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Cambodian Primary Teacher Trainees' Motivation in Learning English

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Abstract— A study of 53 primary teacher trainees in Kandal Province, Cambodia, found that motivation is crucial for students' success in learning English. The trainees displayed both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, with extrinsic motivation slightly outweighing intrinsic motivation. The study identified three interconnected external motivations: future study, grades, and career. This information can be used to study EFL learners' motivation in Cambodia and improve English language acquisition through efficient teaching techniques. This study aimed to investigate the motivation levels of Cambodian primary school teacher trainees in learning English. It focused on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and whether there was a difference between the two among Kandal primary teacher trainees. The questionnaire included 20 items for both motivation levels. This study can be restudied by using both qualitative and quantitative methods for more detailed findings.

Keywords: intrinsic, extrinsic, motivation, trainee, primary, Cambodia

INTRODUCTION

English is the preferred foreign language in Cambodia, used in international business and education, influenced by the United Nations Transitional Authority era and Cambodia's ASEAN membership in 1999 (Igawa, 2008). English is not a compulsory subject for Cambodian Grade 12 students, but high scores in English can improve overall grades and prepare students for higher education (Seng, 2023). Cambodia's education system is crucial for global competitiveness, with teacher quality impacting student learning achievement. The Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport implemented the Teacher Policy Action Plan 2015–2020, reforming pre-service training and piloting the 12+4 program for mutual benefit (Kruy, 2023).

Motivation is a multifaceted concept influenced by various interpretations and sources, making it difficult to define (Sambonin & Liu, 2017). According to studies, simplified materials, balanced instruction, separated language skill instruction, and autonomous learning are frequently lacking in K–12 second language classrooms, impeding communicative skill development and motivation (Chai, 2016). The government of Cambodia is placing more and more emphasis on English language instruction. Since it is believed that young pupils typically replicate teachers' words through acquisition, the majority of Cambodian schools start teaching English in the first grade, and many of them also hire foreign instructors whose first or second language is English (Sor et al., 2022).

The current study aims to investigate how motivated primary school teacher trainees in Cambodia are to learn English. The second goal was to show how they were to acquire English as a foreign language. Finally, the study determined if intrinsic and extrinsic motivation among Kandal primary teacher trainees differed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

English is the most commonly spoken foreign language in Cambodia, and it is widely used in international trade and education. The UNTAC phase (1992–1993) and Cambodia's admission to ASEAN (1999) both increased the country's use of English (Igawa, 2008). Furthermore, as it emerges from poverty and enters the World Trade Organization, Cambodia has adopted English as the working language in its educational system. Because the ASEAN Charter requires English as the working language, several countries have revised their primary school curricula to guarantee English proficiency (Kruy, 2023).

However, empirical studies show that K–12 second language classroom practices frequently lack essential elements such as decontextualized materials, unbalanced instructional emphases, separated instruction of language skills, linear presentation, practice, and production (PPP) procedures, and a lack of autonomous learning and authentic social interactions, all of which impede communicative skill development and motivation (Chai, 2016). This reveals that motivation is a broad concept defined differently by academics and practitioners. Motivation is the magnitude of personal commitment to do a task or work from the practitioner's viewpoint; however, from the cognitive perspective, it relates to essential processes determining human choices among alternative activities. Because of the various interpretations of motivation, defining it is difficult. We will combine definitions from psychologists, organizational practitioners, encyclopedias, and dictionaries, combining them to create a complete knowledge of motivation (Sambonin & Liu, 2017).

In the context of Cambodia, teacher quality has a substantial influence on students' learning accomplishments, making it critical for Cambodia's education system to remain relevant and competitive in the global knowledge-based economy. Communication, observation, and inquiry into beliefs and practices are facilitated through teacher education programs (Kruy, 2023). Although the Cambodian context may be very different from the situations of English teachers in other countries, studying the professional development needs of Cambodian English teachers contributes to a holistic understanding of the professionalism of second language teachers, providing a more global view of the profession (Sambonin, 2017).

Motivation is a complex concept in educational research, with studies showing that positive motivations decrease as children age. The relationship between motivation and academic achievement in schools is controversial, with some suggesting a bidirectional reciprocal relationship. Three issues related to learning motivation are presented in this study (Park, 2011). Moreover, motivation is a key factor in acquiring foreign languages (Daif-Allah & Aljumah, 2020). Motivation in English language learning involves a strong desire to accomplish a task, influenced by factors such as motivational intensity, desire, and attitude toward learning English (Saranraj et al., 2016). Motivation is the drive to act, ranging from a lack of impetus to a high level of energization. It is a crucial aspect of work and play, requiring practitioners to foster motivation in others, viewing it as a unitary phenomenon varying from minimal to significant (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Thus, as the major drive for beginning and sustaining learning, motivation is a critical aspect of second language acquisition, influencing habits and driving success (Tuan, 2012).

