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**MOTIVATION AND GENDER DIFFERENCES IN LEARNING
SPANISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN A MALAYSIAN
TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY**

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – The purpose of this study is to investigate student motivation and gender differences in learning Spanish as a foreign language in the Malaysian context.

Method – Student motivation was measured by means of a self-report questionnaire based on Gardner's social psychological model. The questionnaire contained both close-ended and open-ended questions to provide both quantitative and qualitative information. The participants consisted of 448 students from Universiti Kuala Lumpur Malaysian Spanish Institute where Spanish is a compulsory subject.

Findings – The findings showed that the students were highly motivated toward learning Spanish. No significant differences were found between integrative and instrumental motivations and gender. Nonetheless, both quantitative and qualitative results suggested that the students were slightly more instrumentally inclined but simultaneously appreciated the target language and culture. This was particularly the case for the female students who showed significantly higher instrumental motivation in Spanish learning.

Significance – The study supports the claim that motivation is context-specific and at the same time provides a better understanding of a Malaysian situated phenomenon. Its findings have underscored that different learning contexts have different impacts on student motivation. It is hoped that the understanding of Malaysian student motivation may contribute useful insights to improve the curriculum and instruction of foreign language learning.

Keywords: Motivation; Instrumental motivation; Integrative motivation; Spanish as a foreign language; Technical education; Context-specific.

Motivation and Gender Differences in Learning Spanish as a Foreign Language in a Malaysian Technical University

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INTRODUCTION

The significance of foreign language learning in the global landscape of higher education is augmented axiomatically amidst the flow of economic, political, academic and socio-cultural interests across borders (Ciobanu & Bujor, 2011; Warner, 2011). In this regard, various foreign languages are offered in different campuses of the Universiti Kuala Lumpur. The offerings include Arabic, French, Korean, Mandarin, Russian and Spanish, and are a reflection of the University's commitment to strengthen its engagement with the world. Moreover, to echo the upsurge of internationalization, the university has become a partner of the Erasmus Mundus Grant under the AREAS (Academic Relations between Europe and Asia) Project. This international connection not only strengthens the research efforts among member countries, but also affirms the importance of foreign language learning. According to Zubairi and Sarudin (2009), foreign language learning in national higher education is vital for developing competitive human capital whereby cross-cultural and international communication abilities can be fostered. Similarly, with reference to the recent Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013), multilingual proficiency stands as a challenge in the nationwide educational reform. Under such circumstances, it is therefore imperative to identify some main factors that influence successful foreign language learning.

The process of language learning is said to be affected by numerous variables. Among the affective variables, motivation emerges as one of the most crucial determinants in language learning (Dörnyei, 1994; Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008; Jiménez Luna, 2005; Zubairi & Sarudin, 2009). From a psychological perspective, motivation is a multifaceted and complicated construct that none of the existing theories can fully depict its complexity (Dörnyei, 1998; Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008). According to the literature, Gardner

and Lambert (1959) initiated a research on motivation in foreign language achievement. This research led them to distinguish the two major types of motivation: instrumental and integrative motivations (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Since then, the concept of motivation evolved in parallel with the development of psychology. This phenomenon has breathed new life into the foreign language learning terrain, reconfiguring its research landscape with influential studies on L2 motivation from around the world. At this juncture, it must be emphasized that the present study focuses explicitly on investigating student motivation (a) based on Gardner's social psychological model and (b) the possible gender differences in learning Spanish in a multilingual foreign language context where cultural immersion is not a relevant factor. Other L2 learning motivation concepts will not be covered in this paper.

Gardner's Social Psychological Model

As it has been typically known, the main emphasis in Gardner's social psychological model is grounded in the social dimension. This model is primarily based on Gardner's (1985) definition of motivation as "the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity" (p. 10). With reference to Dörnyei (1994), Gardner (1960, 1985, 2005, 2010), Gardner and MacIntyre (1991), Masgoret and Gardner (2003), Saville-Troike (2006), Schmidt, Boraie, and Kassabgy (1996) and Wong (2011), both integrative and instrumental motivations can be broadly defined as follows. Integrative motivation refers to a positive disposition or attitude toward the target language group, culture or the language itself. This orientation implies an interest or desire to interact with and even become similar to target language speakers. This may not necessarily signify complete integration or assimilation into the target community though it involves a great deal of emotion or affective factors. An integratively motivated language learner sees great value in being able to use the target language and feels the need to learn and experience different cultures. On the other hand, instrumental motivation refers to the potential pragmatic advantages of the target language proficiency, such as language development, monetary reward and socio-economic advancement. An instrumentally motivated language learner emphasizes on learning the target language as an instrument to pass an examination, access additional

