not pay attention when I do not understand my English teacher's explanation of something	6.01	1.62	Very high
	10	I cannot trying to understand the more complex aspects of English	6.24	1.29	Very high
	Overall		5.73	1.53	High

From Table 9, it could be seen the motivational intensity subscale was high with a mean scores 5.73 overall. Item 1, and 4 were very high mean scores, as mean score were between 6.08 and 6.24 according to the interpretation. In negatively worded Item 9 and 10 also mean score shows very high motivational intensity. For Item no 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 mean scores were shown high motivational intensity.

Table 10 *Interpretation of Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) for Desire to Learn English Subscale Items*

	Item No	Item statement of Desire to Learn English	M	SD	Interpretation
Positively-worded items	11	I have a strong desire to know all aspects of English	6.06	1.33	Very high
	12	If it were up to me, I would spend all of my time learning English	4.21	2.10	Slightly high
	13	I want to learn English so well that it will become natural to me	6.39	1.13	Very high
	14	I would like to learn as much as English as possible	6.41	.90	Very high
	15	I wish I were fluent in English	6.61	.81	Very high
Negatively-worded items	16	Knowing English isn't really an important goal in my life	6.38	1.40	Very high
	17	I sometimes daydream about dropping English	5.70	1.76	High
	18	I'm losing my desire I ever had to know English	6.67	.86	Very high
	19	To be honest, I really have no desire to learn English	6.54	1.16	Very high
	20	I haven't any great wish to learn more than the basics of English	6.38	1.30	Very high
Overall			6.14	1.33	Very high

According to Table 10, overall students' desire to learn English was very high mean scores of 6.14 according to the interpretation. For Item 12, students were slightly high mean score of 4.21 out of 10 items, and Item 17 was students were high mean score of 5.70. For the rest items were students' desire to learn English in very high mean scores. It could be seen that students from St. John's

Private School have high motivation for learning the subscale, desire to learn English.

Table 11 *Interpretation of Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) for Attitudes Toward Learning English Subscale Items*

	Item No	Item statement of Attitudes toward Learning English	M	SD	Interpretation
Positively-worded items	21	Learning English is really great	6.30	1.20	Very high
	22	I really enjoy learning English	6.29	1.14	Very high
	23	English is a very important part of the school program	6.42	1.03	Very high
	24	I plan to learn as much English as possible	6.18	1.25	Very high
	25	I love learning English	5.95	1.30	High
Negatively-worded items	26	I hate English	6.58	.95	Very high
	27	I would rather spend my time on subjects other than English	4.96	1.79	Slightly high
	28	Learning English is waste of time	6.67	.83	Very high
	29	I think that learning English is dull	6.31	1.26	Very high
	30	When I leave school, I will give up the study of English because I am not interested in it	6.59	.93	Very high
Overall			6.23	1.19	Very high

As Table 11 demonstrated all the subscale items were interpreted with very high mean scores of 6.26, and most students were very high motivation in attitudes toward learning English. Moreover, Item 25 was high mean scores of 5.95 out of 10 items. For Item 27 was slightly high mean scores of 4.96.



Thus, it could be assumed that Grades 6-8 students in St. John Private School have a positive attitude in learning English based on the result of data.

Table 12 showed the finding of Grades 6-8 students at St. John's Private school had a very high motivation in learning English, because the overall mean score of the questionnaires was 6.04, which was interpreted by very high. The high mean score of motivational intensity was 5.73, desire to learn English mean score was 6.14 which was interpreted by very high, and attitudes toward learning English mean score was 6.23, which was interpreted by very high.

Table 12

*Interpretation of Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) for Motivation for learning English Subscales*

Subscales of Motivation for Learning English	M	SD	Interpretation on Motivation
Motivational Intensity	5.73	1.53	High
Desire to learn English	6.14	1.33	Very High
Attitudes toward learning English	6.23	1.19	Very High
Overall	6.04	1.36	Very High

In Table 12, it can be seen that students' motivational intensity was "high level" compared with the desire to learn English and attitudes toward learning English. The interpretation of each item reflected by the overall high degree of motivation between the ranged of 6.01 and 7.00.

### **Research Finding for Objective 2**

The second Research Objective was to determine the level of students' perceived parental encouragement in learning English as a Foreign Language of Grades 6 to 8 students at St. John's Private School, Patheingyi, Myanmar.

The following table showed the finding for students' perceived parental encouragement in learning English skills questionnaire. For Objective 2, there would be 8 items from parental encouragement subscale. Table 13 demonstrates mean scores, standard deviations, and interpretation for parental encouragement subscale.

