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EXTRINSIC AND INTRINSIC MOTIVATION AND ITS IMPACT ON STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

**MOTIVACIÓN EXTRÍNSECA E INTRÍNSECA Y SU IMPACTO EN
EL DESEMPEÑO DE LOS ESTUDIANTES EN UNA CLASE DE
INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA**

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Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and its impact on students' performance in the EFL classroom

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ABSTRACT

When it comes to learning a second language motivation is key. Therefore, the present study sheds some light onto both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation the main reasons people embark on learning a language as well as how to increase or maintain motivation through the process. To gather the information a mixed research approach was implemented. The participants were eight grade students from a private institution in Heredia, Costa Rica and university students from Ciudad Neily whose age range from 13 to 48. The samples were gathered through a survey to find out their perceptions on the language and possible motivators and how it affected their performance. The results unveiled that intrinsically motivated students outperform students who only possess an instrumental motivation. Additionally, class dynamics along with professors' attitudes play a vital role when learning a language.

Keywords: motivation, extrinsic, intrinsic, EFL, performance

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Motivación extrínseca e intrínseca y su impacto en el desempeño de los estudiantes en una clase de Inglés como Lengua Extranjera

RESUMEN

Cuando se trata de aprender un segundo idioma, la motivación es clave. Por lo tanto, el presente estudio aborda la motivación tanto intrínseca como extrínseca, así como las principales razones por las que las personas se embarcan en aprender un idioma y que factores aumentan o permiten mantener la motivación a lo largo del proceso. Para recopilar la información se implementó un enfoque de investigación mixto. Los participantes fueron estudiantes de octavo grado de una institución privada de Heredia, Costa Rica y estudiantes universitarios de Ciudad Neily cuyas edades oscilan entre 13 y 48 años. Las muestras se recolectaron a través de una encuesta para conocer sus percepciones sobre el idioma y posibles motivadores y cómo estos influyen en su desempeño del mismo. Los resultados revelaron que los estudiantes intrínsecamente motivados superan a los estudiantes que sólo poseen una motivación instrumental. Además, las dinámicas de clase junto con las actitudes de los profesores juegan un papel vital a la hora de aprender un idioma.

Palabras clave: motivación, extrínseca, intrínseca, inglés, desempeño

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INTRODUCTION

Speaking a second language offers a huge world of possibilities for those who do so. Opportunities such as studying abroad, better job opportunities, and even travelling. However, being able to develop a second language might be a difficult process. What learners overlook is that this learning process can be eased by understanding the different factors that interfere in it. One of those factors is motivation. Understanding the motives one has for learning a second language, enhances the learning process. There are different types of motivation and they affect the learners and their language performance in different ways. In this research project such types of motivation will be discussed and analyzed as well as the effects they have on language development. Other elements related to motivation will be discussed as well. Finally, ways in which motivation can be improved or maintained will be described.

Literature Review

Learning a second language is a complex process that requires effort, time, and motivation. The latter is considered as one of the key factors in second language learning because without it the development of a language is harder. As stated by Dörnyei (1998), “[m]otivation has been widely accepted by both teachers and researchers as one of the key factors that influence the rate and success of second/foreign language (L2) learning” (p. 117). Without motivation second language learners might not find enough stimulus to study the language, their performance can get affected negatively, and they can even dropout the course. In fact “[w]ithout sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals, and neither are appropriate curricula and good teaching enough on their own to ensure student achievement” (Dörnyei, 1998, p. 117) That is why this affective variable is essential when it comes to a second language development.

There are two types of motivation, the one that comes from outside sources and the one that comes from the inside. The external motivation is called *extrinsic motivation* and it is the need to do something because there are external rewards like money, trips, better jobs, etc. The motivation that comes from the inside is called *intrinsic motivation* and it is the desire to do something because it is enjoyable or interesting (Benabou and Tirole, 2003, p.55). Similarly, Garner and Lambert (1972) proposed two types or motivational orientation in second language learning which are *integrative orientation* and *instrumental orientation*. Integrative orientation is related to the students’ personal interests in the target language and



instrumental orientation has to do with the practical value of learning a second language (as cited in Gass, Susan, and Mackey, 2012, pp. 396-397).