Gardner and Lambert argue that motivation greatly impacts students' learning performance, outweighing talent and contributing to individual diversity in language acquisition. Motivation is defined by three main needs: the need for stimulation, the need for knowledge, and the need for ego enhancement. These needs help construct learner motivation, enabling them to be stimulated by the environment, achieve knowledge, and seek acceptance and approval from others (Good and Brophy, 1990, cited in Tuan, 2012). In the meantime, Maslow's opinion emphasizes the importance of individual decisions and effort in achieving goals. According to Maslow, motivation is a construct rooted in cultural and social factors, with ultimate goal attainment dependent on satisfying fundamental physical necessities, community security, identity, and self-esteem. Maslow's belief that motivation is influenced by underlying needs and drives is a key aspect of cognitive psychology (Maslow, 1970, cited in Jafari, 2013).

According to Pintrich and Schunk (2002), as cited in Daif-Allah and Aljumah (2020), research on motivation in the early 1990s marked a turning point, introducing concepts like intrinsic motivations and extrinsic motivations. This shift led to the development of situation-specific motivational theories, highlighting the cognitively situated nature of motivation. Social researchers and theorists emphasize the importance of understanding motivation and recognizing intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Both types of motivation can impact students' success in learning, with intrinsic motivation being more prevalent. Research suggests that learners may quit learning if they lack both types of motivation (Tuan, 2012). Based on De Naeghel et al. (2014) and McBreen and Savage (2021), self-determination theory suggests that a teacher's motivational approach can enhance the classroom environment by promoting students' psychological demands for autonomy, competence, and relatedness and increasing reading motivation and achievement (as cited in Kruy (2023).

Intrinsic motivation is a key concept in literature, involving students' curiosity, perceived importance, and involvement with text, while extrinsic motivation focuses on achieving good grades and pleasing others, highlighting the importance of intrinsic motivation in learning (Proctor et al., 2014). Jafari (2013) also reported that intrinsic motivation is a student's inner drive to study, driven by a desire for learning and satisfaction from the material. This motivation is characterized by a sense of autonomy and self-initiation, with no reward except for the activity itself. Intrinsic motivation (IM) is defined as engaging in conduct that is intrinsically pleasant or enjoyable. IM is not instrumental in nature, which means that it is intrinsically motivated activity is not dependent on any outcome (Legault, 2020).

Much of the research on motivation and creativity has focused on intrinsic motivation, which is thought to be important in encouraging creative performance. Indeed, it is widely assumed that intrinsic drive is the primary moderator through

which personal and contextual factors influence creativity (Steele et al., 2017). Student intrinsic motivation is positively correlated with student creativity. Creativity in higher education is crucial for effective learning and a nation's strategic goals, as it is a key factor in achieving high levels of learning (Wang, 2022).

Intrinsic motivation is an important phenomenon for educators, as it is a natural wellspring of learning and achievement that can be systematically catalyzed or undermined by parent and teacher practices (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In contrast to extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation is linked to creativity and vitality (Deci and Ryan, 2008, cited in Legault, 2020).

According to Harmer (1991), motivation, particularly extrinsic incentives, is critical in second language (L2) learning for a variety of functional reasons. This desire might be fueled by outside reasons such as passing tests, getting better employment, or getting into universities. Students or teachers, for example, may learn English to get high incomes in international organizations or scholarships for higher education overseas (Tuan, 2012), as well as to gain recognition, win contests, and complete school-related activities (Proctor et al., 2014). The best type of motivation is intrinsic motivation, which promotes enjoyment, persistence, and psychological well-being. Extrinsic motivators, such as recycling and following traffic regulations, may encourage non-intrinsic actions, which may conflict with human liberty and intrinsic drive. Evidence reveals, however, that extrinsic motivators have a large cost to learning and autonomous behavior (Legault, 2020).

Working on activities with little interest or enjoyment, despite the possible rewards, is an example of extrinsic motivation. This sort of motivation does not imply that a person will not like the activity, but rather that the expectation of the external reward will keep them motivated even when the task is less enjoyable (Jafari, 2013). Extrinsic motivation (EM) is a behavior that aids in the achievement of an external goal, such as obtaining a bonus or studying for a test. Environmental responsibility is an example of an external motivation (Legault, 2020).

