

Factors Influencing Motivation for Enrollment in French Junior Certificate Course at the Institute of Modern Languages: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims at identifying the main factors which influence learners' motivation to seek admission into French Junior Certificate (FJC) course offered by the Institute of Modern Languages at the University of Dhaka. A sequential explanatory mix-method research design was used to address the research questions identified. Students, teachers, and database of FJC courses were chosen as data sources to collect both quantitative and qualitative data and evidences. A total of 269 students were selected for the quantitative data related to students' background factors for the study. Besides, 12 students from six groups and 4 course teachers were selected randomly for collecting qualitative data related to factors that influence learners to pursue FJC course and challenges. The findings of the study suggest that the main motivational factors include international significance of French language, the nature of French language, desire for visiting France, love for French language and culture, desire to pursue higher studies in Francophone countries.

Keywords: motivation, French, French as foreign language, case study

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Introduction

Learning a foreign language is of immense significance in this era of globalization. People of all ages across the globe have been learning different foreign languages for multifarious reasons. The rate and route of success of these aspirants of mastering a foreign tongue strikingly vary from individual to individual due to a cornucopia of factors. Among all the determinants which influence the success in learning a foreign language, motivation is considered as a significant factor in determining the success second/foreign language learning (Yildiz, 2023; Tseng, 2021; Beck, 2004; Dörnyei, Csizer, & Nemeth, 2006). According to Tseng (2021), motivation plays a vital role in achieving success, regardless of whether you are learning a foreign language or a second language, motivation is a key factor in determining success in foreign and second language learning. Similarly, Gardner (1985) opined that motivation, in addition to anxiety, plays one of the most significant roles in learning foreign languages. In

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short, motivation is very crucial for achieving success in learning a foreign language mainly because it determines whether a learner will embark on an attempt to learn a foreign language at all or not; how much devotion s/he will put forth for the accomplishment of the task; and whether s/he will persist in learning the target language.

The Institute of Modern Languages, University of Dhaka, is one of the most important places for learning foreign languages in Bangladesh. Every year around 2000 students get admitted for learning any of the 14 foreign languages offered by the Institute of Modern Languages at the University of Dhaka. Among all the foreign language courses offered at IML, French language is one of the most demanding language courses. Per year, around 1200 admission seekers from diverse background sit for admission test in order to get admitted in French Junior Certificate course. Only 300 candidates are offered admission per year for French Junior Certificate course through a rigorous competitive admission process which includes written test and viva-voce. Thus, a group of highly motivated adult learners gets admitted to French Junior Certificate course to pursue a four-year-long French language. However, it is very alarming that nearly half of the learners drop out at different stages of the course. A close observation of the last three years of French Junior Certificate course database shows that an average of 65% of learners dropped out of the courses. By the time the students reach the Higher Diploma course (fourth year), more than 90% of students drop out of the course (IML Database, 2019). This dropout rate has a significant negative impact on the teaching-learning activities of the French language at IML. Hence, it is imperative to identify the real picture of learners' motivation for enrollment which will provide an effective gateway to explore the reasons for the prevalent overwhelming rate of dropout at IML.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this mixed method study is to identify the main factors which motivate the learners to get admission into French Junior Certificate course. The following questions have been addressed to achieve the above-mentioned goals:

- i. What factors influence learners to pursue French Junior Certificate course at IML?
- ii. To what extent age, profession, and gender of the learners are related to the motivation for enrollment in the French Junior Certificate (FJC) course at IML?

Literature Review

The term *motivation* is a complex construct which does not have a simple definition (Gardener, 2010). Dörnyei, MacIntyre and Henry (2014) added that in recent years motivation has been conceptualized as a dynamic, chaotic and complex system. The validity of their claim is discernible in literature where motivation has been defined and conceptualised in a multifarious way by different researchers. For example, Gardner (1985) defined motivation for learning a

second or foreign language 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).