Integrative and instrumental motivation are a part of the social-psychological construct proposed by Gardner (1985). This theory was comprised by two motivational antecedents, three motivational components, and three attitudinal factors. The motivational antecedents are the integrative and instrumental motivation also known as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation already mentioned. The motivational components are the motivational intensity, the desire to learn the language, and the attitudes towards learning the language. Whereas the attitudinal factors are interested in foreign languages, attitudes toward the target language community, and attitudes toward the L2 learning community. For the purpose of this research project, only the motivational antecedents (integrative and instrumental motivation) are considered for discussion. The other elements are reviewed with a more recent theory (*L2 Motivational Self System*).

The students' language performance is related to the type of motivation that drives them. According to Benabou and Tirole (2003) when students have extrinsic motivation towards the language they “can perform extrinsically motivated actions with resentment, resistance, and disinterest or, alternatively (p. 55). On one hand, intrinsic motivation enhances students' learning process; “[t]his natural motivational tendency is a critical element in cognitive, social, and physical development because it is through acting on one's inherent interests that one grows in knowledge and skills (Benabou and Tirole, 2003, p.56). In this way, the type of motivation that elicits better results is the intrinsic motivation. This is supported by Delaney and Royal (2017) “intrinsic motivation enhances both performance and productivity” (p. 129). This type of motivation makes the learner feel good about the process because he/she enjoys it, so the results tend to be positive. In the same way, Noels, Clément, and Pelletier (1999) affirmed that “[c]orrelational analyses determined that stronger feelings of intrinsic motivation were related to positive language learning outcomes, including greater motivational intensity, greater self-evaluations of competence, and a reduction in anxiety” (p.22). On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is not less effective; however, since it is external there must be outer reinforcement for its effectiveness.

Moreover, if there is no motivation students might not perform well nor will they develop a language the same rate as motivated students; “feeling amotivated was associated with lower competence” (Noels, Clément, and Pelletier, 1999, p. 28)



In the topic of motivation, external and internal factors play an important role in students' attitudes towards the target language. However, Dörnyei (2009) placed the individual as the key factor in motivation. The *L2 Motivational Self System* theory proposed that the vision the learner has of himself/herself is central for motivation. As Dörnyei (2009) stated "the L2 Motivational Self System [...] offers new avenues for motivating language learners [...] through generating a language learning vision and through imagery enhancement" (p. 32). This theory includes three main components of the self; (1) *ideal L2 self*-deals with the students' desires to become certain person or ideal self. The students are motivated to reduce the differences between who they are and who they want to become. (2) *Ought-to L2 Self* is related to the the person the students believe they need to become to be successful and that is not necessarily related to whom they want to become. This component is closely related to extrinsic motivation. (3) *L2 Learning Experience* is concerned with the learning environment the students are immersed in in terms of whether it is motivating to continue learning the language or not (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 29). Understanding how the students feel regarding themselves and their learning environment is essential to maintain or increase their motivation. Understanding where this motivation comes from, is another crucial element to consider.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research project is to describe and quantify the factors that have an impact on students' motivation and the practical ways to increase or maintain their motivation. Therefore, a mixed method was used; Hernández, Fernández, and Baptista (2010) remarked that mixed research methods represent a set of systematic, empirical and critical research processes that involve the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, as well as their integration for discussion (p. 546). The participants of the study are eighth grade high school students from a private institution of Heredia province (an urban area of Costa Rica) and university English students from Ciudad Neily (a rural area of Costa Rica) who are in their third year of the major. There were 30 participants and their ages range from 13 to 48 years old. The samples for the investigation project were gathered through a survey of two parts. The I part aimed at gathering the participants' age and the II part included three questions to gather students' perceptions on the moments and reasons why they feel motivated and ways to increase or maintain their motivation. The project intended to compare the motivation of high and low performers.



DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS

Table 1. Reasons why the high-performance participants feel motivated.