information (e.g. research and academic materials), get a better job or a higher salary, expand career or business opportunities, or even gain more prestige and power in certain social circumstances. According to Li (2014), a substantial number of studies in various parts of the world have employed Gardner's social psychological model. Therefore, considering its dominant and convincing character in L2 motivation empirical studies, the present study is aimed at initiating a knowledge base for relevant future endeavors in relation to L2 motivation, particularly in foreign language and technical education domains.

Numerous studies conducted using Gardner's model favored integrative motivation in determining the success of second language learning. Initially, Gardner (1985) indicated that integrative motivation was more crucial than instrumental motivation in second language learning. Gardner, Day, and MacIntyre (1992) then reported that learners with higher integrative motivation showed superior vocabulary acquisition. Hernández (2008) revealed that integrative motivation was a significant predictor of student achievement in the foreign language classroom. Similar results were also found in the Iranian context. Gholami, Allahyar, and Rafik-Galea (2012) reported that integrative motivation prevailed among high achievers who outperformed others significantly, while Nahavandi and Mukundan (2013) discovered higher degree of integrative motivation among Iranian EFL (English as a Foreign Language) engineering students. Recently, McEown, Noels, and Saumure (2014) reported that integrative motivation was an important motivational orientation among Canadian learners of Japanese as a foreign language.

On the other hand, there were studies that revealed contradictory results. Related studies reported that EFL learners inclined toward instrumental motivation in Bangladesh (Jakir Masum, 2016), China (Kyriacou & Zhu, 2008), Iran (Ahmadi, 2011; Aliakbari & Ahmadi, 2014; Mehrpour & Vojdani, 2012; Vaezi, 2009), Jordan (Al-Khasawneh & Al-Omari, 2015; Tahaineih & Daana, 2013), Malaysia (Che Mat & Md. Yunus, 2014; Muftah & Rafik-Galea, 2013), Oman (Al-Mahrooqi & Denman, 2014), Taiwan (Warden & Lin, 2000), Thailand (Wimolmas, 2013), as well as the United Arab Emirates (Qashoa, 2006). The findings from these Asian studies hence, challenged the generality of Gardner's integrative orientation in different sociocultural contexts. However, it should be noted that most of these studies were predominantly done in an

EFL context. Empirical evidence for other foreign languages, for instance, Spanish, is still lacking. Hence, the present study seeks to expand the breadth of this area of L2 motivation research.

L2 Motivation and Gender Differences

Henry (2011) reviewed a wealth of empirical studies from different sociocultural contexts and confirmed the existence of systematic gender differences in L2 motivation. These studies indicated that females were more motivated to learn foreign languages and they demonstrated more positive dispositions toward target language speakers and cultures. These sociolinguistic findings further strengthened the stereotypical belief that “girls are better at language learning than boys” (Heinzmann, 2009, p.19). Males, on the other hand, were characterized as more ethnocentric, with independent self-construal and stronger ability in math and physics.

Most studies acknowledged the superiority of female learners in foreign language learning when compared to their male counterparts (for recent EFL: Henry, 2009, 2011; Iwaniec, 2015; Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2013; Ryan, 2009; and for other foreign languages: Kissau, 2006; Kissau, Kolano, & Wang, 2010; for more previous studies: Henry, 2011), and particularly in the core affective domain of integrativeness (Ahmadi, 2011; Ghazvini & Khajehpour, 2011; Henry, 2011; Okuniewski, 2014). Correspondingly, there were studies that reported completely contradictory results (Al-Bustan & Al-Bustan, 2009; Polat, 2011) or no significant gender differences in L2 motivation (Akram & Ghani, 2013; Azarnoosh & Birjandi, 2012; Henry, 2011). According to Henry (2011), these inconsistent results might be due to selection and/or sociocultural factors. Since gender-related behavioral differences are contextual and cultural-dependent, more researches are needed, particularly in contexts where social practices, hierarchies and ideologies are different from those in the West. These studies will help provide a better understanding of gender differences in L2 motivation and contribute to the literature on the gender gap.