Cheng and Dörnyei (2007) defined motivation as “one of the key factors determining success in foreign/second language (L2) learning” (p. 153). Dörnyei (2009) viewed motivation as a self-system composed of possible selves affecting learners’ motivational level. Johnstone (1999) considered motivation as a stimulant for achieving a specific target. For Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010), learner’s motivation has a significant impact on their willingness to initiate and sustain their pursuits of second language learning (Dörnyei, 2005). According to Ryan and Deci (2000), motivation is analogous to improvement and maintaining the pursuit of an action. For Ellis (1994) motivation is the learner’s endeavour for learning a second language because of “their need or desire to learn it” (p. 715). Gardner et al. (1976) described motivation as the learner’s intense desire to acquire the target language to communicate with the target language community. Wlodkowski (1986) suggested that motivation is a process that (a) causes an individual to investigate their behavior, (b) gives the behavior purpose and direction, (c) remains a driver of behavior, and (d) influences an individual to select a particular behavior. In Lumsden’s (1994) view, that student learner’s motivation pertains to his or her desire to involve in the learning activities. Lightbrown and Spada (2001) argued that second language learner’s motivation which is a complex phenomenon is affected by his/her needs for communication as well as attitude towards the target language community. According to Crump (1995), motivation is primarily driven by second language learners’ eagerness to learn and enthusiasm.

It has become evident from the discussion above that motivation is one the most important driving forces related to the language learner’s endeavour to learn a second language (Crookes and Schmidt, 1991). The rate of learning a language and the route of learning highly depend on the motivation of the learners (Ellis, 2004). Questions may arise about the main types of language learning. According to Gardner and Lambert (1972), there are two types of motivation for language learning: instrumental motivation and integrative motivation. The integrative motivation refers to the learners’ attempt to learn a language with an eagerness to participate in the culture of the target language community. It involves learners’ attitude to the target language community as well as their eagerness to be its part. (Moskovsky et al., 2016; Papi, 2010). For Gardner (1985), integrative motivation happens when learners intend to join the target language community and culture. On the other hand, instrumental motivation refers to learners’ attempt learn a target language with a view to achieving something practical and concrete (Hudson, 2000). Instrumental motivation is driven by a useful motive usually to support one’s occupation. Learners’ participation in the learning process and the outcome of their learning are affected by these two types of motivation. Cook (2000) believed that both of these two types of motivation are useful and effective factor for second language learning. Comparing these two types of motivation with each other, Ellis (1994) opined that integrative motivation is related to long-term success in second language learning. He believed that this type of motivation is

more competent and well-organized. This was supported by Csizér and Dörnyei's (2005) study among 4765 Hungarian elementary school-aged children. The researchers investigated the interrelationships among seven components of motivation. The result identified integrativeness as the most vital factor among all the seven components of motivation.

The idea that learners having integrative motivation would be more successful has been questioned. Some researchers such as Kachru (1992) have found that instrumental motivation has been more successful in such contexts where English has become an international language such as in India and Japan. In such contexts, learners hardly get any opportunity to use the target language or to interact with the target language community. In contrast, Gardner and MacIntyre (1991) and Williams and Burden (1997) showed that both of these two types of motivation may be equally influential in facilitating language learning. This claim has been supported by the study of Newcombe and Newcombe (2001) who reported that although learners in Wales displayed both integrative motivation and instrumental motivation for learning Welsh, they demonstrated more integrative motivation than instrumental motivations for learning the language.

According to Brown (1993), motivational continuum is thought to have intrinsic and extrinsic motivations at opposite ends, making intrinsically motivated learners more likely to succeed than extrinsically motivated learners. This holds true for retaining information for a long time which is essential to learn a target language successfully. (Crookes et al., 1991; Ellis, 1997; Taylor et al., 1977).

L2 learning always involves both external and internal reasons (Noels, Pelletier, Clement, & Vallerand, 2000). It has been argued by Noels (2001) that learners' motivation to learn a language is not determined solely by a specific reason, but by a variety of reasons, although the significance of these reasons vary significantly from one learner to another learner. For Davis (2020), during language learning, a learner's motivation is influenced both internally by his/her mental motives and externally by the learning environment he or she is in. Noels et al. (2000) claim that the learners will feel amotivated if they do not find a meaningful reason to continue their activity, which will lead to disengagement from it. Similarly, the study of Komarraju et al. (2009) asserts that achieving, stimulating and enjoying both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards are also very crucial in encouraging students to develop their sense of motivation to learn the target language.