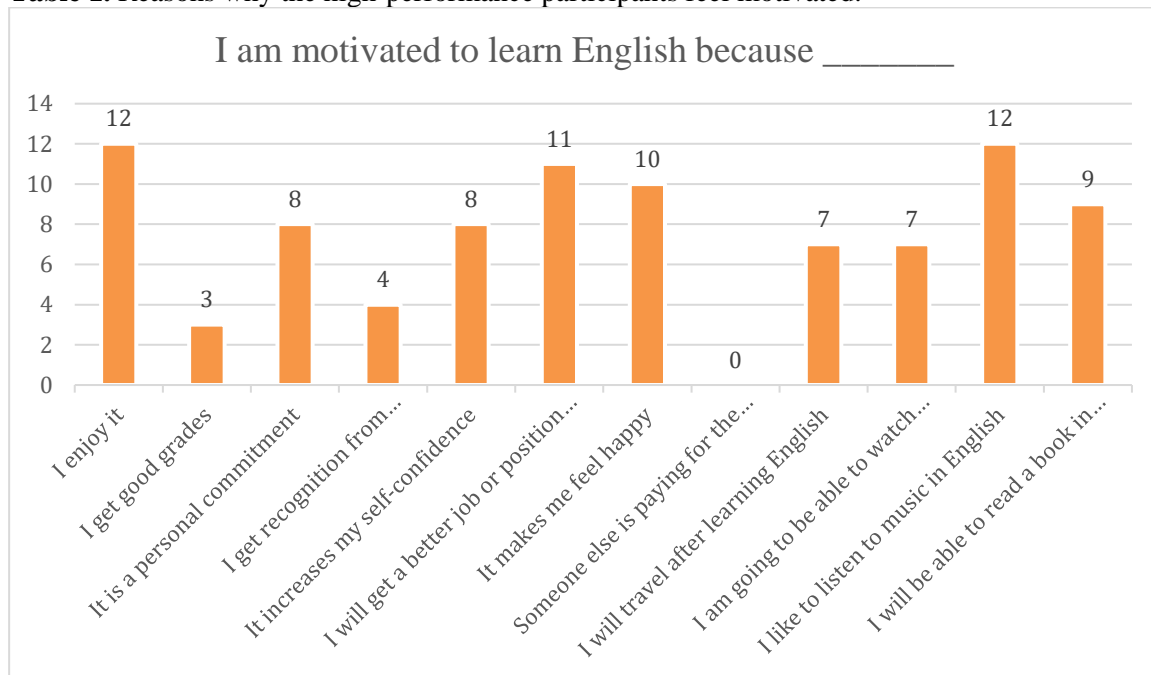
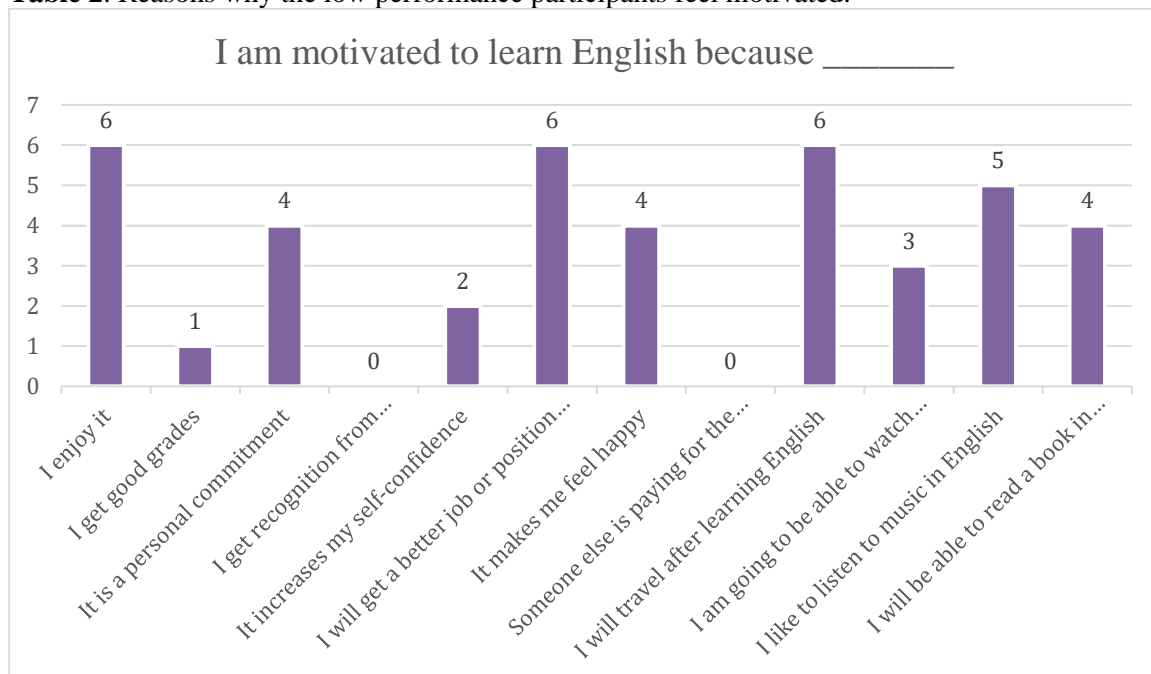


Table 2. Reasons why the low performance participants feel motivated.