As mentioned earlier, motivation is one of the most crucial determinants in foreign language learning. To be able to identify student motivations and expectations will help inform curriculum designers and policy makers, in turn to derive better approaches

to maximize positive outcomes in foreign language learning. However, only a few studies have been conducted to investigate the FL motivational orientations in the Malaysian context. Along the same lines, there are even fewer studies focused on the level and types of motivation among students of Spanish as a foreign language. In this regard, the primary interest of this study is to examine student motivation in the Malaysian context, with specific emphasis on studying (a) the initial level of student motivation toward learning Spanish at the university, (b) whether the students are integratively or instrumentally motivated toward learning Spanish, and (c) the possible relationship between gender and motivation toward learning Spanish.

METHODOLOGY

Research Setting and Participants

This research was conducted in one of the campuses of the Universiti Kuala Lumpur. In this campus, two Spanish introductory courses (at the Diploma and Bachelor levels) are offered every semester. Both courses consist of 42 contact hours delivered in the context of learning Spanish as a foreign language, encompassing lectures, tutorials, and out-of-classroom activities. The university adopts a student-centered approach and formative assessment methods. Over a 14-week semester, students are required to accomplish various linguistic activities as outlined in the course syllabi to develop different language skills.

The participants of this study consisted of a total of 448 foreign language students from Diploma programs who had enrolled successfully in the compulsory Spanish course during the research period. They were technical majors, with ages ranging from 18 to 35, and were graduates from various local and vocational learning institutions, namely Institut Kemahiran Mara (IKM), Institut Kemahiran Belia Negara (IKBN), polytechnics, matriculation colleges, among others. On the whole, they were new to Spanish language learning and had limited exposure to fundamental aspects of Hispanic language and culture. In most cases, the students of this university have fairly similar social heritage backgrounds

and for this reason, it could be assumed that these participants were representative of the entire student population in the entire university. The admissions statistics for these cohorts of students showed that there were more male students enrolled in the two programs mentioned earlier, with the male to female ratio being 3:1. The total sample consisted of 72% male and 28% female students, which corresponded closely to the sex ratio of the total student population in this campus. Table 1 summarizes the demographic information of the participants.

Table 1

Demographic Distribution of the Participants

Variable		Frequency	Percentage
Age	18-25	444	99.10
	26-35	4	.90
Race	Malay	444	99.10
	Chinese	0	.00
	Indian	2	.45
	Others	2	.45
Gender	Male	323	72.10
	Female	125	27.90
Multilingualism	Malay and English	376	83.93
	+ 1	61	13.62
	+ 2	9	2.00
	+ more	2	.45

Note. +1 = able to communicate in only one additional language besides Malay and English; +2 = two additional languages; + more = more than two additional languages.

Instrument

To elicit the student participants' initial motivational pattern toward learning Spanish as a foreign language, a bilingual self-report motivation questionnaire (MQ) written in Malay and English was created. In view of its practicality and simplicity, Johnson's (2012)

entrance questionnaire was adapted as the MQ of this study. The original MQ was mainly based on Gardner's socio-educational model of instrumental/integrative motivation. The adapted MQ comprised two constructs, namely integrative and instrumental motivations as measured by six items each. This was consistent with the many versions of a MQ that contained three to six measuring items for each construct. The MQ for this study was divided into two sections. The first section was intended to collect participant demographic information. The second section contained 12 randomly ordered statements that corresponded to the two aforementioned motivation constructs. The respondents were requested to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with these statements by marking one of the five points of the Likert scale ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*, including an additional neutral response, *not applicable* (NA). According to Tsang (2012), the inclusion of the NA item is deemed appropriate in order to avoid forcing respondents to choose a direction or fabricate an opinion just to appear opinionated. This helps prevent reaching misleading conclusions in the study. Moreover, this section ended with two open-ended questions that allowed the respondents to express freely their personal perspectives. The first question attempted to gather any additional reasons why the respondents wanted to learn Spanish, while the second question was intended to seek the reasons why the respondents were not motivated to learn Spanish. This section hence provided both quantitative and qualitative information, whereby the qualitative feedback helped to elaborate further the quantitative findings.

