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Foreign Language Learning Motivation And Academic Performance Among Iraqi Efl Learners

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Abstract

The **General Background** of English as a global medium of higher education requires university students to acquire strong foreign language proficiency for academic and professional success. Within the **Specific Background** of Iraqi tertiary education, English serves as the primary instructional language, yet many undergraduates struggle to attain satisfactory language outcomes. A notable **Knowledge Gap** exists regarding empirical evidence on how specific language learning motivational factors correlate with actual academic achievement among Iraqi university undergraduates. This study **Aims** to evaluate language learning motivation levels, determine academic performance in English, and analyze the correlation between motivation and examination results among 200 undergraduate EFL learners at Mustansiriyah University. Quantitative **Results** demonstrated that 58% of learners exhibited average motivation and 51% achieved average exam performance, while Pearson correlation revealed a strong positive relationship between motivation and performance ($r = .83, p < .05$). The study highlights its **Novelty** by identifying that Iraqi EFL undergraduates are predominantly instrumentally motivated by social status and employment prospects rather than integrative cultural drive. Practical **Implications** urge educators and curriculum designers to implement targeted motivational strategies and washback programs targeting underperforming skills.

Keywords : Foreign Language Learning Motivation, Academic Performance, Iraqi Efl Learners, Undergraduate Education, Correlation Analysis

Key Findings Highlights

Iraqi EFL undergraduates predominantly demonstrate average motivation levels and average academic performance in mandatory university English courses.

Student motivation is heavily instrumental, primarily driven by career advancement, social status, and international language prestige.

Foreign language learning motivation exhibits a statistically significant positive correlation with undergraduate academic exam results.

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1. Introduction

The importance of the English language cannot be overstated in the contemporary era of global communication and information. The 21st century requires learners and professionals to be proficient in terms of competence and performance in English language. That is why, English is considered a global language (Northrup, 2013), which connects communities across the globe and makes cross-cultural communication possible. Owing to its globally embraced status, the learner in the current age of communication is required to reflect adequate English language skills. However, the degree of these skills' adequacy increases in case of non-native speakers of English. EFL/ESL learners face a bi-faceted challenge in that one, they have to be well-equipped with the language skills, and second, they need to show adequate performance in a language that is different from their L1 (Shin, 2008).

Motivation is considered to play a significant role in foreign/second language learning and academic performance since it is believed to provide impetus to performance in both of the aforementioned cases. The word 'motivation' is derived from a Latin word 'movere', which means 'to move'. In this light, motivation is defined as an inner stimulation and impulse that drives an individual towards undertaking a particular action such as language learning (Lehmann, 2007). From the psychological and cognitive point of view, foreign language learning is also associated with an intrinsic drive in a learner to move ahead with the purpose of learning. In this way, language learning motivation provides the learner with the energy to bring about learning and performance in EFL/ESL (Ormrod, 2000). This clearly implies that EFL university-level learners require a considerable amount of motivation to learn the language. Furthermore, if in a context such as Iraq, English is the sole medium of instruction at university-level, the significance of both English language and language learning motivation is elevated.

Iraq is an EFL context, which means that English is considered a foreign language in it. However, it is the only medium of instruction in universities. The university-level learners are required to display sufficient English language skills in order to gain adequate academic achievement. It has been observed that the learners with sufficient language skills usually excel in research and professional pursuits since presently, the major stock of knowledge across the globe, is in English. This brings motivation for learning English at the fore front of learning and intellectual growth for Iraqi university-level learners.

However, in Iraqi EFL context, research into motivation for learning English, specifically in the case of university-level learners, are scarce (Saleh & Majeed, 2021). Furthermore, the majority of Iraqi learners at university-level, still underperform in English language academically (Al Abdely & Thai, 2016). Despite this, the levels of these learners, and the relationship between language-learning motivation and academic achievement in English has not been extensively explored at university-level. It is still unclear if motivational aspect, which in the end relates itself with self-efficacy, is appropriately emphasized in instruction, learning and assessment of EFL learners. Such a background of Iraqi context makes it crucial to investigate the aspect of motivation in English language learning of the university-level EFL learners. The study, therefore, aims to investigate these levels in addition to the aforementioned interrelationship. Such studies are likely to provide significant insight into language learning and motivational dimensions of tertiary level learners.

Despite the global challenges posed by the current age of global communication and information in the 21st century, limited measures to enhance Iraqi learners' exposure to English have been taken (Koran, 2015). The role of English language in Iraqi society in general, and academia in particular is still considered foreign. Even though university-level requires a considerable amount of motivation and learning in English, there seems to be limited realization of this fact among the stakeholders. This situation seems to have affected the quality of English language and academic achievement of these learners. As a consequence, most of Iraqi EFL learners at tertiary level of education, fear learning English and taking its examination. On the other hand, Peng (2005) has indicated that English is expected to continue to be the dominant global language in trade, tourism, finance and technology. This implies that if Iraqi learners' English language skills are not adequate, their academic performance may be negatively affected. In spite of these probabilities, the aspect of motivation in Iraqi university-level learners' English learning has so far been neglected, and the majority of these learners are insufficiently motivated to learn English (Abdullah & Al-Mofti, 2017). Such a state of affairs requires in-depth analysis of these EFL learners' motivation levels since motivation is directly related to foreign language learning.

Several notable researchers (Sharma & Sharma, 2018; Yousefi, Ghassemi & Firouznia, 2009; Riswanto & Aryani, 2017; Goodman et al., 2011) have indicated the existence of an inevitable link between the learner's motivation level and foreign language learning. They also have emphasized that academic achievement is intrinsically associated with motivation to learn English, in the context where English is the medium of instruction. However, the stakeholders, in the Iraqi educational context, seem to have inadequate realization of the link between motivation and language and academic performance. In an educational context where English is the medium of instruction, such lack of realization is highly likely to negatively affect learning, the learners' future prospects, and teaching quality. Thus, such a situation calls for in-depth investigation of the learners' motivation levels and the related academic achievement so that a proper realization may be established among the stakeholders, and some constructive measures may be taken in time.

It is notable that in Iraq, the overall amount of research and literature on English language learners' motivation is limited (Ali & Fei, 2017). Moreover, the extant literature on the interplay of language learning motivation and academic achievement at university-level is also scarce. A logical consequence of the limited availability of the motivation related literature seems to cause a gap in the education stakeholders' realization of the importance of the element of motivation in English language learning. This breach seems to have lowered the quality in tertiary education. Furthermore, the reliable empirical information about the role of motivation in Iraqi university learners, is not extensively available. Currently, there is a dire need of in-depth insight into the English learning motivation of learners who find learning English challenging.