There are many reasons why students decide to enroll in language courses. Each learner has their own personal motivation (integrative or instrumental) to pursue a foreign language course. According to Zelson (1973) cited in Damron and Forsyth (2012, p. 163), the motivating factors often include the following reasons: desire to connect with their heritage, communicate with family members (grandparents, etc.) or a significant other, fulfil general education or graduation requirements, follow the suggestion of a friend or acquaintance, learn a language for the sake of language study itself, enhance future career opportunities, prepare for future study

and academic work etc. For example, Balaban (2014) administered a study among Albanian students and identified job opportunities, trade, education, residing in Turkey, and interest in Turkish language as the determining factors for Albanian students' pursuits of Turkish language. Similarly, Tok and Yigin's (2013) study found that students had a desire to learn Turkish for career, professional and educational career, tourism, marriage and political reasons. Besides, Sayar's (2019) study identified that acquiring a new language and being involved in cultural interaction are the main factors for learning Turkish. Furthermore, Goktepe's (2014) study which investigated the attitudes and motivations of Turkish first-year university students towards English language learning revealed that the learners were primarily driven by their professional need in their pursuit of English language learning. This indicated their instrumental motivation for learning English.

Several other studies (e.g. Tunçel, 2016; Nimer 2019 etc.) identified the integrative motivation for learning a foreign language. For example, Tunçel's (2016) study with Greek students revealed that the main factors for their integrative motivation to learn Turkish include the influence of Turkish TV serials, proximity between Turkish and Greek culture, and the neighbourhood of the two countries. Besides, Nimer (2019) investigated why refugees in Turkey were learning Turkish. The findings revealed integrative motivation for learning Turkish. The need for communicating with native Turkish and developing a good rapport with them, acculturation with Turkish culture, surviving in the host country, being cognizant about the daily affairs and living in peace and harmony with the neighbours are the main factors which intrinsically motivated them to learn Turkish.

It has been evident from the discussion above that there are numerous internal factors of the learners which can either facilitate or negatively influence learners' motivation to continue their pursuit of learning the target language. Reserchers such as Brown (1994) and Skehan (1989), explored how learners' individual factors affect their persistence in learning the target language. According to Brown (1994) and Skehan (1989), issues such as intelligence and individual learning styles may also influence learners' motivation and determine whether the learners will continue to pursue a language course or not.

To conclude, the previous research works have identified that mostly instrumental motivation and, in some cases, integrative motivation inspires learners to pursue foreign language. Besides, the absolute majority of the prevalent studies focused about motivation and drop from English as a foreign language course in Bangladesh. Therefore, there is a conspicuous lack of research regarding the learner's motivation and attrition from French as a Foreign Language in Bangladesh. In this context, understanding the trend and nature of motivation for pursuing French Junior Certificate courses at the Institute of Modern Languages will significantly add to research on French as a foreign language learning. The findings of this study will be very conducive to the French language teachers to better understand and meet the needs of the learners of FJC course.

Methodology

This study is a sequential explanatory mix-method research design to address the research questions identified. Students, teachers and database of FJC courses have been chosen as data sources to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. A total of 269 students have been selected for the quantitative data. A survey questionnaire with 5-item Likert scale was administered to relevant data. The data was analysed using SPSS 25th version to analyse Frequency distribution (mean, standard deviation). The qualitative data were collected through a semi-structured interview. 12 students from six groups have been selected randomly for collecting qualitative data related to factors that influence learners to pursue FJC courses. Besides, the researcher interviewed four French course teachers to get a teacher's perspective on learner's motivation for admission in FJC course and the existing challenges. The qualitative data has been analysed thematically considering the identified research questions. The qualitative data analysis adhered to Braun and Clarke's (2006) suggested thematic analysis process which involved 6 steps namely getting acquainted with the data, creating initial codes, identifying themes, reviewing them, defining and naming these themes, and finally, compiling the report. Pseudonyms have been used to maintain anonymity of the informants. The statements of the informants were fine-tuned for grammatical accuracy.