Table 13 *Interpretation of Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) for Parental Encouragement Subscale Items*

Item No	Item statement of parental encouragement	M	SD	Interpretation
31	My parents try to help me to learn English	6.42	1.04	Very high
32	My parents feel that it is very important for me to learn English	6.54	.85	Very high
33	My parents feel that I should continue studying English all through school	6.31	1.19	Very high
34	My parents have stressed the important English will have for me when I leave school	5.97	1.45	High
35	My parents urged me to seek help from my teacher if I am having problems with my English	6.42	1.19	Very high
36	My parents are very interested in everything I do in my English class	5.82	1.54	High
37	My parents encourage me to practice my English as much as possible	6.48	.67	Very high
38	My parents think I should devote more times to study English	6.04	1.34	Very high
Overall		6.25	1.20	Very high

According to Table 13, most of the students' perceived parental encouragement was very high mean scores. Among the students' perceived parental encouragement, Item 34 and 36 mean scores of 5.97 and 5.82 were lower than out of 8 items. To sum up, Grades 6-8 students' perceived parental encouragement of learning English as a foreign language was a very high level of the mean score of 6.25.

### **Research Finding for Objective 3**

The third Research Objective was to determine the level of English achievement of Grades 6-8 students at St. John's Private School, Patheingyi, Myanmar.

English achievement was used from the monthly test of Grades 6- 8 students' writing test. To interpret the level of achievement, the table of St. John's Students' English achievement was used. According to the interpretation of the test score, it divided four parts, excellent, good, moderate and fail. Table 14 demonstrates the means and standard deviations of student achievement test respectively.

Table 14 *Interpretation of Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) for the English Achievement Test*

English achievement test	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Interpretation
Monthly test scores of Grades 6-8 students	70.28	16.95	good

Table 14 demonstrates the level of English achievement of students' mean scores level was 70.28 which is interpreted as good. In an overall look, Grades 6-8 students' English achievement mean score at St. John's Private School were at a high level.

#### **Research Finding for Objective 4**

The fourth Research Objective was to determine if there is a significant relationship between motivation and perceived parental encouragement with English achievement at St. John's Private School at Pathein, Myanmar. In order to address Research Objective 4, the statistical hypothesis was using three variables in this study.

To address this objective was to calculate bivariate correlations between motivations for learning English, students' perceived parental encouragement, and students' English achievement test score at St. John's Private School, Pathein, Myanmar.

Table 15 below indicates the bivariate correlation between motivations for learning English, students' perceived parental encouragement, and students' English achievement test score of St. John's Private School, Pathein, Myanmar.

Table 15 *Bivariate Correlations Between Grades 6-8 Students' Motivation, Perceived Parental Encouragement and English Achievement at St. John's Private School*

Variables	English Achievement	Motivation	Parental Encouragement
English Achievement	-	-	-
Motivation	.301** ( $p < .001$ )	-	-
Perceived Parental Encouragement	-.011 ( $p = .894$ )	.433** ( $p < .001$ )	-

*Note.* \*\*All the bivariate correlation coefficients are significant at the .05 level (2-tailed),  $p < .001$ .

The results of following the individual relationship between the variables are as follow: The bivariate correlations among the three variables in this study (motivation for learning English and English achievement, motivation for learning English and perceived parental encouragement, and English achievement and perceived parental encouragement), show that Grades 6-8 students' motivation and English achievement were weakly correlated ( $r = .30, p < .001$ ) as a significance level of .05. The coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) for these variables is .09, which indicates that 9% of the variance in the relationship of Grades 6-8 students' English achievement could be accounted for motivation for learning English.

Similarly, motivation for learning English and students' perceived parental encouragement were moderately strong correlated ( $r = .43, p < .001$ ) as a significance level of .05. The coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) for these variables is .18, which indicates that 18 % of the variance in the relationship of Grades 6-8 students' parental encouragement could be accounted for by their motivation.

However, Grades 6-8 students' perceived parental encouragement did not have a significant with English achievement and it was negatively correlated,  $r = -0.11, p = .89$ . Since only one of the independent variables correlated significantly with the independent variable, further calculation of the multiple correlation coefficients was not needed.

The study's research hypothesis was there is a relationship between motivation and students' perceived parental encouragement with English achievement of Grades 6-8 students at St. John's Private School, Patheingyi, Myanmar at a significance level of .05. Table 15 showed the independent variable motivation had a significant relationship with the dependent variable students' achievement, but there is no the significant relationship between independent variable perceived parental encouragement and the dependent variable students' English achievement.

## **Discussion**

The following section presents a discussion of research finding of this study, which are related to the result there is a relationship between students' motivation and perceived parental encouragement and their English achievement.

### **Motivation for learning English and English Achievement**

The findings demonstrated that Grades 6-8 students at St. John's Private

School had a high level of motivation in learning English. The findings revealed that students' motivation was related to their English achievement.

Motivation affects individual students' achievements, different abilities, various attitudes and their characteristics (Gardner, 2010). The findings of Gardner and Lambert (1959) suggested that Integrative motivation is better than instrumental motivation in leading to enhance achievement in learning a second language. In addition, the level of achievement can be most really predicted by the internal and external motivation of the learners by observing the output of the effort and time needed to control the target language, although people have different reasons for learning languages (Gardner, 1985a). It was found that in St. John's Private School, students' motivation was interrelated with their achievement.