In response to these problems, the study aimed to determine the motivation for learning English and its relationship with the learner achievement, of Iraqi university-level EFL learners.

1.1 Research Objectives

1. To determine the levels of motivation for learning English of Iraqi university-level EFL learners.
2. To determine the performance of Iraqi EFL university-level learners, in academic English language
3. To investigate the relationship between motivation for learning English and academic performance in English of Iraqi EFL university-level learners

1.2 Research Questions

1. What are the respondents' levels of motivation for learning English?
2. What are the respondents' levels of academic performance in English language?
3. What is the correlation between the respondents' motivation for learning English and academic performance in English?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Motivation and Foreign Language Learning

Research in psychology and education has frequently addressed the term 'motivation'. The term is derived from the Latin word 'movere', which means 'to move' that represents the dynamics of a function or action. The basic question here is that in what contexts the term is used in educational psychology in general, and in second/foreign language learning in particular. In essence, the term motivation is defined as an inner drive or stimulation to do or achieve some action or objective (Dörnyei, 2009). Therefore, a motivated state is in which an individual is motivated to do something or meet some objective.

Thus, the study of the motivated states or the levels of motivation in the learner towards a specific educational goal is in fact the study of how, how well and how much the learner is motivated to attain that goal. Considering the significant aspect of 'how' in motivation, motivation is broadly divided into two types namely intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation depending on its nature and characteristics. To elaborate, when an individual engages in an activity because the learner finds it satisfying, pleasing or enjoyable, and the individual wishes to sustain this behavior, it is intrinsic motivation, and the individual is considered intrinsically motivated to engage in that particular activity. On the contrary, when an individual engages in an activity because that is a means to an end, the individual is considered to have extrinsic motivation, and is considered extrinsically motivated (Hennessey et al., 2015).

Considering the affective aspect of motivation, and the type of learning that is required in second or foreign language learning, motivation and language learning become quite close. If language learning requires motivation in the learner, then in an institutional setting, both of these factors by default engage and involve academic performance. In accordance with this notion, motivation has been involved in social and educational setups. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011, p. 39) divided the development of second-language motivation theory into four periods.

Keeping into consideration the above basic motivational components in foreign language learning, it is necessary to discuss the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in learning a foreign language. This also encompasses the nature of the learner's interest, which is referred to as integrative if the learner is motivated to learn the language to adopt and play a role in the cultural aspects to which the foreign language belongs. This interest is called instrumental if the learner is motivated to learn the foreign language to attain some purpose (Yuet, 2009). It is notable that different cultures and educational setups engage in learning a second or foreign language on the basis of different interests. For instance, the majority of ESL learners in Pakistani context learn English as a second language to mix up with the culture and attain the interest of cultural prestige. At the same time, learning Chinese as a foreign language for Pakistani is largely for the purpose of studies in information, technology and business, or for the purpose of trade between both countries. In case of English, Pakistani learners are largely integratively motivated whereas in the case of Chinese, they are largely instrumentally motivated.

In continuation to the above, the instance of Iraqi context is presented here since that is the context of the study. English is the foreign language in Iraq. The EFL learners in Iraqi universities are largely extrinsically or instrumentally motivated to learn English. That means these learners have a desire to learn English largely for passing the compulsory English examination. However, it cannot be ruled out that many learners may have the desire to adopt the culture of the language, mix with it and intrinsically motivated to be proficient in English. However, considering the larger interest, that is the interest of the majority, it seems to be affecting the intrinsic motivation of these learners. This, from time to time, is reflected through the underperformance in English language on the part of the majority of Iraqi EFL learners at university-level (Sabti et al., 2019). In this connection, three significant aspects emerge here that must be taken into account for empirical review of the related literature. Therefore, the next section presents the status and learning of English among Iraqi EFL learners, particularly at university-level.

2.2 Motivation and EFL Learning among Iraqi Learners

English is a foreign language in Iraq, and the university-level learners are required to study a compulsory course of English. Furthermore, for university programs, except which are bound to be in other languages than English, English is the medium

of university instruction. In this connection, learning English is of prime significance for Iraqi university learners. In this way, academic performance and global level future opportunities for these learners are linked with learning English. However, the overall success in academic performance in English and learning English as a foreign language has been unsatisfactory among Iraqi university learners. This currently is a matter of great concern of the stakeholders.

Several studies indicate a link between foreign-language learning motivation and academic performance. Moreover, motivation levels of the language learners have also been investigated in different contexts for different purposes. For instance, Cheng and Dörnyei (2007) conducted an empirical study on the relationship between second language learning performance and motivation. They found a viable link between language learning and motivational aspect in learners. Likewise, Noel, Joulia and Braggard (2001) also found a correlation between learners' motivation and academic performance. However, it has also been suggested, such as in Bahous et al. (2011) that the level of motivation and its engagement with academic performance may differ in different contexts, social and educational setups, and learners. This encourages the language learning researchers to measure motivation levels of EFL learners in different contexts. This also stimulated several different types of investigations involving other variables, in the research of university-level learners.

Such research avenues must be taken seriously in developing countries such as Iraq. It is because the EFL learners in such countries are usually far behind those in developed educational contexts. Al-Bahadli (2020) conducted a study on student engagement, which is an affective and motivational aspect in, in academic achievement in the context of Iraqi university-level learners. They found that the Iraqi learners needed social support to increase their motivation. This indicates that Iraqi learners' EFL abilities, as far as the majority is concerned, also requires improvement since it has been observed that Iraqi EFL learners largely underperform in English language (Rababah, 2002), and that in this regard, the existing literature on the motivation levels of Iraqi learners is scarce (Ali & Fei, 2017).

Mezaal (2021) states that Iraqi EFL context suffer from various problems in teaching and learning of English. These problems are linked with teaching methods, syllabus designing, learner motivation, social support and misdirected intellect of the learners that manifests in the shape of poor academic performance. Rababah (2002) conducted a study especially in English writing skills and the Iraqi students' engagement in the English language activity. He found that Iraqi learners found palpable problems in responding to the academic questions in English.