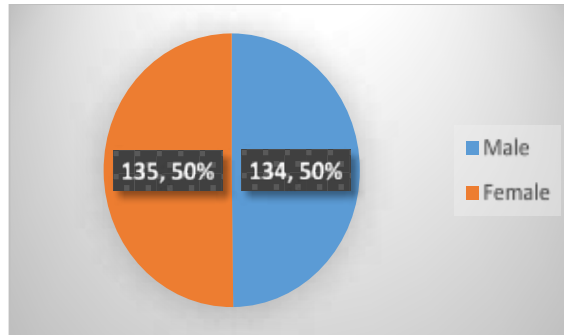
Findings and Discussion

The findings of the study from both quantitative and qualitative data are presented in this section according to the research questions of this study. The quantitative and qualitative data are presented in combination where necessary.

Learners' demography of FJC course

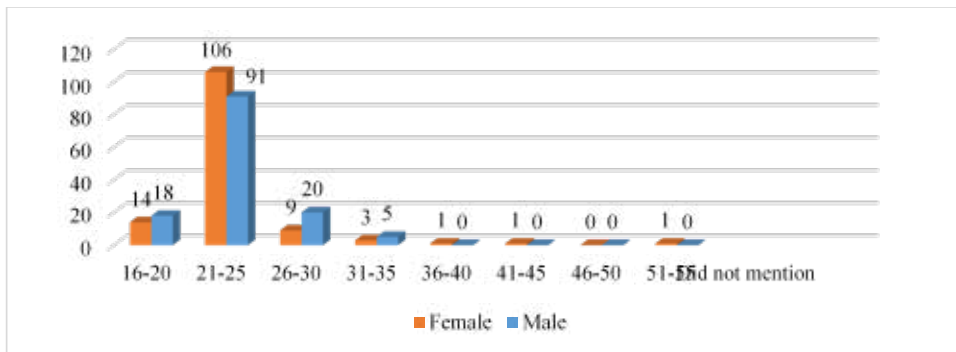
The database analysis demonstrates that a total of 300 students out of more than one thousand admission seekers were offered admission. However, only 269 students finally got enrollment in the FJC course. The demography of the 269 learners has been analyzed in terms of their age, gender, and profession. First, the researcher attempted to classify the enrolled students according to their gender. The main purpose was to find out if it was possible to generalize that people from a particular gender pursue French Junior Certificate course more than their counterparts. The analysis of the IML database shows that the ratio of the enrolled male and female students is almost equal. Hence, it can be concluded that there is no gender biasness in pursuing French language course at IML. The findings shown in figure 1 clearly demonstrate that people irrespective of their gender are equally interested in achieving command over French language.

Figure 1: Gender distribution of the enrolled students



Next, the learners were classified into different age groups. The purpose was to identify if people of any particular age group demonstrated more interest in French Junior Certificate course offered at the Institute of Modern Languages. The findings have been presented in the following bar graph in figure 2.

