

# Cambodian High School Students' Motivation in Learning English: One-Way ANOVA Analysis

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## ABSTRACT

English has become a world language. It has been used formally as the first, second, or third language in many countries worldwide. Therefore, for decades, English language learning and teaching have become the focus for educators, teachers, students, and all other concerned sponsors. There are different contributions to the success of English language learning and teaching. Motivation is one of the most important components that push students to succeed in learning English. The current study employed a quantitative design, analyzing the existing data of 265 Cambodian high school students to explore if there were significantly different motivation levels in learning English according to their grades and age ranges. The results prove that there were no significant differences across the students' grades and age ranges of motivation in learning English. Finally, a future study using different designs at other educational institutions or with a bigger sample size was suggested.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

English is now the word heard everywhere by different people from different nationalities in the world. There are different important aspects of English, two of which will be revealed in this section. The first sub-section deals with the general introduction to English, while the second sub-section deals with English and French in Cambodian public schools today. Through reading this section, the readers can picture foreign languages and English education in the Cambodian Context.

### 1.1 General Introduction to English

When talking about the English language, all the people in the world know what it is. Originally, English was not the world language, but now it is. Em and Mao (2022) noted that English originated in England and then it spread around the world. This language has influenced many countries, and they have even accepted this language to put in their school curriculums. Some countries even use English as their official language and second language.

English has been the official language of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) for the time being. ASEAN, which is comprised of 10 member states: Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, the Philippines, Myanmar (or Burma), Laos, Vietnam, Singapore, and Cambodia (MoEYS, 2001), uses English as their official language,

especially during their annual summits and discussions. Therefore, all ASEAN members have turned their focus on foreign languages to English more than other languages, and it has been included in their school curriculums so that the students can learn this language from a young age. Likewise, Cambodia has included English in the school curriculum from Grade 4 as the first step, and then it was introduced in Grades 1, 2, and 3 without English textbooks. It will also be included in kindergarten soon (MoEYS, 2015).

By knowing English, individuals, especially students, can benefit a lot from it. For example, English allows people to communicate across borders. People who know English can communicate with people from different countries worldwide. When you travel abroad, the language is not a barrier anymore if you know English. As a result, you can communicate and survive if you are going to live abroad easily. Besides, English is the language for higher education. When students pursue their studies at higher education levels or in foreign countries, English can help them succeed. However, if they do not know English, they are going to fail in their studies because of the language barrier.

Moreover, English is the language of doing research and publication. If you are on a research project, you need to look for different documents to meet your demands, but if you do not know English, there won't be many documents for you to review. Then when you publish your articles or books, you had better publish in English rather than your language, which is not English, because articles or books written in English attract the world's readers (see Heng et al., 2021). Previously, English was brought into Cambodia during Lon Nol or the Khmer republic regime between 1970 and 1975 (Neau, 2003). During that time, teachers and students were encouraged to teach and learn English, but then people seemed not interested in learning and teaching English because the French language had influenced them for a longer time.

English, along with other foreign languages, was then kicked off the stage upon the arrival of the Khmer Rouge or Pol Pot regime between 1975 and 1979 (Neau, 2003). Due to the political invasions of the communist bloc, English and some other foreign languages were not allowed to exist in public school classrooms or other private classes in Cambodia until 1989 (Igawa, 2008). It was also noted that teachers and students were encouraged to learn Russian and Vietnamese instead, and those who learned and taught English or French were confined, sentenced, or jailed (Retka, 2018; Sok, 2009).

## **1.2 English and French in Cambodian Public Schools Today**

These days English and French have been included in the Cambodian public school curriculum from Grade 1. From Grade 1 to Grade 6, these foreign languages have been practised two hours a week. Primary school teachers can choose to teach their students English or French. Most Cambodian primary school teachers (approximately 98%) teach their students English, not French. In an informal online survey, only two out of around 100 primary school teachers in Cambodia teach their students French. They teach their students only French alphabets (*A, B, C...*), and some simple words like "*garçon, fille, livre*", or simple sentences like "*Je vais à l'école*" or "*Elle lit son livre*". Others teach their students English, while some do not teach them foreign languages because they do not know them.