In this regard, Qaddumi (1995) had already indicated that unsatisfactory English language skills and performance of the Iraqi EFL learners are interlinked. He conducted a study on English language skills of Iraqi learners, and concluded that the learners' performance was unsatisfactory in English language skills especially in writing however, the poor academic performance was linked with the element of learners' interest (i.e., motivation) in learning English language. Sabti et al. (2019) conducted a study on Iraqi EFL learners' motivation to learn English and academic achievement. They conducted this study in the context of university-level learners in Iraq. In this quantitative study, they concluded that Iraqi EFL learners' self-efficacy, academic performance in English and EFL learning motivation required immediate attention.

Nasser (2018), in continuation to the above, conducted an experimental study on Iraqi university-level EFL learners. In this quantitative study, he found that Iraqi university-level EFL learners experienced challenges in learning English language therefore, their academic performance suffered errors. On another note, Albodakh and Cinkara (2017) conducted a quantitative study on Iraqi EFL learners and investigated the relationship between these Iraqi EFL learners' motivation and English language learning specifically focusing on their vocabulary size. Vocabulary size is linked with the language expansion and learning in a learner's mind thus, it is also linked with overall language learning. The researchers found that these Iraqi EFL learners were motivated in both ways namely extrinsically and intrinsically however, a number of students were extrinsically motivated, which means their motivation needed further immersive support. They concluded that Iraqi extrinsically motivated EFL learners must be extended support so that they engage in integrative learning and motivation. Furthermore, further investigation is required in this regard in the context of Iraq.

The above studies and conclusions indicate a research gap in the area of determining motivation levels of Iraqi EFL learners. Attending to this call of research, the study aimed to determine the motivation levels of Iraqi EFL learners at university-level. It also aimed to relate motivation with the learners' performance in English.

2.3 EFL Motivation and Academic Performance

Learners' performance and motivational aspect has extensively been linked with each other by several researchers. The core theory of academic performance, which also forms the theoretical framework in the study, was proposed by Reynolds and Walberg (1991). Prior to this consolidated theory, Walberg (1981) presented a nine-factor model of productivity that related itself with productivity and performance in learning. According to the model, the total factors in the theory can be divided into three sets namely the Learner Aptitude, the Instruction, and the Affective or Psychological Environment. To comprehend how academic performance in associated with affective or motivational aspect, it is necessary to know the componential formation of these three sets.

The Learner Aptitude Set includes the learners' developmental stage or level such as age etc., the learner ability or previous academic achievement, and motivation. It may be seen that in this set, the learners' ability and development are linked with the learner's affects or motivation to learn and attain the academic goals. If all components have an adequate level, the learner is expected to perform well. It is highly probable that the future academic prospect of the learner will be in the periphery of high achievement.

The Affective or Psychological Environment of learning refers to the conditions in which learning is extended. The elements

included in this set are class environment, home environment, peer environment and exposure to mass media outside school. In this set, the major agent of class environment is the teacher, whose motivation affects the instruction. Highly motivated teachers usually create amicable class environments and learnability in learners. Moreover, home environment is directly linked with the stimulation or interest (motivation) to which the learner is exposed. Peer environment also may clearly be linked with the learner's peers' interest and motivation in learning. Lastly, attaching with mass media requires stimulation of the learner's interest.

Overall, it may be seen that the model of academic performance has a great dependence on motivation and interest of the involved stakeholders. This indicates the significance of motivation in academic performance. Reynolds and Walberg (1991) conducted an investigation using the aforementioned nine-factor model of academic learning on 3,116 learners, employing probability sampling. The findings revealed that motivation and home environment had an immense indirect influence on the academic performance of the learner. Similarly, Erten and Burden (2014) conducted a quantitative study in Turkish context, sampling 256 EFL learners, on the motivation and academic performance of the learners. He found that the learners' motivation to learn English language had a relationship with their English language performance, and that it correlated negatively with academic performance since the students showed low motivation levels.

In the present times, the researchers and education stakeholders have been putting in efforts to heighten the learner motivation to learn English as a foreign language, using different learning supports such as blended learning, computer-assisted language learning and mass media exposure etc. In this connection, Qays et al. (2022) conducted a study on Iraqi EFL learners to investigate the effect of blended learning on the academic performance of the learners. They found that the learners' motivation increased with introducing a new technique of learning. This indicates that using up-to-date methods influence learners' motivation, and that their motivation also influences academic performance. It also indicates that low level of motivation may be linked with traditional methods of language learning. However, the investigations that analyzed the relationship between Iraqi EFL learners' motivation and academic performance are scarce. More investigation is required in this area to understand how and how well Iraqi EFL learners may be motivated to perform well in English learning. The study aimed to contribute to filling in this research gap by the investigating the motivation levels of Iraqi university-level students.

2.4 Empirical Studies in the Iraqi Context

Saleh and Majeed (2021) conducted a mixed method study on 200 Iraqi EFL university-level learners that involved several different universities in Iraq. The study investigated both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation in the learners. It was found that the learners were more instrumentally motivated than being integratively motivated. This implies that Iraqi EFL learners need more exposure and affective involvement in learning EFL for integrative purposes. Instrumental motivation occurs when the learner learns a foreign language for achieving some purpose, the most common of which is passing the examination. On the other hand, integrative motivation occurs when the learner wants to learn the language for communicative purposes.

Similarly, Latif (2021) performed a study on 150 adult EFL learners from different departments in an Iraqi university. Using mixed method approach, this study determined the motivation of the Iraqi learners. The quantitative and qualitative analyses revealed that these Iraqi university-level learners were more instrumentally motivated than being integratively motivated to learn English. This supported the findings of Saleh and Majeed (2021).

Mahdi (2020) also conducted a study to determine motivation for learning English of Iraqi learners. Using a questionnaire, the researcher accessed Iraqi EFL learners to explore their motivation. It was found that these Iraqi learners were more instrumentally motivated to learn English than being integratively motivated. Furthermore, they perceived the environment of their country and education sector an impediment in learning the language.

Some other previous studies, also explored Iraqi EFL learners' motivation involving other variables. Sabti et al. (2019) conducted a study to examine the Iraqi learners' motivation level, anxiety and academic performance. It was found that the learners who suffered from anxiety in learning the language could not perform well academically. Similarly, Qays et al (2022) conducted a study to explore the impact of blended learning and motivation of the Iraqi learners' academic achievement. The researchers found that blended learning left a positive impact on the motivation, interest and academic performance of the learners.