I. METHODOLOGY

The research data came from primary school teacher trainees at the Kandal Teacher Training Center in Cambodia. This section highlights the current study's methodological difficulties. According to Tuan (2012), questionnaires were used as a tool to examine questions in the quantitative approach to collect motivational study data. Questionnaires are written instruments that ask respondents a series of questions or assertions and then present them with alternatives on how to reply. This method is critical for analyzing learning motivation since it simplifies concepts such as motivation. The survey approach was utilized to acquire data on students' inner and extrinsic motivation for learning English. This useful method allows researchers to understand beliefs, opinions, characteristics, and behavior, making it an effective tool for collecting data on phenomena that cannot be directly observed.

Keo et al.'s (2022) questionnaire, which was divided into intrinsic and extrinsic incentive dimensions, was administered in English. The measures, which ranged from 1 to 20, were designed to elicit respondents' perspectives on the motivations for learning English, with items 1 to 10 assessing intrinsic motivation and items 11 to 20 covering extrinsic motivation. Respondents were in their second year of study at Kandal Primary Teacher Training Center. The overall number of trainees that participated in the study was 53 (a response rate of 77.94% out of a total of 68).

Result and discussion

Results

TABLE 1. Participant's demographic information

Demographic	Value	N	Percentage
Gender	Male	14	26.40%
	Female	39	73.60%
Age	18 - 20	4	7.50%
	21 - 23	37	69.80%
	24 - 26	11	20.80%
	27 – Up	1	1.90%

Table 1 shows that respondents were separated into two groups: men (14.40%) and women (39.60%). Four (7.50%) of those who responded were between the ages of 18 and 20. 37 (69.80%) of those who responded were between the ages of 21 and 23. There were 11 trainees aged 24 to 26 (20.80%), and just one trainee was 27 or older. In a nutshell, female primary teacher trainees outnumber males by 47.20%. Furthermore, 69.80% of primary school teacher trainees were between the ages of 21 and 37.

Questionnaires

Table 2. Primary teacher trainees' intrinsic motivation in learning English.

No	**Intrinsic motivation**	**M**	**SD**	**Min**	**Max**
1	I learn English because I like it.	4.15	.41	3.00	5.00
2	I like learning English because I enjoy it.	4.05	.41	3.00	5.00
3	I learn English because I feel happy when I learn it.	4.13	.48	3.00	5.00
4	I learned English because I like learning about people's cultures.	3.88	.64	2.00	5.00
5	I learn English because I like making more friends.	3.86	.76	2.00	5.00
6	I learn English because I like listening to English.	4.01	.63	2.00	5.00
7	I learn English because I feel interested in it.	4.01	.45	3.00	5.00
8	I learn English because I feel that the language is fun.	3.84	.60	2.00	5.00
9	I learn English because I like reading texts in English.	4.07	.54	3.00	5.00
10	I learn English because I like keeping in touch with foreign friends.	3.75	.70	2.00	5.00
Total of intrinsic motivation in learning English		3.97	.56	2.50	5.0

Table 2 reported that the majority of the primary school teacher candidates at the Kandal Primary Teacher Training Center stated that they enjoy learning English because they feel positive about it, with a Cronbach's Alpha of.87 for all 10 items of a questionnaire assessing intrinsic motivation. They learn it because they like it (M=4.15). Then, when

they take English lessons or learn the language, they are delighted (M=4.13). Additionally, Kandal primary school teacher trainees (M=4.07) must be able to read English. This might be an indication that they can do more important actions or jobs by utilizing English as a medium thanks to their ability to understand the language. Last but not least, Kandal primary teacher trainees (KPTTC) also like learning English since it allows them to communicate with outsiders (M=3.75).

Table 3. Primary teacher trainees' extrinsic motivation in learning English.

No	Extrinsic motivation	M	SD	Min	Max
11	I learn English because I need it for my study.	4.35	.55	3.00	5.00
12	I learn English because I need admiration from others.	3.35	.94	1.00	5.00
13	I learn English because I need to search for documents.	4.13	.52	3.00	5.00
14	I learn English because I need to use it in my future career.	4.22	.54	3.00	5.00
15	I learn English because I need to become acknowledgeable person.	3.94	.69	1.00	5.00
16	I learn English because my school needs me to learn.	3.81	.76	2.00	5.00
17	I learn English because I need to win speaking competitions.	3.69	.72	2.00	5.00
18	I learn English because I want to appear more educated.	4.35	.48	4.00	5.00
19	I learn English because I want to get a good job.	4.35	.59	3.00	5.00
20	I learn English because I want to pass the exam.	4.05	.60	3.00	5.00
Total of extrinsic motivation in learning English		4.02	.63	2.50	5.00

Table 3 demonstrates that the majority of primary teacher trainees in Cambodia like studying English because of three key factors regarded to be extrinsic motivational features of learning English (Cronbach's Alpha=.88). They acquire English as a result of continuing their education (M=4.35), becoming more educated (M=4.35), and obtaining a suitable employment (M=4.35). This demonstrates that English is an important element of their lives since they want to pass the examinations (M=4.05) and subsequently be recognized (M=3.94). Finally, the ability to compete in various speaking competitions persuades people to learn English (M=3.69).