Procedures

To increase the reliability and validity of the instrument, the first version of the MQ was subjected to a inter-rater reliability measure (Bresciani et al., 2009). In other words, this version was reviewed by six raters, comprising internal and external lecturers, academic coordinators and administrative staff representing the different ethnicities, before the study was carried out. Moreover, a pilot test of this instrument was administered to 20 non-participating students to ensure its content validity. In effect, opinions and suggestions from all raters and non-participating students were taken into account for final reformulation in order to minimize possible

misinterpretations. The final version of the MQ was then administered to the participants during the first week to measure student initial motivational tendencies toward Spanish learning. The reason why the administration of the MQ was conducted during the first week of the academic semester was to avoid possible influence on student perceptions of motivation by other teacher-related factors, such as teaching methods, teacher support, and classroom management, among others. All the participants were given adequate information regarding the purpose of the research and the nature of the survey. The questionnaire was completed anonymously in the classroom to ensure a true reflection of the respondents' perspectives. The data obtained was analyzed using SPSS version 20.0.

There were two phases in the data analysis process. Firstly, the Keiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was performed to ensure the appropriateness of the samples involved for factor analysis. Secondly, to estimate internal consistency reliability of the motivational factors, Cronbach's alpha coefficients was computed using the overall MQ scores and also scores for each construct. Subsequently, a factor analysis (principal component analysis with varimax rotation) was conducted to explore the underlying variables of the MQ for construct validity. Al-Khasawneh and Al-Omari (2015) recommended the following criteria to decide on the level of student motivation toward language learning: The mean score of 1.0-2.49 is considered inadequately motivated, 2.5-3.49 is moderately motivated, and 3.5-5.0 is highly motivated. In order to investigate differences in motivational types or orientations and gender in L2 motivation, Compare Means analyses including independent-samples *t*-tests, paired-samples *t*-tests were performed at a significance level of .05. The responses from the two open-ended questions were subjected to a content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Only valid responses were thematically coded and categorized by the researchers with respect to the relevant motivational orientations. Discrepancies in interpretation and categorization were resolved collaboratively among the researchers.

RESULTS

A total of 448 questionnaires were collected comprising 5 nonresponse cases and 77 with NA responses. Since there were

only 5 (1.1%) nonresponse cases, *mean imputation*, an often used simple imputation method in the social sciences was adopted to compensate for item-nonresponse bias (Durrant, 2009). However, the distribution of NA responses (17.2%) was not random; they were hence coded zeros (Welch, 2012). Therefore, the final number of input for subsequent data analyses was maintained at 448 as an attempt to improve overall estimates.

Factor Analysis

A total of 12 items (statements) were analyzed and each of them contained 448 samples. The overall KMO was .831 and the *p*-value for Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was .000. This signified a valid representation of the samples to the population under study and all the variables were therefore considered acceptable for factor analysis. The overall Cronbach's alpha for the MQ was .76. According to Montshiwa and Moroke (2014), an alpha level of .70 or higher is considered acceptable. This implied that the MQ was consistent and reliable. However, the internal consistency scores for the two constructs were .62 (instrumental) and .60 (integrative) respectively. In this regard, Dörnyei (2007) highlighted that somewhat lower coefficients were to be expected due to the complexity of the second language acquisition process. Similarly, Tavakol and Dennick (2011) argued that "a high alpha coefficient does not always mean a high degree of internal consistency" (p.53). The alpha value is affected by the length of the questionnaire. A short questionnaire usually has a smaller alpha. Based on these accounts, the MQ was thus considered acceptable.

The factor analysis was computed on all the participant responses to the 12 MQ items. According to Montshiwa and Moroke (2014), a factor loading exceeding 0.3 for a sample size $n=300$ is considered significant and one can assume a strong relationship between the item and the corresponding factor. Table 2 shows the Cronbach alpha coefficients for the two factors and the corresponding factor loadings for all items. The factor loadings obtained were considered interpretable and thus, it could be claimed that the MQ had construct validity.

Table 2

Descriptive and Reliability Statistics for the Two Motivational Factors

	Item no.	L	M(SD)
Factor 1: Integrative motivation (6 items, Alpha = .60)			
I always wanted to learn a foreign language	b	.48	4.41(.57)
It is fun	d	.68	4.48(.63)
Its culture interests me	e	.69	4.10(.84)
It is a romantic language and speaking it makes me more attractive	f	.68	4.26(.92)
I want to be able to make friends and converse with Spanish speakers	h	.50	4.35(.71)
I need to communicate with a friend or a family member who speaks Spanish	i	.57	3.54(1.26)
Factor 2: Instrumental motivation (6 items, Alpha = .62)			
It is one of the compulsory subjects in this institute	a	.74	4.34(.75)
I heard it was easy to obtain an A in this subject	c	.58	3.49(.86)
I want to study abroad in a country where Spanish is spoken	g	.78	4.22(.92)
It will help me to get a job in the future	j	.62	4.47(.75)
It will help me to read academic materials, magazines, etc.	k	.49	4.36(.64)
I would like to travel to Spanish speaking countries	l	.64	4.45(.89)