After analyzing Table 1 and Table 2 about the reasons why participants feel motivated, it can be observed that high performers are intrinsically motivated to learn the second language because they enjoy it and because they like to listen to music in English. Extrinsic options such as getting good grades or getting recognition from professors, friends, and family are the least voted ones. Both high performers and low performers share the option “I enjoy it”. However, they differ in the others since low performers feel

extrinsically motivated to learn the language because they will get a better job or position in their workplace and they will travel after learning english.

The reasons that motivate high performance students are intrinsic or integrative. As Benabou and Tirole (2003) expressed, *intrinsic motivation* is the desire to do something because it is enjoyable or interesting (p.55). Differently, low performance students feel motivated to learn the language because of the reward they are going to get afterwards being this an extrinsic or instrumental motivation. Benabou and Tirole (2003) stated that *extrinsic motivation* is the need to do something because there are external rewards like money, trips, better jobs, etc. (p.55).

Table 3. Moments in which the high performers are motivated.

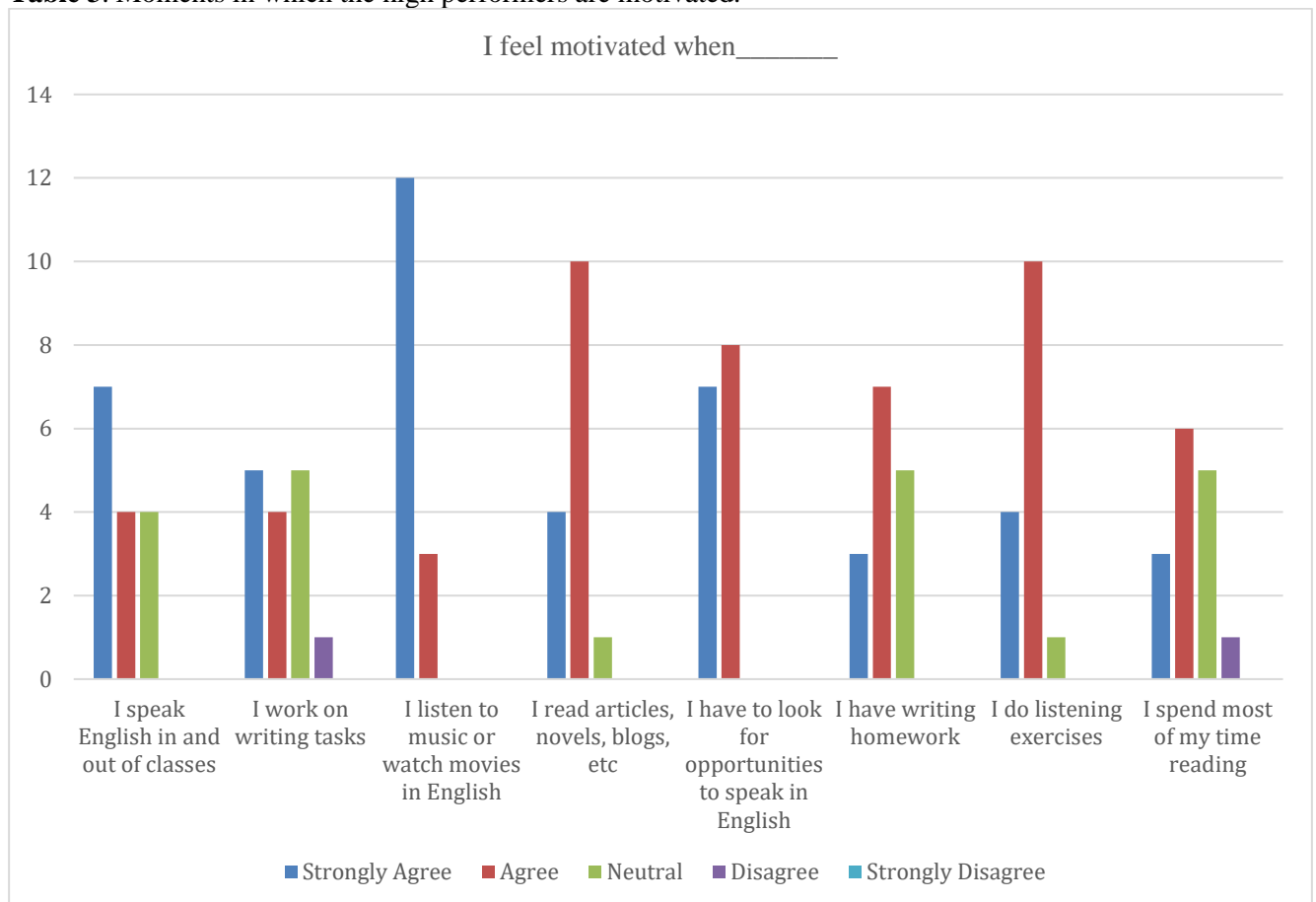


Table 4. Moments in which the low performers are motivated.

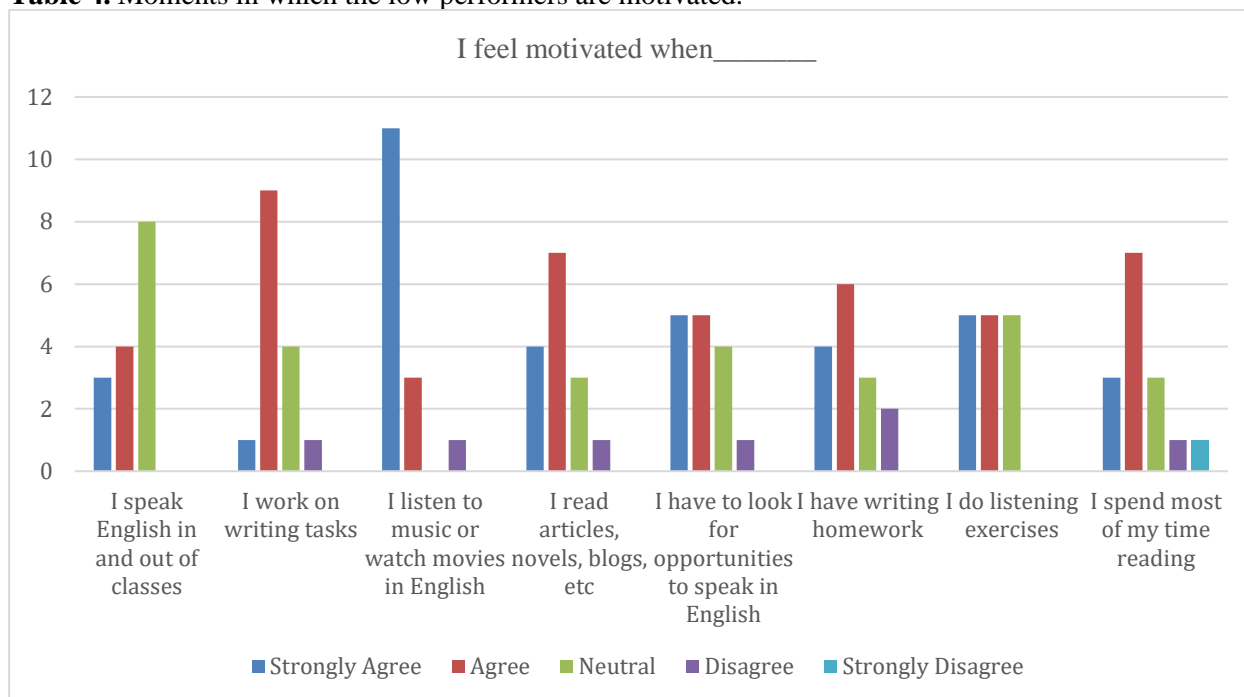


Table 2 and Table 3 show the moments in which the participants feel motivated. High performers feel the most motivated when they listen to music or watch movies in English, read articles, novels, blogs, etc, and when they do listen exercises. They feel less motivated when they work on writing task and when they spend most of their time reading. For low performers on the other hand, they feel the most motivated when listen to music or watch movies in English and when they work on writing tasks. Similarly to high performers, low performers feel less motivated when they have to spend most of their time reading. Interestingly, low performers also reported feeling less motivated when they have writing homework, when they have to look for opportunities to speak in English, when they have to read articles, blogs, novels, etc, and when they listen to music or watch movies in English.