For secondary levels (lower and upper), foreign languages (English and French) were demonstrated six hours a week from Grade 7 to Grade 12. English and French can be chosen by the students as the first or second foreign languages for their studies. For example, English is the first foreign language, French is the second foreign language, and vice-versa. Normally, the first foreign language is set to be taught four hours a week, while the second one is set to be taught two hours a week. However, the actual implementation is different (see Table 2 for examples).

Notably, in real practice, if English is taught in one class, French is not possible in that class, and vice-versa. These days, most secondary schools in Cambodia encourage their students to choose English, not French, for some reasons: English has become a world language and has been used in most fields; there are no French textbooks at school or the bookshop; there are not many French teachers at each school now; and many French teachers do not know French well because they have been asked to teach other subjects like Khmer, Geography, or History instead. As a result, many people think that French will be forgotten in Cambodian schools in the future even though there are some teachers of French in Cambodia and a French teacher training department inside the National Institute of Education (NIE) of Cambodia. It is because very few Cambodian students are interested in learning French.

Table 1. Information about foreign language teaching hours set by MoEYS (2015)

No.	Grade	Subject	Hour
1.	Grade 1	Foreign languages	2 hours per week
2.	Grade 2	Foreign languages	2 hours per week
3.	Grade 3	Foreign languages	2 hours per week
4.	Grade 4	Foreign languages	2 hours per week
5.	Grade 5	Foreign languages	2 hours per week
6.	Grade 6	Foreign languages	2 hours per week
7.	Grade 7	Foreign languages	6 hours per week
8.	Grade 8	Foreign languages	6 hours per week
9.	Grade 9	Foreign languages	6 hours per week
10.	Grade 10	Foreign languages	6 hours per week
11.	Grade 11	Foreign languages	6 hours per week
12.	Grade 12	Foreign languages	6 hours per week

Table 1 shows two hours a week for foreign language teaching in Cambodian schools from Grade 1 to Grade 6 and six hours a week from Grade 7 to Grade 12. However, there are differences in actual practices, as presented in Table 2. The differences might happen due to the overload of unimportant subjects in the school curriculum. Thus, foreign

language hours need to be cut off, or it might be because the implementation of the new curriculum framework is not fully put into effect.

Table 2. Information about English Textbooks used in Cambodian Public Schools

Grade	English Textbook	Real Practice	Publisher
Grade 1	No Official Textbook*	2 hours per week	Not available
Grade 2	No Official Textbook*	2 hours per week	Not available
Grade 3	No Official Textbook*	2 hours per week	Not available
Grade 4	English Grade 4**	2 hours per week	MoEYS
Grade 5	English Grade 5**	2 hours per week	MoEYS
Grade 6	English Grade 6**	2 hours per week	MoEYS
Grade 7	English Grade 7, English is Fun Book 1, English is Fun Book 2	4 hours per week	MoEYS
Grade 8	English Grade 8, English is Fun Book 3, English is Fun Book 4	4 hours per week	MoEYS
Grade 9	English Grade 9, English is Fun Book 5, English is Fun Book 6	4 hours per week	MoEYS
Grade 10	English Grade 10	4 hours per week	MoEYS
Grade 11	English For Cambodia Book Five	2 hours per week	MoEYS
Grade 12	English For Cambodia Book Six	2 hours per week	MoEYS

Source: Keo et al. (2022, p. 109).

\*Most teachers in government schools do not teach their students English at all because most of them are old and do not know English.

\*\*There is no specialized teacher of English for primary school. Thus, young teachers who know English are often selected to teach students at these grade levels.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Types of Motivation

To succeed, one has to be motivated. It ignites enthusiasm, brings happiness when objectives are achieved, and inspires hope in the face of setbacks. Self-motivated individuals have the propensity to pursue objectives with vigour and perseverance. A self-motivated leader possesses traits such as a strong desire, distinct visions, and unwavering dedication to a business. Self-driven leaders constantly raise the bar for performance and compete not just with one another but also with their subordinates. There are two common types of motivation, as follows.