However, Mutar (2019) conducted a study to investigate the motivation of Iraqi EFL adult learners. Involving a sample of 400 university-level learners, the quantitative analysis showed that the learners were well-motivated. Their attitude towards learning English was positive however they faced challenges of different kinds in learning English. The study also found that there was no significant difference in the motivation levels of female and male Iraqi EFL learners.

The above studies, however, show that there is a research gap in the area of measuring the in-depth motivation levels among Iraqi EFL learners. Most of the studies have examined the means that are obtained from analyzing questionnaires. However, the collective levels of the learners require further investigation. The study attended to this call of research with an aim to contribute to the research area.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

2.5.1 L2 Motivational Self System

Every research project or investigation is founded on a framework of the corresponding theories that provide empirical roots to the undertaken study. These theories also provide validity to a study because of the founding conceptions are the components of the scientific literature. On account of this, the study also extracted its theoretical foundation from the validated and widely embraced theories. These theories broadly are associated with the variables of motivation and academic performance. In motivation, the theories which were proposed in relation with second/foreign language learning and academic performance of the learner in the foreign language. The theoretical framework of this study was carefully related with the most relevant theories that played the key role in formulating the research objectives, questions and the variables of the study. There are two core theories in this study which are discussed below in detail:

Learning a second or foreign language is all in all a cognitive process that requires appropriate level of interest in objective attainment, in the language learner. Dörnyei (2009) elaborates the role of motivation in foreign language learning by addressing key questions that are given below:

The key questions that this theory takes into account are on the motivated state of a learner while the learner is 'stimulated' to learn a second or foreign language. The theory proposes that motivation plays an active role in foreign language learning, and that teachers and learners are familiar with the term due to its significance in the learning process. Dörnyei (2009) states that motivation frequently is taken as a common state in which the learner shows interest in language learning but in essence, it is a complex affective aspect that has numerous complex states involved in it. Motivation is a multidimensional term that encompasses emotions of the learner, cognition of the learner and differences in learners.

On account of these questions, Dörnyei (2009) proposed the conglomerates of a new foreign-language learning motivation theory. In this theory, the conceptual underpinning of motivation of foreign or second language learning is in the form of the theorist's proposition that the level of the learner's success is always linked with the level of motivation that the learner has in learning the language. In this regard, there have been several previous theories of motivation. For instance, Gardner, Lalonde and Moorcroft (1985), in social psychological paradigm, proposed that the attitude of the learner/speaker of L2 plays a vital role in bringing about learning/performance. Furthermore, he proposed that the learner's interest that is related to integrative motivation functions when the learner or speaker desires to communicate with the members of L2 community. Sometimes, the learner is integratively motivated to become like the L2 community. This is also related with intrinsic motivation. On the other hand, the learner is usually extrinsically motivated when the learner wishes to attain some goal and wishes to use the L2 as a means to that end such as passing an examination or acquiring a job etc.

The new theory of Motivation proposed that motivation of an L2 learner may be seen through the lens of L2 motivational self system. This system attempts to integrate several related propositions from Self Language Acquisition (SLA) theories that are influential especially in educational psychology. This way, this theory relates well to the learners of English in the countries to which English is either a second or foreign language such as Iraq, which is the context of the study.

Theory of L2 motivational self system was founded on the psychological concepts of the possible selves in a learner. These propositions of the possible selves, are connected with the precepts of 'what' people would like to become; what people might become, and 'what they are afraid of becoming' (Dörnyei, 2009). Thus, motivation and interest of individuals are included in this system. In the context of learning a foreign language, this theory proposed the notion of an Ideal Self. This is a significant part of this theory because it involves the ideal characteristics of learning that the learner wants to possess. In this way, the motivation or interest of the learner is linked with aspirations and desires. Here, if the learners have appropriate support from the class, home and peer environment, they may be motivated to achieve this Ideal Self through language learning.

On the other hand, is the concept of Ought-to Self, which is concerned with what the learner needs to become, or the level that should be attained by the learner. It is related with obligations and responsibilities in learning. It is notable that this self is more active in Asian contexts, such as Iraq, wherein the learners wish to bring honour to the family and their name and for that matter, they desire to perform well including the performance in language learning. Theory of L2 Motivation Self System, here, adds to these two self-guides with another dimension which relates to the environment. The environment, as stated earlier in Section 2.3, plays a key role in determining the learning success of the learner along with the element of motivation. It may be seen as another source of motivation for the language learner. Dörnyei's (2009) self-guides describe these interacting dimensions.

The framework illustrates that the L2 learners' Ideal self and Ought-to Self are interlinked while another dimension also influences in this system that is the environment in which the language is being learnt. It indicates that the learner's home, school and peer environment is a significant element in determining the motivation of the learner. This also brings in the discussion the academic performance of the learner that takes place in that environment, and is related with learning and measurement of learning. Moreover, the motivation frequently manifests itself in the shape of academic performance in that language. Considering this, the study included the theory of academic performance in its framework. The following section presents the detail of this theory.

2.5.2 Theory of Educational Productivity

To investigate the levels of the respondents' levels of academic performance, the variable of academic performance required a valid theory of academic performance as its foundation. Thus, Walberg's theory of educational productivity (1981) was included in the current framework. This is the second theory of the framework and its details are given below.

The theory of educational productivity is concerned with the influences and impacts that a learner may have on performance

or productivity. The main precept of this theory is academic achievement of the learner therefore, it is equally applicable in foreign or second language learning. Walberg proposed an array of the factors that may influence the academic performance of the learner. This theory was proposed after Walberg's study was integrated with the analysis of 3000 studies conducted by different theorists. This makes this theory valid and widely applicable to the educational settings.

This theory proposed eleven most influential variables in educational productivity. It is notable that of these eleven factors, eight factors were related to the affective (motivational) aspects of the learner. Such as the nature and quality of interaction between the teacher and learner, the influence of peers, motivational and affective behaviours of the learner, the behaviour and motivation of the classroom management, social setup, social behaviour towards learning, support of the parents and socio-affective influences, exposure to media etc.