Figure 2: Age distribution of the enrolled students



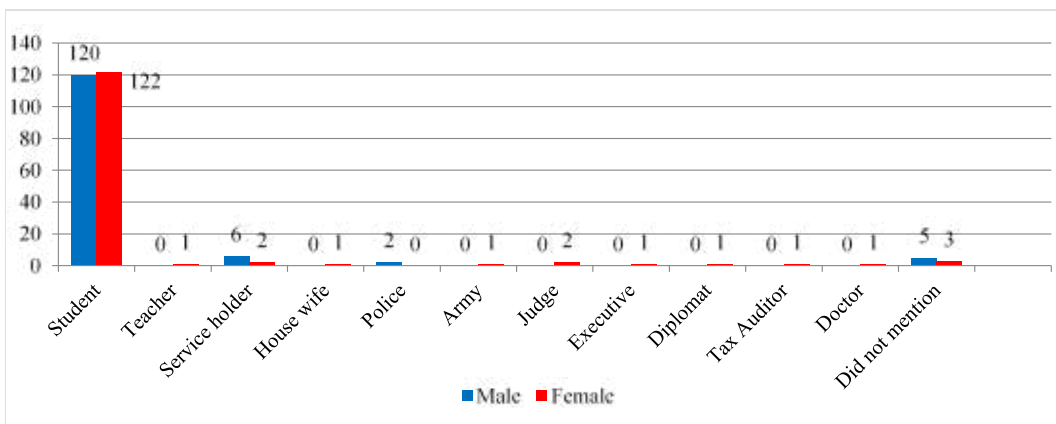
The bar graph in figure 2 indicates that the majority (73.23%) of the students of the French Junior Certificate course come from the ‘21-25’ age group among whom the female students (39.40%) are high in number than their male counterparts (33.82%). Among the 8 age groups, ‘16-20’, ‘21-25’, and ‘26-30’ age groups are comparatively higher. These data imply that young people aged between 21 and 30 are more interested to learn the French language.

These findings are very remarkable because it puts light on one of the very important issues hitherto unaddressed. The data demonstrate the predominance of just one segment of the population even though the FJC course is open to all age groups of people. The main purpose of the course is to develop the learners’ desire to further enhance professional expertise by developing their linguistic expertise in one of the most important foreign languages in the world.

According to IML admission policy, anyone having an HSC (Higher Secondary Certificate) can sit for an admission test for admission in French language. However, the data shows that only 4% of learners come from the age of 36+ groups. The researcher attempted to explore the reasons for this phenomenon through semi-structured interview. All the four interviewed teachers unanimously opined that the comparatively aged learners cut a poor figure in the admission test. Hence, they opt for going to Alliance Française de Dhaka. Even though Alliance Française de Dhaka is comparatively very expensive, the elderly learners and service holders prefer to get direct admission rather than appearing in a competitive exam. On the other hand, the current students who have limited income sources tend to appear in the competitive exam and thus pursue a French language course at a less expense. The students' opinion collected through interview protocol supported this statement made by the teachers. For example, one of the interviewees mentioned as *"I cannot afford to study at Alliance Française de Dhaka. So, I have decided to get admission at IML because I can easily afford the tuition fees here."*

Finally, the researcher endeavoured to identify the distribution of the learners according to their profession. The main interest of the researcher was to find out if it was possible to generalize that people from a certain profession are more interested in learning the French language in Bangladesh. This information is of great significance because getting a comprehensive picture of the learners' profession and their need for learning French will significantly help the concerned authority to prepare proper lesson plan, determine appropriate classroom techniques and strategies. Hence, the researcher used the database protocol and classified the whole population according to the profession. The findings of the distribution of the FJC learners according to profession have been presented in the following bar diagram in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Distribution of the learners based on profession



As is shown in the graph in figure 3, the majority of the students of the FJC course come from the profession of student category. It is evident from the graph that approximately ninety percent (89.96%) learners are students studying in different academic institutions. The rest of the population includes service holders, police, teacher, judge, army, and diplomats, etc. However, their number is very insignificant. The researcher attempted to find the reason of this phenomenon through interview protocol. The majority of the interviewees have opined that the main reason behind this discriminatory picture is that the running students of different universities outshine other elderly admission seekers in the admission test. Hence, their number dominates the demographic picture of French class. One interviewee mentioned that “the nature of admission test is a big challenge for the elderly students engaged in different professions to get admission into this course. In most cases, the current students often perform better than others.” Besides, admission process is very cumbersome: collecting application form, filling up the form, submitting application form for director’s signature, paying fees to the bank, sitting in the admission test, verification of documents, and registration in the hall. Many professionals want to avoid this type of time-consuming hassle. So, they prefer to get “first come, first served” type direct admission in the Alliance Française de Dhaka. Getting admission at Alliance Française de Dhaka offers a one stop service. The interviewed teachers have mentioned that current students specially the students from the University of Dhaka tend to pursue the course at IML. It is because they are still young, energetic, and accustomed to the pressure of the academic system. On the other hand, the aged professional people are entangled into several complicated professional cum social bindings and responsibilities. They struggle a lot to maintain a balance among their professional life, family life, and academic life. Most often their other professional schedule clashes with the class timing offered at IML. Hence, the rate of admission rate of the professionals is very trivial.