One of the findings pointed that students had high motivational intensity in learning English. The students at St. John's Private School seemed to work hard and effort on their motivation in language learning. Gardner and Lambert, (1972), Makrami (2010) and Scovel (2001), discovered that instrumental orientation defines the desire to learn a language for practical, educational, professional or for the benefits of the higher salary or to improve their one's work position. Gardner (1985a) said that a motivated student is one who wants to achieve the specific goal. She or he would be ready to do hard work to achieve the goal and would fulfill the process of achieving the goal.

Another finding in current research also showed that students' desire in learning English was in a higher level of motivation, and it was shown that student different significant based on their motivation. According to studies, English was an important role, and become necessary in business around the world (Oxford Royale Academy, 2014). Additionally, students who specialized in English and the faculty have more opportunities to receive training abroad (Paw, 2015). Students at St. John's Private School had a strong desire to learn English and they tried to reach their achievement. According to Dörnyei and Otto (1998), motivation could be described as the dynamic changing of individual desires and wishes, which was recommended to act effectively in learning.

Another factor showed highly motivated in learning English that attitude toward learning English. Students' attitude involved feelings, values, beliefs, and disposition to perform a certain way. In this study, the researcher found that students' attitude towards learning English was in a very high level of motivation. According to the researcher's observation, students at St. John's Private School are willing to learn the English language, because they love to

do some performances and enjoy activities in the English class. When teacher practiced reading test, they looked very active and ready to practice on the stage. The researcher expected that by preparing the lesson-plan and creating more activities in the classroom, the learning approach might be a huge impact on students' interest in learning English.

### **Motivation for learning English and Perceived Parental Encouragement**

The findings revealed that Grades 6-8 students at St. John's Private School had a high level of motivation for learning English and perceived parental encouragement. The finding was consistent with Bindu and Aruna (2014), found that students who received high perceived parental encouragement were higher motivation than students who received low perceived parental encouragement. Furthermore, the researchers had found that parents play an important role in the need for higher achievement of their children. He continued that parental encouragement was a significant and important predictor of achievement motivation of higher secondary students. Similarly, Lungley and Lynch (2017) found that there was a positive relationship between motivation and academic achievement at Grades 6-8 students at Bangkok Christian International School. They mentioned that increasing motivation for students self-selected English was correlated with their academic achievement.

Previous studies have also supported the same assumption. Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, and Holbein (2005) claimed that children's academic motivation and achievement increased when parents get involved. This also enhanced the students' achievement, learning, competence, and understanding of a subject area. In Gardner's socio-educational model, it was proposed that parental encouragement was an additional variable that influences language achievement for scenarios wherein younger age populations are in the study (Gardner, 2009).

Researchers found that parental involvement has many helpful effects on students other than academics, including increased motivation, which may lead to academic success nevertheless of economic background. Likewise, the researchers confirmed that insufficient or no parental involvement gives low students' achievement and engagement (Bower & Griffin, 2011). According to this finding, students' motivation and parental encouragement was a significant and positive relationship with each other. Some students reported, "My parents encourage me to practice my English as much as possible", and "My parents think I should devote more times to study English". By representing that parental encouragement was inspired to their children to study hard, and supported them not only the physical but also mental needs.

### **Perceived Parental Encouragement and English Achievement**

English achievement was measured by a monthly test in St. John's students' English test scores. The finding of the current study showed that Grades 6-8 students' English achievement mean score at St. John Private School was at a high level. Pearson correlation coefficient was done to analyze if there was a significant between perceived parental encouragement and English achievement. The finding indicated that perceived parental encouragement did not have a significant with English achievement.

However, according to Griffith (1996) studied how the parental interest and parent empowerment are connected to students' achievement. In another study by Wentzel (1998), perceived parental support was the only type of encouragement that leads to the students' academic goal orientation. According to Lakshmi and Arora (2006), parental acceptance and encouragement were definitely linked with academic success and capability. Conversely, psychological and behavioral showed a negative relationship with academic success and competence in parental control. They proved that parents who were supposed as being more acceptant and using less restrictive and hostile mental control have their adolescents with higher academic success and skill.

The finding of the current study found that perceived parental encouragement and English achievement were unrelated and it was negative relationship. The researcher assumed that 50% of students at St. John's Private School came from villages and they stayed at girl boarding house and boy boarding house. Some hired a house and stayed together with their friends. For that reason, perceived parental encouragement was not related with English achievement. Another reason was even though students, who stayed with their parents, they did not get parental support at home. Parents were relying on their children to guide teacher, who always assist their child's homework in the house, and they gave lots of money to the teacher. They emphasized their business instead of giving a time to their kids.

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