Intrinsic motivation occurs when a person is motivated to fulfil personal demands by internal sources (Amabile, 1993; Ryan & Deci, 2000). People do not do things because they have to; they do them because they like them. When you are intrinsically driven, you love a hobby, a course of study, or the development of skills for the fulfilment of education and enjoyment. Intrinsic implies internal or inside oneself. People will not be retiring with

mansions or private planes; instead, they will find fulfillment in assisting others and improving their worst days. Examples include looking into chances for personal growth so that you may feel competent at a task or setting the bar high enough to become a mentor or role model. Whatever you do, you do it for your satisfaction and achievement (Pelletier, 1995).

Extrinsic motivation occurs when a person is motivated by external elements that are provided by or under the control of others (Deci et al., 1992; Deci & Ryan, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Pay and praise are two suitable examples. This kind of incentive is prevalent across society and is employed all the time. Extrinsically motivated people are those that are driven to perform, accomplish, study, or do anything based on a carefully considered outcome rather than for enjoyment, personal growth, or pleasure (Cerasoli et al., 2014).

## 2.2 Empirical Studies of Motivation in Learning English in the Cambodian Context

There have been some studies on motivation in learning English. For example, Em et al. (2018) conducted a study at Northline upper-secondary school in Phnom Penh. The study employed a quantitative design in order to examine students' different types of motivation. The results showed that the students were more intrinsically motivated to learn English as a foreign language (see Em et al., 2022).

Another study was conducted at a Buddhist primary school to explore Cambodian Buddhist monk students' motivation in learning English. The study employed a quantitative design using descriptive statistics. There were 93 Buddhist monks participated in the study. The results revealed that the participants were more extrinsically motivated toward learning English as a foreign language (Keo et al., 2022a; Keo et al., 2022b).

Currently, Sor et al. (2022a) conducted a study with 265 high school students in a province to examine their motivation. The study employed a quantitative design with descriptive and inferential statistics. The results showed that students were very driven to study English and that their motivation was more extrinsic than intrinsic. Female students' extrinsic motivation was significantly higher than that of male students (see Sor et al., 2022b).

Phann et al. (in press) conducted a deeper understanding of the existing data of 93 Buddhist monk students after being allowed by Keo et al. (2022a) to seek if there were statistically significant differences regarding students' perceptions of learning English from three different grades, and found that there were statistically significant variations in the motivation of students across grades. Phann et al. (in press) found that compared to the students in Grade 5, Grade 6 students were more enthusiastic about learning English. Additionally, Grade 6 students were more driven to learn English than Grade 4 students, and Grade 5 students were more motivated than Grade 4 students to study English. According to these findings, Grade 4 students were the least motivated to study English, while Grade 6 students were the most driven.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Research Design and Participants

The current study is a subset of a larger investigation. The study used a quantitative approach. The participants were chosen at random from a Cambodian high school in a province. 265 high school students without restrictions participated in the study. Additionally, it was made clear to all study participants that they might leave the study at

any moment if they felt it violated their privacy or was not confidential (see also Keo et al. 2022a).

### 3.2 Data Analysis

In the current study, one-way ANOVA was taken into account. The main goal was to determine whether there were any statistically significant differences between the students in the target school's Grades 10, 11, and 12.

## 4. FINDINGS

This section presents the findings from the One-Way ANOVA Analysis concerning students' grade levels and age ranges.

### 4.1. Students in Grades 10, 11, and 12

Table 4. One-Way ANOVA Analysis of Students in Grades 10, 11, and 12

Types of Motivation		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Intrinsic	Between Groups	0.215	2	0.107	0.394	0.675
	Within Groups	71.474	262	0.273		
	Total	71.689	264			
Extrinsic	Between Groups	0.638	2	0.319	1.295	0.276
	Within Groups	64.560	262	0.246		
	Total	65.198	264			
Overall	Between Groups	0.398	2	0.199	0.976	0.378
	Within Groups	53.382	262	0.204		
	Total	53.780	264			

As revealed in Table 4, there were no significant differences in the intrinsic motivation variable (Sig = 0.675). There were also no significant differences in extrinsic motivation (Sig = 0.276). Overall, there were also no significant differences when combining the two types of motivation (Sig = 0.378). In the case of difference, *P-value* must be lower than 0.05, as a normal case in social sciences. Thus, the results mean that the students from the three grades did not have any statistically different motivation for learning English.