TABLE 4. **Paired Samples Statistics**

Teacher trainees' overall motivation in learning English (N=53)

N	Types of motivation	M	SD	Min	Max
1	Intrinsic	3.98	.393	2.50	5.00
2	Extrinsic	4.03	.45	2.50	5.00
3	Overall	4.00	.42	2.50	5.00

According to Table 4, in overall both types of motivation, intrinsic (M=3.98) and extrinsic(M=4.00), influence on the primary teacher trainees similarly. This report notifies to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are crucial that encourage the primary teacher trainees to learn English.

Table 5. Paired Differences of Intrinsic and Extrinsic motivation

Pair	M	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Intrinsic and Extrinsic motivation	-.049	.35	-1.01	52	.31

When we compare the mean differences between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in learning English of the primary teacher trainees, it is comparable to the data in Table 4 but only slightly different (M=-.049). Additionally, there are no

differences between the degree of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in learning English for Kandal primary teacher trainees at the Kandal Primary Teacher Training Center (KPTTC), in Kandal Province, Cambodia, according to the t test result (-1.01) and p value (P=.314).

Finding and discussion

According to the finding of this study in Table 5, both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation influenced the trainees to learn English are not different with the p value (p= .31) which is not significant. This can be not in line with Harter & Jackson's research highlights the negative correlation between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, suggesting that individuals are either intrinsically or extrinsically motivated towards an object (Park, 2011).
Moreover, the findings from this study show that the primary teacher trainees used both of the types of motivation to learn English, as shown in Table 4, intrinsic(M=3.98) and extrinsic (M=4.03).

Intrinsic motivation is a natural human tendency, influenced by social contexts that shape perceived autonomy and competence, fostering active pursuits of interests (Legault, 2020). This can be similar to the study conducted by Seng (2023). The researcher studied 72 junior university students, 58.3% female and 41.7% male, pursuing a Bachelor of Education in Teaching English as a Foreign Language. They were Khmer-speaking and aged 17-42, with an average of 20 years (Seng, 2023). Seng's study (2023) found that students use both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation to study English at university, with intrinsic motivation having a larger mean value than extrinsic motivation, with a cumulative mean of 3.51 and 3.9, respectively.

Even though, the degree of motivation between intrinsic and extrinsic is not different with the p value (P= .31), we can see the means of both types are so slightly different. It seemed that the external factors a bit higher influence on English learning motivation. It is similar to the study by Daif-Allah and Aljumah (2020). The study reveals that university students in Saudi Arabia prioritize integrative and instrumental goals for learning English. While integrative motivation is essential for success, instrumental motivation is ranked first among students. Early studies emphasized integrative motivation, but now emphasize instrumental motivation. Instrumental orientation is seen as more important than integrative, as Saudi students often lack interaction with target group members (Daif-Allah & Aljumah, 2020). However, according another study by Seng (2023), the researcher found that UIN Ar-Raniry English students have higher intrinsic motivation than extrinsic motivation in learning English, indicating a positive impact on their attitude and achievement, which can be beneficial for both students and teachers in the teaching process (Fachraini, 2017).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study compares intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in English learning among primary teacher trainees at the Kandal Primary Teacher Training Center in Cambodia, finding no significant differences in motivation levels. The study highlights the positive motivation of Kandal Primary teacher trainees towards learning English as a foreign language, recommending adaptations to EFL courses, teaching methods, and assessment tools. This exploration can be the key signs to know the trainees from generation to the other generation. As shown, most trainees were motivated to learn English because of the better careers because they felt that English could provide them with chance of getting better additional jobs such as part-time ones. Similarly, with high potential of English proficiency, the trainees hoped that English helped to pursue their education. Therefore, trainers should remember all the above information to motivate students such as teacher trainees so that they can learn better. Furthermore, all Primary Teacher Training Centers should invite educational counselors to guide them for their future vision. This is because being just a primary teacher is not the end of their educational lives. As we all know that education is a lifelong process.

Recommendations for future research

Because the sample is just 53 trainees among 68, the author suggests the future study of this topic with more that 100 samples or use both methods of qualitative and quantitative.

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