The first set of the variables in the theory, clearly links motivation to educational productivity in that the first three components are the learner ability, learner motivation and age. It indicates that motivation is probably the part of each variable. For instance, if the teacher is highly motivated, the learning is positively influenced. If the learner is highly motivated, the learning will be positively affected and so forth and so on. It reveals the significance of motivation in educational productivity. Moreover, it is contended that this theory of educational performance is one of the very few widely validated theories across different contexts (DiPerna, Volpe, & Elliott, 2002). In presenting these nine precepts, the theorist analyzed 179 handbooks and 91 research syntheses, and subsequently, the preceptual ground of this theory was founded. On the account of this validity, the study included the theory in its framework.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

Based on the theoretical framework, research objective and questions, the conceptual framework of the study was formulated. A conceptual framework illustrates the variables of a study along with the direction of analysis. This section provides a detailed description of the conceptual framework of this study.

The first variable of this study was the Iraqi EFL learners' motivation in learning English. This was an independent variable or IV of this study. It was treated as a mono-precept variable. The data for this variable was collected by a language learning motivation questionnaire that had been previously used in different contexts, and was developed by Yuet (2009). The second variable of this study was academic performance of Iraqi EFL learners in English language. It was also treated as a mono-precept variable, and the data on this variable was collected by accessing the learners' recent performance in English language examination in their university. It was treated as a dependent variable in this study.

The primary aim of this study was to measure the motivation levels of a sample of Iraqi EFL university-level learners. However, the study also aimed to measure the levels of academic performance in English language, of these learners. The last aim of this study was to investigate the possible relationship between the learners' motivation and academic performance. In the conceptual framework, the independent variable of motivation was based on theory of motivation in second/foreign language learning (Dörnyei, 2009). On the other hand, the dependent variable of academic performance was based on theory of educational productivity (Walberg, 1981). Together, these theories define the conceptual framework.

The conceptual framework comprises one independent and one dependent variable while their possible relationship, which was to be investigated, is shown by the connecting arrow.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design, Population, and Sampling

The target population of the study was the Iraqi EFL learners in Mustansiriyah University in the city of Baghdad in Iraq. Of these EFL learners, the samples for this study were accessed. The following section describes the samples and sampling technique used in this study.

The study employed Quantitative Survey Design and quantitative research approach under this design therefore, the sampling technique was in line with the principles of this research approach. As described above, the population of this study belonged to Mustansiriyah University, the sample was accessed from the department of English in this university. Thus, the sample consisted of Iraqi EFL undergraduate learners in the department of English in Mustansiriyah University in Iraq.

Furthermore, to access these samples, random probability sampling technique was employed. The rationale of using this technique was that this type of sampling provides the valuable chance of selection to every individual of the population without any bias. This sampling technique reduces any bias that the researcher, being an individual, may be prone to exercise while sampling. All cases enjoy an equal probability or likelihood of being selected (Kothari, 2004). In the study, after selecting the sampling technique, the sample size was determined to access the appropriate number of samples. The following section describes the process of determining the sample size.

In light of the above formula, the researcher in the study determined the sample size taking into consideration the population size ($n = 1000$). Thus, with the margin of error of 5%, the confidence interval was 95% so the resulting sample size was approximately 200 learners. Thus, a sample size of 200 learners was accessed in Mustansiriyah University. Table 1 shows the profile of the accessed samples:

Table 1 shows that the total sample comprised 200. Of these samples, 100 were male learners while 100 were female learners. All samples were studying in VII semester, and were enrolled in compulsory English language course. All of these learners were undergraduates in the university. Though the number of the samples in male and female learners was equal but no gender stratification was linked with the research objectives of this study.

Table 1. *Profile of the Samples*

Number of Samples	Gender	Semester	Level of Education
100	Male	VII	Undergraduate
100	Female	VII	Undergraduate

Table 1.

3.2 Research Instruments

In relation with the above, the first instrument of this study was “Language Learning Motivation Questionnaire”, which was developed by Chen Chiu Yuet (2009). It was a close-ended and structured questionnaire that aimed to measure the motivation levels of EFL/ESL learners at university-level. This questionnaire was adopted without any modifications because it was found suitable to achieve the research objectives of the study. The respondents of the study were also EFL learners at university-level thus no modification was introduced.

This questionnaire used 6-point Likert scale for the purpose of providing the respondents with ample opportunities to express the shades of their opinions. This was deemed reasonable because motivation is an affective aspect, and affective or emotional aspects tend to have several shades. Thus, instead of five, 6-point Likert scale was used. The structure of these Likert scale is shown in Table 2:

The questionnaire had 36 items in total that were on the intensity, type and nature of the motivation of the learners that they felt towards learning English language.

To benchmark the score that each respondent earned in the questionnaire, the rubrics of categorizing means developed by Burry-Stock et al. (2000) were used. This is a valid rubric that has been used in several previous studies (Burry-Stock et al., 2000; Riazi & Khodadadi, 2007) to categorize the means of metacognitive and affective dimensions. The rubric has three core levels that correspond to five mean categories. Table 3 shows these rubrics and the corresponding levels:

Thus, in accordance with the used rubrics, three main motivation levels of the learners were determined namely ‘High’, ‘Average’ and ‘Low’.

The second research instrument of this study was the respondents’ English examination scores. These scores were awarded to the learners on the basis of the examination of compulsory English language that these Iraqi EFL learners took one week before the motivation questionnaire was administered to them. Thus, due to the very short and negligible time between the examination and administration of the questionnaire, these scores were considered representative of these learners’ current performance in English language. The total examination score was 100.

As one of the research objectives of the study was to determine the level of the respondents’ academic achievement in English language therefore, the division of the levels was based on the benchmarks specified in the university’s assessment key that was used by the respondents’ university. Table 4 shows this assessment key:

Table 4 shows that a learner had to obtain a score of 55 out of 100 in order to earn the pass status in the exam while a score ranging from 56 to 70 was considered average; a score range of 71 – 80 was considered good whereas a score above 85 was considered excellent.

Table 2. *Likert Scales of the Language Learning Motivation Questionnaire*

Likert Scale	Description
1	Strongly Disagree
2	Disagree
3	Slightly Disagree
4	Slightly Agree
5	Agree
6	Strongly Agree

Table 2.

Table 3. *Rubrics for Motivation Levels*

Mean	Description
3.5 - 5.0	High
2.5 - 3.4	Average
1.0 - 2.4	Low

Table 3.

Table 4. *Benchmarks for Academic Performance*

Benchmark	Score Interval
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Excellent	Above 85
Good	71 - 80
Average	56 - 70
Poor	1 - 55

Table 4.

3.3 Pilot Study, Reliability, and Data Collection

It is crucial to pilot the research instruments to establish appropriate validity and reliability of the instruments for the use in the main study. Therefore, a pilot study was conducted administering these instruments to 50 samples.