According to Benabou and Tirole (2003) when students have extrinsic motivation towards the language they “can perform extrinsically motivated actions with resentment, resistance, and disinterest or, alternatively (p. 55). Low performers show disinterest for the majority of the options where they have to produce the language. On the contrary, high performers show a positive attitude for majority of the situations presented; “[t]his natural motivational tendency is a critical element in cognitive, social, and physical development because it is through acting on one’s inherent interests that one grows in knowledge and skills (Benabou and Tirole, 2003, p.56).

Table 5. Factors that would increase or maintain high performers' motivation.

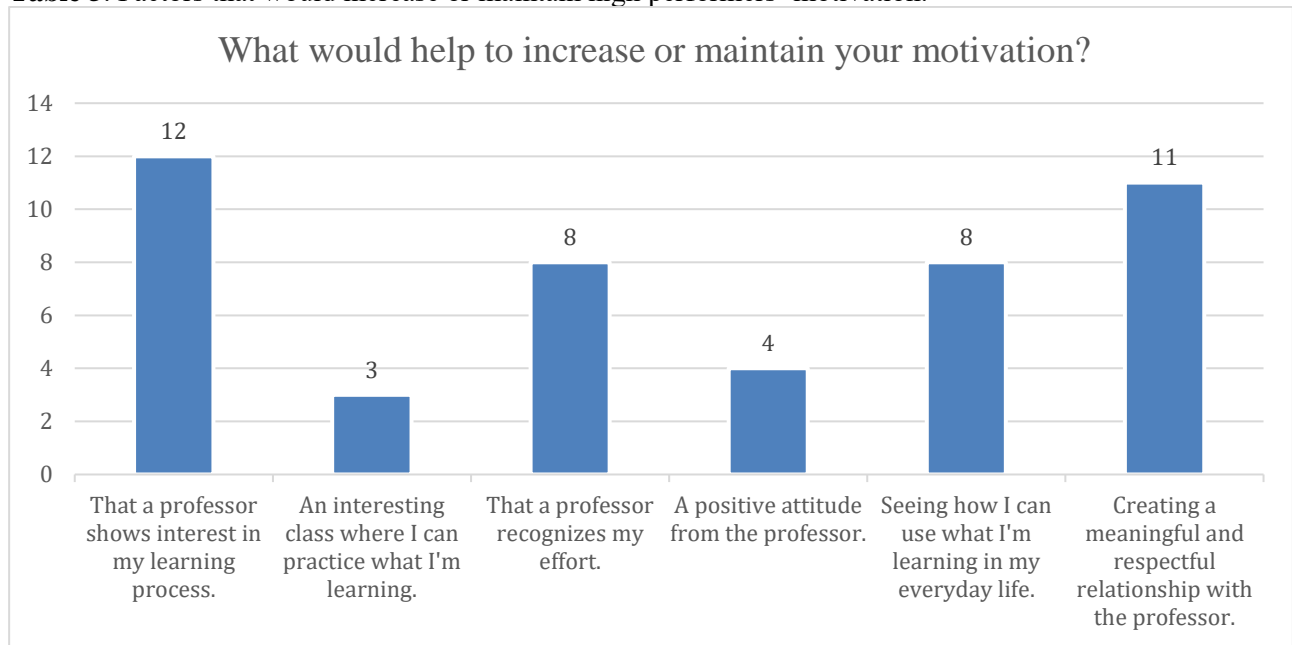
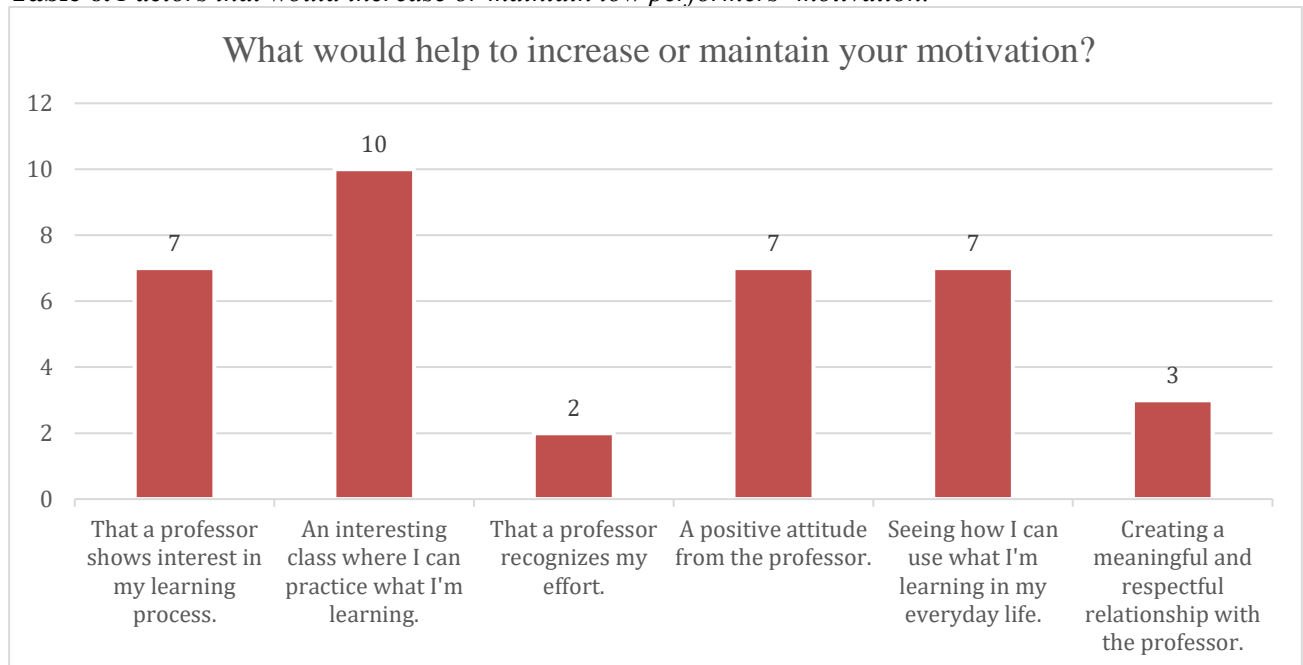