Note. L = Factor Loading; M = mean; SD = standard deviation

Level of Student Motivation toward Learning Spanish

Table 3 shows the level of motivation of the participants toward learning Spanish. The overall mean score of 4.21 was within the range 3.5-5.0 and this indicated that the students were highly motivated toward learning Spanish.

Level of Integrative and Instrumental Motivations

Table 4 shows the comparison of the mean scores for integrative and instrumental motivation of the participants. The participants were found to be integratively (M=4.19) and instrumentally motivated (M=4.22). Based solely on the mean scores, the students were

more instrumentally motivated. However, paired-samples *t*-test showed that there was no significant difference between these two motivations. Statistically, the participants were found to be equally integratively and instrumentally motivated. See Table 2 for the mean score of each item for the two constructs.

Table 3

Level of Motivation of the Participants

	n	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Motivation	448	2.17	5.00	4.2057	.43517
Valid N (listwise)	448				

Table 4

Integrative and Instrumental Motivations of the Participants

	n	M	SD	MD	t	p-value	Remark
Integrative	448	4.1897	.49289	.3199	1.587	0.113	NS
Instrumental	448	4.2217	.47633				

Note. n = number of subject; M = mean; SD = standard deviation; MD = mean difference; NS = no significant difference.

Level of Student Motivation and Gender

Table 5 shows five comparisons of the mean scores of student motivations according to their gender. Female participants obtained a higher overall mean score on motivation (M=4.33) compared to the male participants (M=4.16). Based solely on the mean scores, the female participants were more motivated in learning Spanish. However, independent-samples *t*-test showed that there was no significant difference between these two groups of participants. Statistically, both male and female participants were found to be equally motivated in learning Spanish.

Female participants again obtained higher mean scores for both motivational orientations (M=4.30, integrative; 4.37, instrumental) than the male counterparts (M=4.15, 4.17 respectively). Based on the mean scores alone, the female participants were more integratively as

well as instrumentally motivated compared to the male participants. However, independent-samples *t*-tests again showed that there were no significant gender differences between these two orientations. Statistically, both male and female participants were found to possess equal integrative and instrumental motivations toward learning Spanish as a foreign language.

Table 5

Comparisons of Motivation Based on Gender

	G	n	M	SD	MD	t	p-value	Remark
Motivation (IT)	M	323	4.1563	.44739	.17699	3.923	.078	NS
	F	125	4.3333	.37433				
Integrative (IT)	M	323	4.1476	.50930	.15109	2.935	.253	NS
	F	125	4.2987	.43083				
Instrumental (IT)	M	323	4.1651	.48768	.20288	4.115	.123	NS
	F	125	4.3680	.41278				
Motivation (PT)	M	323	4.1476	.50930	.01754	.716	.474	NS
	M	323	4.1651	.48768				
Motivation (PT)	F	125	4.2987	.43083	.06933	1.991	.049	S
	F	125	4.3680	.41278				

Note. IT = Independent samples *t*-test; PT = Paired samples *t*-test; G = gender; M = male; F = female; n = number of subject; M = mean; SD = standard deviation; MD = mean difference; NS = no significant difference; S = significant difference.

Paired-samples *t*-test showed that there was no significant difference between the two orientations among the male participants. In other words, male participants showed equal integrative and instrumental motivation toward learning Spanish. Nevertheless, there was a significant difference between these two orientations among female participants. This finding indicated that the female participants showed significantly higher instrumental motivation than integrative motivation in learning Spanish.

Qualitative Findings

A total of 157 responses (male = 74%; female = 26%) were collected from the two open-ended questions. A total of 98% of these responses

were considered valid to the first question and 97% to the second. It is worth noting that only 26% (n=117) of the total respondents provided personal comments and some of them presented multiple responses for each question. Therefore, the number of responses was not consistent with the actual number of respondents involved.