Before the questionnaire was administered to the 50 pilot participants, it was important to establish its validity. Validity is defined as the ability of a research instrument to determine the phenomena that it affirms to determine (Roberts & Priest, 2006). Though this questionnaire was adopted and was used without any modifications in its original version, but still a university teacher was contacted to comment on the validity of the questionnaire. The university teacher was a senior lecturer in department of English in Dijla University in Iraq. It was found that the face and construct validity of the questionnaire were suitable to be used at the pilot stage.

After collecting the data at the pilot stage, the collected data were entered in SPSS v.26 to determine the reliability of the questionnaire in the pilot study. Table 5 shows the reliability value:

Table 5 shows that the obtained Cronbach's alpha for the reliability of the questionnaire was 0.89. Pallant (2020) states that a Cronbach Alpha value above 0.7 indicates adequate reliability of an instrument. Thus, in the current case, the value ($\alpha = 0.89$) indicated that the questionnaire was suitable to be used in the main study.

After the modifications that were required by the pilot stage, the data collection for the main study was conducted. Two hundred respondents were recruited and seated in the main hall of English department of their university. After they were ready for filling in the questionnaire, they were informed to freely ask if they had any queries. Moreover, the respondents were properly briefed about the completion process and the time. They were also provided the email of the researcher in case they were interested to know more about the findings or this study. Within 25 minutes, the research procedure was complete. The researcher thanked the respondents in the end.

Table 5. *Reliability of the Motivation Questionnaire*

Stage	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Pilot study	36	0.89
Main study	36	0.85

Table 5.

3.4 Data Analysis and Ethical Considerations

After the stage of data collection for the main study, data analysis was performed on the collected data. For the data analysis, SPSS v. 26 was used. Two types of statistical analyses were performed to analyze quantitative data. These are namely descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. In descriptive analysis, the mean, frequency, standard deviation and percentage (levels) etc. are determined. These dimensions describe the characteristics of the collected data therefore it is called descriptive data analysis. On the other hand, inferential data analysis refers to performing complex or advanced statistical analysis using certain tests such as correlation and regression analysis (Byrne, 2007).

In the study, the main objective was to determine the levels of the respondents' motivation for learning English. Thus, on the data collected using the Language Learning Motivation Questionnaire, frequency descriptives were performed using SPSS v. 26. This test is performed to obtain the percentages and frequency of the collected data. This procedure yielded the Iraqi EFL learners' motivation levels in learning English language.

Subsequently, frequency statistics were performed on the respondents' English examination scores. It was performed since the second objective of the study was to obtain the levels of academic performance of the learners in English language. This procedure yielded the levels (i.e., percentages) of the respondents' academic performance in English.

At the second stage of data analysis, inferential statistical data analysis was performed on the collected data. The third objective of the study was to investigate the relationship between the respondents' language learning motivation and English language performance. To meet this objective an inferential test called Pearson's Correlation Analysis was performed on the collected data using SPSS v. 26. The data involved were the motivation questionnaire data and English language scores of these Iraqi EFL learners. This analysis yielded a correlation coefficient that showed the strength of the relationship between both aforementioned dimensions.

Table 5 shows that the reliability of the questionnaire in the main study was 0.85, which is greater than the standard value of 0.7. This indicated that the obtained data was suitable for further quantitative analysis.

Every research must take into account certain ethical considerations. When it involves human respondents, the demand of attending to ample ethical concerns is increased. In the study, the respondents were duly requested of their consent of participating in this research. No respondent who did not provide informed consent was included. Clear instructions along with the description of the purpose of the research was explained to the respondents. Furthermore, the respondents were

assured that the obtained data would be used only for research purposes, and will not be revealed to any third party. For validity establishment, the purpose of the study and relevant material were appropriately communicated to the reviewers.

4. Results

4.1 English Language Learning Motivation

This section addresses the first research question. To answer this research question, the descriptive statistical analysis of the data collected by the Language Learning Motivation (Yuet, 2009) questionnaire, was performed. The descriptive analysis was conducted using SPSS v. 26. For this analysis, frequency statistics (i.e., mean, frequency & percentage etc.) was selected in SPSS. The levels of learner's motivation were indicated using the rubrics of Burry-Stock et al. (2000). These rubrics showed the high, average and low levels of these Iraqi EFL learners' language learning motivation. Table 6 presents these levels.

Table 6 shows that 13% (n = 26) learners had the high level of motivation towards learning English. Furthermore, 58% (n = 116) learners had the average level of motivation. On the other hand, 29% (n= 58) learners had the low level of motivation. The analysis also indicated that the average motivation level was the most prevalent. It was followed by the low level of motivation. It is notable that the high level is the lowest of all in these Iraqi EFL learners. Overall, it indicates that the majority of these Iraqi EFL learners' levels of motivation in English language learning were average.

Next, conducting Frequency statistics in SPSS, the descriptive nature of each item in Language Learning Motivation questionnaire was analyzed. For this purpose, the mean and standard deviation of each item was determined. This provided the individual levels of the learners' aspects of the language learning motivation.

Table 6. *Distribution of Learners by Motivation Level*

Motivation Level	Frequency (n)	Percentage
High	26	13%
Average	116	58%
Low	58	29%
Total	200	100%

Table 6.

Table 7. *Mean and Standard Deviation of Questionnaire Items*

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. attentive in English lessons	4.01	1.18
2. participate in extra-curricular English activities	3.04	1.49
3. hardworking in studying English	4.12	0.90
4. think about how to learn English better	4.60	1.12
5. plan schedule to study English	3.93	1.01
6. spend homework time on English	4.18	0.72
7. not being forced to learn English	3.05	1.28
8. choose to study English even if not required	4.20	1.86
9. continue learning English after leaving school	4.26	1.70
10. want to learn English well	4.91	1.36
11. find it easy to learn English	3.19	0.72
12. want to gain better English proficiency	4.31	1.41
13. happy with the English grades	3.98	1.19
14. have a feeling of success in learning English	3.89	1.02
15. have good ability in learning English	2.93	1.62
16. greater effort makes better English	4.07	1.29
17. know how to improve English	3.16	0.90
18. learning English is not a matter of luck	4.23	1.39
19. feel in control of learning	3.67	1.31
20. self-responsibility to do well in English	4.89	0.99
21. interested in learning English	3.95	1.39
22. enjoy reading English newspapers or books	4.01	1.28
23. enjoy watching English movies or TV programs	4.61	0.69

24. enjoy talking with foreigners in English	4.19	1.48
25. enjoy using English outside classroom	3.88	1.58
26. feel comfortable when speaking English	3.30	1.02
27. enjoy living in an English-speaking country	4.78	0.72
28. interested in English-speaking countries' cultures	4.26	0.74
29. fulfil the university language requirement	4.82	1.95
30. find a better job in the future	5.04	0.86
31. English is an international language	5.22	0.72
32. fulfil parents' expectation	4.87	0.91
33. gain people's respect	5.01	0.95
34. raise the social status	5.05	0.90
35. English is the mark of an educated person	4.93	0.81
36. help to do better in other academic subjects	4.80	0.95

Table 7.