Table 6. Factors that would increase or maintain low performers' motivation.



The information obtained from table 5 and 6 shows that for high performers the instances that would increase or help maintain their motivation are that the professor shows interest in their learning process and that they can create a meaningful and respectful relationship with the professor. However, the option that does not contribute to their motivation is an interesting class where they can practice what they are learning. Interestingly, this option was voted, for low performers, as the one that contributes the most to increase or maintain their motivation. Alongside with a positive attitude from the professor and seeing what they are

learning in their everyday life. Lastly, low performers do not find the option “that the professor recognizes my effort” as a determining one.

According to the *L2 Motivational Self System* theory proposed by Dörnyei (2009) the *L2 Learning Experience*, which is concerned with the environment the students are immersed in when learning the language, is a key aspect to maintain them motivated. If the motivation is absent or if there is a lack of reinforcement the motivation decreases rapidly. This is supported by Noels, Clément, and Pelletier (1999) who stated that “the more students feel amotivated, the less effort they will expend” (p. 30).

Generalizability Analysis

Motivation is a common topic in second language learning. This affective variable is a key aspect that has been studied for several years in order to find out where it comes from and how it affects the process of learning a language. Motivation is dynamic which means it constantly changes and it is different in every individual being these some of the reason why one should not overgeneralize the results of the research. After evaluating the results and theory and for the purpose of this research study, the results supported the theory analyzed when it comes to the language performance of intrinsically and extrinsically motivated students. Integrative oriented students tend to perform better than instrumental oriented students. The reasons why they are interested in the language differs as well. Intrinsically motivated students tend to choose options that they enjoy or that they find interesting, On the contrary, extrinsically motivated students chose options that would provide them with rewards such as trips or better job positions.

CONCLUSIONS

Learning a language involves many factors. One of those is motivation and the effects it has on the students learning process. Those effects will vary depending on the type of motivation the students show whether it is intrinsic/integrative or extrinsic/instrumental. There are other elements that interfere with students’ motivation such as the *L2 Learning Experience* or in other words the environment in which the students are immersed. The investigation elicited results that show that intrinsically motivated learners tend to perform better in their second language, while extrinsically motivated learners might experience more difficulties to develop it. Additionally, the class environment has an effect on students’ motivation as well, whether it is the professor’s attitude or the class dynamics. For students to have a professor that shows interest in their



learning process, creates a suitable environment for language learning to happen. Furthermore, to create a class where they can practice what they learn is a key element as well.

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