The valid responses (n=125) for the first question (*additional reasons why you want to learn Spanish*) were categorized into the two motivational constructs: Integrative motivation (40%) and instrumental motivation (60%). The most commonly reported reason among the responses was cognitive-instrumental (25.6%) including becoming multilingual, knowledgeable and to further one's studies. This was followed by utilitarian motives (24%), such as economic advantages, personal security and enhancement, helping tourists and other general advantages. The target language itself contributed 21.6% of the responses whereby respondents indicated that Spanish was an interesting language with a unique sound system and enjoyed popularity. A total of 10.4% of responses revealed that learning Spanish was a matter of pleasure, such as travelling and getting new experiences. Another 9.6% indicated that they desired to communicate with other Spanish language speakers and lastly 8.8% showed interest in Spanish culture including its history, movies, music, football, among others. These findings were consistent with the quantitative results and therefore, the participants could be considered as more instrumentally motivated while simultaneously appreciating the target language and culture. Table 6 shows some examples of the qualitative responses based on the motivational orientations.

The valid responses (n=29) for the second question (*reasons why you are not motivated to learn Spanish*) revealed that the participating students felt demotivated because they assumed Spanish was difficult (34.5%), the packed class schedule and syllabus (20.7%), contextual irrelevance (13.8%), low self-esteem (10.3%) and other reasons (20.7%) that highlighted the respondents' idiosyncrasies and preferences, which included their disinterest, laziness, and that Spanish was not a technically-based core subject, among others. These findings were consistent with the studies by Aladdin (2013) and Qashoa (2006) in which subject-related demotivating factors ranked first in foreign language learning.

Table 6

Examples of Qualitative Responses from Content Analysis

Orientation	Frequency (%)	Examples (unedited)
<u>Instrumental</u>		
Cognitive	32 (25.6)	I want to study in a country where Spanish is spoken; it is great if someone can learn more than two or more language
Utilitarian	30 (24.0)	Easy to get work; can help spanish tourist if they are lost in Malaysia
Pleasure	13 (10.4)	To enjoy when in new country; it is a new languages and it also give me a new experience. Learning Spanish is very exciting.
<u>Integrative</u>		
Language itself	27 (21.6)	The sound of Spain language attract me to learn this language; I am attracted to Spanish because I just love to hear Spanish people talk
Interpersonal	12 (9.6)	I want to communicate with other friends who are live at Spanish; to add more friend at Spain
Culture	11 (8.8)	To watch Spanish movies without subtitles; it is fun to know more about the world as I love to learn every history that has been written down in the past

DISCUSSION

Firstly, quantitative findings from this study indicated that the students in the Malaysian technical institution were highly motivated toward learning Spanish as a foreign language. This result was consistent with the findings in various Asian studies (Che Mat & Md. Yunus, 2014; Muftah & Rafik-Galea, 2013; Wimolmas, 2013; Zubairi & Sarudin, 2009) though these studies were mainly in the English language learning domain. Besides, this result was supported by the qualitative findings, which indicated that the students valued Spanish as a language for knowledge acquisition, and it was generally beneficial. Thus, it would seem to suggest that, although Spanish was being offered as a compulsory subject, the students were well aware of the importance of foreign language learning in the current educational landscape.

Secondly, both quantitative and qualitative results revealed that the students showed instrumental as well as integrative motivations toward learning Spanish. This finding echoed the studies by Chalak

and Kassaian (2010), Gholami, Allahyar, and Rafik-Galea (2012), Nahavandi and Mukundan (2013) and Zubairi and Sarudin (2009). In fact, this finding provided further support for the claim by Brown (2000), who pointed out that the two motivational orientations were not necessarily mutually exclusive. He found that “most situations involve a mixture of each orientation” (p. 163). This implied that the students did not deliberately show any form of motivation toward learning Spanish. This indirectly highlighted the context-specific factors affecting L2 motivation. Among the integrative statements, *it is fun* (M=4.48) and *I always wanted to learn a foreign language* (M=4.41) prevailed. However, *I need to communicate with a friend or a family member who speaks Spanish* (M=3.54) obtained the lowest mean score with 30% (n=30) of NA responses. This showed that the students desired to explore the Spanish language, but were less likely to assimilate into the target language community.