Table 7 shows that item 31 (i.e., English is an international language) obtained the highest mean among all the items. This suggests that these Iraqi EFL learners recognized that English was a significant language due to being a global means of communication across the world. Furthermore, the second highest mean was of item 34 (i.e., English raises the social status). Connected in spirit was Item 33 (i.e., find a better job in the future), which obtained the third highest mean. This means that these learners were aware of the fact that learning English could raise their social status and future prospects. This revealed that the motivation of these learners was largely instrumental. This means they wanted to learn English only because it was a means to an end.

Contrarily, the lowest mean was recorded for Item 15 (i.e., have good ability in learning English). This implied that many of these learners lacked confidence in their ability to learn English. This was supported by the mean of item 26 (i.e., feel comfortable when speaking English), which indicated the inhibition and level of comfort of these learners in learning and speaking English.

Overall, comparing the means revealed that these Iraqi EFL learners' motivation towards learning English was at the average level. However, this did not overrule the probability that some learners also had the high level of motivation in learning English (13%) as shown in Table 6.

4.2 Academic Performance in English

It was the second research question in the study. To determine the academic performance of the respondents in English language, their most recent scores in English language examination were obtained. Subsequently, the data were entered in SPSS v. 26. To answer this research question, frequency statistics (mean, percentage etc.) was selected in SPSS.

The analysis was performed on account of the four benchmarks given in the assessment key of the university. These benchmarks were Excellent, Good, Average and Poor. Table 8 presents the learners' levels of academic performance.

Table 8 shows that 5% (n = 10) learners had the excellent level in English language performance. Furthermore, 18% (n = 36) learners had the good level of English language performance. On the other hand, 51% (n = 102) learners had the average level of performance in English language. Lastly, 26% (n = 52) learners had the poor level of performance in English language. In this way, the excellent-performance category represented the smallest proportion whereas the average level was the highest. In addition, the poor level of performance was higher than the excellent level.

The findings of this question revealed that the majority of these Iraqi EFL learners had an average level of academic performance in English language, which was determined in the shape of descriptively examining the levels of their performance in the most recent English language examination.

Table 8. *Distribution of Learners by Academic Performance Level*

Performance Level	Frequency (n)	Percentage
Excellent	10	5%
Good	36	18%
Average	102	51%
Poor	52	26%
Total	200	100%

Table 8.

4.3 Correlation between Motivation and Academic Performance

This was the third research question of the study. To answer this question, inferential statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS v. 26. To obtain the answer, Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted on the motivation and academic performance of the respondents. This test was opted because it is the most common analysis which is performed in order to investigate the strength of relationship between two variables. In the study, motivation was the independent variable whereas academic performance in English language was the dependent variable. Table 9 shows the results of the analysis:

Table 9. *Correlation between Motivation and Academic Performance*

Analysis	Variable	N	Academic Performance
Pearson Correlation	Motivation	200	.83*

Table 9.

* *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

Table 9 shows that there was a strong correlation between the learners' motivation for learning English and their academic performance in English ($r = .83$). This implied that higher motivation would be associated with higher in the learners' academic performance. According to Pallant (2020), a strong correlation indicates a strong relationship between the two variables. This implies that the learners' motivation has a strong relationship with their academic performance.

5. Discussion

5.1 Motivation Levels

The descriptive analysis indicated that these Iraqi EFL learners had the lowest percentage (13%) in the high level. On the other hand, the average level of the learners' motivation (58%) was the highest. Firstly, it indicated that the motivation levels of the majority of these Iraqi learners were average. However, it does not mean that there were no proficient learners. This finding is in line with the findings of Latif (2021), who conducted a study on the motivation of adult learners in Iraqi EFL context. He found that the majority of the learners' motivation was extrinsic and average level. This also supports Abu-Ghazaleh and Hijazi (2011) in Jordanian context, in which it was found that the learners studying arts, had a lower motivation level than those studying science. Furthermore, the overall motivation levels of the arts learners were average.

Language learning motivation is usually divided into two types though this division is not always hard and fast. Extrinsically motivated learners use the language to achieve some target such as passing the exam or getting a job. On the other hand, intrinsically motivated learners consider learning the language a process of owning a personal asset which could provide them with the chances of mingling with the native speakers, and knowing their culture. The findings of the study also showed that the learners' responses obtained a high mean in relation with considering English as a global means of communication. However, these learners also showed a high mean in the item that was related to the need of learning English to secure a better job in the future. Moreover, they also showed a high mean of responses in relation with considering English as a means to meet their parents' expectations, and raising the social status. This extrinsic motivation of Iraqi EFL learners supports the findings of Yousef et al. (2013). They conducted a study on Jordanian EFL learners and found that the learners were instrumentally motivated due to their interest in securing a good job, passing an exam and the utilitarian value of English in the present age of business and trade.

However, the interest that the respondents showed in learning English is instrumental because they want to use English only for its use and benefit in job market and status. This is contrary to the findings of Al-Issa (2014) in Omani context in which the learners were integratively motivated and wanted to learn English to communicate with the native speakers and interest in western culture.

Moreover, the findings of research question one showed that the majority of these Iraqi EFL learners showed though the means of the relevant item that they were not comfortable when speaking English. This also shows that the teaching, learning or social environment in which these learners are learning English is not very congenial for these learners. This is in line with the findings of Sivaraman et al. (2014), in the context of Oman, in which the learners informed that they felt uncomfortable while using English language. In this connection, Lori and Al-Ansari (2001) contend that understanding Arab cultures' motivation at present, requires a culture-sensitive approach. It is because the differences that exist between the Arab and western cultures seems to influence the motivation for learning English of the Arab world. Interestingly enough, Randall and Samimi (2010), in the context of Dubai, found that the learners were entirely highly motivated to learn English for the sake of mixing with the native culture. However, the current findings are different from this finding. In the wake of these findings, more investigation is recommended in this regard.