## 4.2 Students in Different Age Ranges

Table 5. One-Way ANOVA Analysis of Students in Different Age Ranges

Types of Motivation		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square		F	Sig.
Intrinsic	Between Groups	0.146	2	0.073	0.266	0.766	
	Within Groups	71.543	262	0.273			
	Total	71.689	264				
Extrinsic	Between Groups	0.009	2	0.005	0.019	0.981	
	Within Groups	65.189	262	0.249			
	Total	65.198	264				
Overall	Between Groups	0.036	2	0.018	0.088	0.916	
	Within Groups	53.744	262	0.205			
	Total	53.780	264				

As revealed in Table 5, there were no significant differences in the intrinsic motivation variable (Sig = 0.766). There were also no significant differences in extrinsic motivation (Sig = 0.981). Overall, there were also no significant differences when combining the two types of motivation (Sig = 0.916). In the case of difference, *P-value* must be lower than 0.05, as a normal case in social sciences. Thus, the results mean that the students from the three-different-age ranges did not have any statistically different motivation for learning English.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The current study found that there were no statistically significant differences in the level of motivation for learning English as a foreign language among the students in Grades 10, 11, and 12. The results mean that those students had different perceptions of motivation to learn English, but their perceptions were not significantly different. The study also found that there were no statistically significant differences in the level of motivation for learning English as a foreign language among students from different age ranges. The results mean that those students had different perceptions of motivation to learn English, but their perceptions were not significantly notable either.

Based on the current study, it can be noticed that one part of the findings are different from those of Phann et al. (in press), who found that students from different grades had statistically different perceptions of motivation in learning English as a foreign language. The results from the current study and those of Phann et al. (in press) are the indicators informing the Education Ministry, education policymakers, and concerned education stakeholders to take essential actions to make learning and teaching foreign languages in Cambodia, especially English, better.

## 6. CONCLUSION

According to the results of the current study, students in Grades 10, 11, and 12 did not demonstrate statistically different levels of desire to study English as a foreign language. The findings imply that although those students' assessments of their drive to study English varied, their perceptions did not differ considerably. According to the study, there were no statistically significant variations in the students' levels of motivation for studying English as a foreign language among those in the various age groups. The findings indicate that those students' assessments of their drive to study English varied, although these beliefs were not statistically significant.

The findings, together with those from the related studies, prove that the students had similarly high motivation to learn English as a foreign language in the Cambodian Context. Thus, all related parties should keep the existing actions going on and take additional necessary actions to improve the process of learning and teaching.

Not so different from several Cambodian authors in the related fields, such as Em et al. (2018, 2021, 2022a, 2022b, 2022c), Em (2019, 2021a, 2021b, 2022), Em and Nun (2022), Hoeun and Em (2021), and Houn and Em (2022), we suggest that teachers' qualities be upgraded to improve students' motivation in learning English and other subjects, students' learning interests in learning, and student's academic performance; we additionally suggest that all related education stakeholders keep improving those qualities for teachers and care for students' academic performance. For example, the teachers' upgrading program at the National Institution of Education (NIE) in Cambodia was conducted to improve teachers' qualities for only three cohorts and then stopped. This action should not be stopped but will continue to enhance education quality in all fields. Additionally, we suggest teachers link motivation in learning to intercultural competence (see Bon, 2022) and evaluate students' regular learning (see Nhor et al., 2022). Then teachers should also get ready with ICT to help improve students' learning activities apart from classroom activities (see Pang et al. 2022). Finally, we also suggest a future study using different designs at other educational institutions or with a bigger sample size.

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