On the other hand, the instrumental statements, for instance, *it will help me to get a job in the future* (M=4.47) and *I would like to travel to Spanish speaking countries* (M=4.45) showed the highest mean scores. This finding indicated that most of the students regarded Spanish as a tool for better career prospects and pleasure. Meanwhile, *I heard it was easy to obtain an A in this subject* (M=3.49) reported the lowest score. This result was supported by the qualitative findings where *Spanish is difficult* was reported as the most demotivating reason among students learning Spanish. For the teacher, being aware of these reasons may lead to an increased awareness of their learners’ beliefs and how it should impact teacher classroom practices. Such findings are a source of useful inputs for teachers and policy makers in gauging effective ways in foreign language learning. In sum, the students learn Spanish for professional purposes while at the same time wish to know better the language and culture.

However, this result contradicted the findings of other studies in the technical domain (Chosri & Intharaska, 2011; Mohd Redzuan, Anak Buda & Abdullah, 2014; Redfield, Figoni & Levin, 2009; Warden & Lin, 2000) which supported the predominance of instrumental motivation in EFL. Although the female students in this study showed significantly higher instrumental motivation, the overall statistics reported that the students in general exhibited a mixture of

both motivations. One possible explanation for such a result in this study may be related to the instrumentality of the Spanish language itself. In reality, English is the common pragmatic language for professional and academic advancement. Spanish, however, seems to be of secondary importance to the students as most jobs do not require Spanish in the local context. Another possible reason may be attributed to the students' multilingual characteristics. According to Canagarajah and Wurr (2011), "multilinguals prefer to develop a range of codes for a range of purposes" (p. 3); in other words, multilinguals are always open to negotiating diverse languages in their everyday life and develop their competence in combination with different codes along the way.

With respect to gender, the result was consistent with that in several other studies (Akram & Ghani, 2013; Azarnoosh & Birjandi, 2012; Henry, 2011) where gender differences did not emerge significantly. This result seems to support Hyde's (2005) gender similarities hypothesis, hence rejecting the stereotypical belief that boys generally have lower motivation in language learning. One possible reason for such a result in this study may be related to gender differences in the trait of competitiveness. According to Buser, Niederle, and Oosterbeek (2014, p. 1409), "boys are substantially more competitive than girls". It is hence possible that male students intended to be competitive against their female counterparts to prove that they could also perform as well in language learning. This could be because females had already shown their capability to excel in male-dominated technical subjects in the first place. Another possible explanation may be due to the students' perception of foreign language learning. On the one hand, Spanish is commonly regarded as one of the subjects which provided some balance to the technical emphasis in most subjects in the institution. Language learning is thought to have the potential to neutralize some stresses associated with technically-based core subjects. On the other hand, the qualitative findings showed that both genders perceived foreign language learning as beneficial. In this regard, language learning is not considered as a female-dominated subject, because both genders seem to be equally well-informed regarding the challenges in learning the Spanish language. Besides, Universiti Kuala Lumpur practices gender equality in education (Sulaiman, Mohd Salleh, Mohamad, & Lai, 2015) and it provides all students with the same

necessary knowledge, exposure and opportunity. In sum, this study has clearly supported the validity of the critiques against the social perception that math are for boys and language for girls. These assumptions, however, require more future researches to provide further sound empirical evidence.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study showed noteworthy differences compared to other L2 motivation studies. Overall, the technical students were highly motivated toward learning Spanish as a foreign language. No significant differences were found between integrative and instrumental motivations and gender. Nonetheless, both quantitative and qualitative data seemed to suggest that the students were slightly more instrumentally motivated and at the same time showed their appreciation for the target language and culture. This was particularly true for the female students who showed significantly higher instrumental motivation in Spanish learning. In summary, the study has provided further support for the claim that motivation is a situated phenomenon, whereby different language learning contexts have different impacts on student L2 motivation.

The limitations of this study are basically due to the boundaries of the inquiry. The study focuses on a setting where Spanish is a compulsory foreign language subject. The students are multilinguals and predominantly males. Although the research process and data analyses may yield results useful to similar settings, the study does not claim to be able to generalize its findings to other Spanish language learners worldwide. Moreover, according to Li (2014), the self-report questionnaire may not be always reliable to reflect true information from respondents. As a result, this study should be seen as building a knowledge base for further researches in seeking more accurate information of student motivational attributes that will lead to success in foreign language learning. Future studies may consider using Dörnyei's (2009) contemporary L2 Motivational Self System concept to investigate students who do not fit naturally into the traditional L2 motivation models. This may afford useful insights to improve the curriculum and instruction of foreign languages.

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