Factors Influencing Enrolment into FJC Course

The second research question demanded a qualitative data. In this question, the researcher aimed at finding out factors which motivated the learners to seek admission in the FJC course at IML. The purpose was to determine whether there is any single factor or many factors which either individually or collectively inspired the learners to pursue FJC course.

This study sought whether the same factors mentioned by Zelson (1973) cited in Damron and Forsyth (2012) are applicable to explain the learners’ motivation to join the FJC course. Hence, the researcher employed a five-point Likert scale and interviewed 12 students randomly selected from six sections of FJC course by using predefined themes. The use of the Likert scale and the interview helped not only to identify the factor(s) but also to identify the extent these factor(s) influenced the learner’s motivation to pursue a French language course at the Institute of Modern Languages. The findings from the quantitative data are presented in table 1.

Table 1: Motivation for enrolment

Factors	Answers supporting the factors	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation
For fulfilling academic requirement	7%	1.29	0.938
Due to love for French culture and desire to explore it	65%	3.55	1.767
For immigration to a Francophone country	19%	2.97	2.008
For higher studies in Francophone countries	74%	4.10	1.700
Due to the international significance of French language	90%	4.61	1.116
Due to the importance of French for future career	70%	3.87	1.954
French being an interesting language	85%	4.53	1.008
Inspiration/pressure from family	33%	2.35	1.889
Desire for visiting Francophone countries	83%	4.59	1.086

The table 1 demonstrates that the main factors for pursuing the French language are the international significance of French language (90%, WM 4.61, SD 1.116), French language as interesting language (85%, WM 4.53, SD 1.008), desire for visiting France (83%, WM 4.59, SD 1.086), love for French language and culture (65%, WM 3.55, SD 1.767), desire to pursue higher studies in Francophone countries (74%, WM 4.1, SD 1.7), etc. It is also evident that factors like academic requirement (7%), migration to a francophone country (19%), and inspiration/pressure from family (33%) did not play any significant role in motivating them to pursue French language at IML.

An in-depth analysis of the existing literature demonstrates that learners get motivated to learn a foreign language for multifarious reasons. According to Zelson (1973), learners learn a foreign language for several reasons such as connecting with their heritage, communicating with family members (grandparents, etc.) or a significant other, fulfilling general education or graduation requirements, following the suggestion of a friend or acquaintance, learning a language for the sake of language study itself, etc. The findings of this study accord with the findings of Zelson (1973) in several ways. For example, the main reasons for pursuing FJC course are importance for a future career, international significance, visiting a francophone country, higher studies in any Francophone country, love for French culture, and desire to explore it. The findings from the semi-guided interview of the four teachers revealed that most of the learners of FJC get admission in French mainly for the international value of the French language, better job

opportunities, associated social status, and peer pressure. However, the findings also differ in several other respects such as Zelson found that learners pursue a foreign language course for connecting with their heritage, communicating with family members (grandparents, etc.) or a significant other, or for fulfilling general education or graduation requirements. Most of the informants of this research have shown that they do not have any academic requirement, nor any intention to get connected with their near and dear ones, nor for any pressure from the family.

The findings also indicate that the respondents do not have only integrative motivation but also instrumental motivation. Gardner and MacIntyre (1991) and Williams and Burden (1997) have shown that both of these two types of motivation may be equally influential in facilitating language learning. The findings of this study also demonstrate that both integrative and instrumental motivation played a significant role in motivating the learners to pursue FJC course at IML. These findings are also supported by Balaban (2014), Sayar's (2019), Tok and Yigin's (2013), Noels, Pelletier, Clement, & Vallerand (2000), Noels (2001), Davis (2020), and Komaraju et al. (2009).

The type of motivation for learning French varied from one respondent to another. While some of them were driven by integrative motivation, others were forced by instrumental motivation. The most important theme which emerged from the interview data is the instrumental motivation for seeking a job in an international organization or in a multinational organisation. Because of the high international significance of French, it is very important to know French for getting a good job in an international organization such as UN, UNICEF, OIC etc. 90% of the informants attested that the significance of French Language motivated them to pursue French Junior Course. For instance, one of interviewees mentioned that *'I am a police officer. Learning French is very important for my career. Having a good command over French will help me work in United Nations Peace Keeping Missions in Africa.'* Another informant opined, *'I have been learning French because it is the official language of many renowned organisations in the world. Learning French will offer greater opportunities for me to work in developed countries.'* This reply is supported by another informant who said as *'French is the official Language of 29 countries. So, learning French will open better opportunities to work in international organisations.'* These findings are supported by those of Balaban (2014), Tok and Yigin's (2013), Goktepe's (2014), Zelson (1973) cited in Damron and Forthsyth (2012) who mentioned that one of the most important factors for pursuing French is to enhance future career opportunities.

The second most influential instrumental motivation for enrollment in the FJC course is the students' desire to pursue higher education in a francophone country (74% percent, WM 4.1 and SD 1.7). Kachru (1992); Nitsuma (1992) cited in Williams and Burden (1997) found that instrumental motivation is more important for the effective learning of an international language than integrative motivation in countries like India and Japan. This study has come up

with similar findings. For example, one of the interviewees replied as *'I would like to pursue higher studies in Canada. Knowing French will increase the possibility for getting chance in a Canadian University.'* Another interviewee added as *'I am learning French because it will help me get a scholarship for higher studies in Francophone countries. I want to pursue a Master degree in Film and Television in France and want to work in French Film.'* This finding is in line with that of Balaban (2014) who identified that learners were learning a foreign language pursuing education in the community of the target language.

The third most significant theme which emerged from the interview data is the intrinsic motivation for learning French i.e. love for French culture and desire to explore it. Newcombe and Newcombe (2001) found that while learners in Wales showed a stronger inclination towards integrative motivation for learning Welsh, they also exhibited instrumental motivations for acquiring the language. The similar findings have emerged from this study. The interviewees had quite different intrinsic motivations for learning French. The recurrent themes of intrinsic motivation found through the interview are exploring French literature, gastronomy, fashion, arts, cinema, painting, TV series etc. For instance, one of the interviewees mentioned as *'I want to explore French Fashion, arts and cinema.'* While another interviewee mentioned as *'I want to learn French because I would like to explore French literature, beautiful tourist spots, gastronomy, music, painting and TV series.'* Sayar (2019) and Tunçel's (2016) studies support these findings.

Limitation of the Study

This study has a few limitations. First, this research constitutes a case study involving respondents and informants exclusively from a single public university as the sample pool. Hence, caution should be exercised while interpreting the findings of this study. Second, this study focused only on the factors influencing their motivation to pursue French as a foreign language. Future research endeavors should aim to employ more extensive data samples to confirm the potential attainment of comparable results. Future research should seek to use larger data samples to validate whether similar results could be achieved. The study only looked at the factors motivating enrollment in FJC course. This creates another possibility that future research may want to examine the influence of students' cultural backgrounds on personality traits, the relation between motivation and performance.

Conclusion

Motivation plays a great role in achieving success not only in an academic journey but also in all other initiatives. In fact, the success in any initiative is proportionate to the type of motivation as well as degree of motivation the individual has. It is evident from the findings of this study that the students of FJC course have an array of different motivational factors for

pursuing this course. The researchers believe that further longitudinal research is needed to find the trend of motivation for enrollment into FJC course because proper understanding of the trend of motivation of the learners will help the concerned authority to develop and implement successful curriculum and thus meet the needs of the learners. The concerned authority also needs to identify the reasons why the representation of the number of students from other profession as well as age group is so poor and adopt potential measures to increase the diversity of students. One possible solution to this problem can be bringing a change in the admission test system so that all the admission seekers irrespective of their age and profession have equal chance for getting admission. All the findings of this study imply that there are other areas for further research e.g., further research can be conducted to identify the factors influencing the learners to drop out from FJC course.

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