5.2 Academic Performance

The findings revealed that the majority of the Iraqi EFL learners, who were the respondents of the study, had an average level of English language performance (51%). On the other hand, the percentage of the learners with excellent performance in English language, was the lowest (5%). Furthermore, the respondents who had the lowest performance were 26%. This indicates that overall, these Iraqi EFL learners require their performance to be elevated. The findings about the average level of these learners supports the findings of Rezaee and Mubarak (2018), in the context of Iraqi EFL university-level learners. It was found that the critical thinking ability of these learners in English language (i.e., performance) was at average and below average levels.

Contrarily, the low performers seem to be less motivated, for some reasons, towards learning and performing well in English language. There may be several implicit and explicit factors involved in this however, according to Walberg (1981), motivation is a significant factor for academic performance in his nine-factor theory. In the case of these Iraqi EFL learners, the effect of the social environment may be working behind this performance because in Iraq, English is foreign in day-to-day communication. Furthermore, teaching quality and facilities also matter in this regard. On the other hand, the average performers seem to lie somewhere between the high and low performers. Overall, it is considered urgent to alleviate the English language performance of these Iraqi learners who are at average and low level of academic performance.

5.3 Relationship between Motivation and Academic Performance

The third research question, 'What is the correlation between the respondents' motivation for learning English and academic performance in English?', was answered by performing a correlation analysis on the data of the respondents' motivation and academic performance. The analysis showed that there was a high correlation between these Iraqi EFL learners' language learning motivation and academic performance in English.

The findings of the third research questions were in line with Dashtizadeh and Farvardin (2016) who conducted a study in the context of several Iranian university learners. They found that there was a positive correlation between the learners' motivation for learning English and their academic performance in English. They also discovered that the ability to move forward with a learning condition also plays an important role in this relationship. The findings of the study also support the findings of Tuan (2012) which was a study conducted on motivation and performance taking into account the teachers' attitude and other relational variables. The study found that there was a fair impact and correlation between both.

The current findings indicate the significance of motivation in the learners' performance. In this way, EFL motivation has also been observed to have significant correlation with the English performance of the learner. In this regard, a significant study was conducted by Abad-Mancheño, León-Mejía and Sánchez-Cabrero (2022). It was considered significant because it conducted an investigation on the relationship between second language learning motivation and academic performance taking into account several different learners such as German, Spanish, Italian and Japanese, in the context of an American university. It was found that a highly positive correlation existed between the learners' second language learning motivation and academic performance. The study also supports the above findings because a high and positive correlation has also been discovered in the context of the respondents.

In the case of the respondents of the study, the positive correlation between the Iraqi EFL learners' language learning motivation and English academic performance shows that if these learners' motivation is increased, their academic performance in English language will also increase. On the contrary, if the motivation is decreased, the English language academic performance of these learners will also decrease. It is because both variables indicated a high correlation. The study also found that the majority of these learners had average level of motivation and academic performance in English. This implied that immediate attention is required to be paid on these learners' increase in motivation so that their academic performance in English may increase. In this regard, the study supports the finding of Ayub (2010) in Pakistani adult learners' context. It was found that an increase in motivation would increase the academic performance of the learners.

It is, however, debatable that which methods are adopted to increase motivation so that the academic performance of the EFL learners is increased. The case of the respondents of the study is significant in that these learners informed that the majority were uncomfortable with using the language. The current results of correlation must be applied with caution in this case because there may be other variables involved in this situation, such as anxiety, home environment and teaching quality as Walberg (1981) states. Though the current findings show that there is a positive correlation between these learners' motivation and English language performance but while taking remedial measures, it may be wise to motivate the learners in all skills of English. Most of the developing educational cultures think that only reading and writing skills are important to be learnt in a foreign language. For a globally active status of the learners, all four language skills are required to be involved in the process of motivation increase.

In Iraqi educational environment, usually reading and writing in English is deemed important (Al-Khayyat, 2020). Usually, the academic performance in listening and speaking in English is neglected. It is due to this neglect that the majority of the Iraqi learners are not proficient in these skills, and fear taking any examination of these languages. This matches with the information that the study's respondent provided in the responses of the questionnaire. They informed that they were uncomfortable speaking to foreigners in English. Thus, it is recommended that more in-depth analysis and investigation may be undertaken by other researchers in this regard.

6. Implications

Firstly, the findings have significant implications for the teachers. The Iraqi English language teachers can use this study, and the other similar existing studies, to know the motivation and academic performance of the Iraqi university-level learners. Knowing that the learners' academic performance in English is related with their motivation for learning English, can make teachers understand the current status of their learners' abilities. If teachers know well the levels of their students, the teachers can know and understand the learning needs of their students. In the Iraqi contexts, it is necessary that the teachers should be aware of the learners EFL learning needs. It is because there is a general impression that English language teaching and its quality is not satisfactory in Iraqi universities.

If the teachers are aware of the learning needs of their students, the teachers can bring their teaching in line with these learning needs. The teachers can change and transform their teaching methods and quality according to their learners'

needs. In this connection, the learners can design the activities of the English language skills in which the learners are weak, and require increase in performance. Furthermore, the teachers can also know in which skills, the learners are good. In this way, the teachers can reinforce the activities in those skills. This way, there are chances of increase in the learners' performance in English language.

Moreover, the teachers can design appropriate washback courses using the information about the students' learner needs in English. Washback is the measure or program or plan through which the learners' discrepancies and weak skills are targeted by giving them practice in the required areas. Similarly, the study's findings may be used by Iraqi EFL teachers at the university-level for knowing the required areas to be targeted in the washback. Washback can be designed according to this information. In this way, the used information will be scientific and the result of research. It means that valid information will be available for designing the washback.

Other than teachers, the findings of the study can also be used by Iraqi EFL learners at university-level. These learners can know their motivation levels in overall and individual areas also (the items in the questionnaire). When the learners know their abilities and limitations in foreign language learning, they can take the control of their learning. It is because adult learners can usually know their learning problems, and accordingly can understand where they stand. In this way, the learners can take the measures to increase their performance by putting in their efforts in the required area. They can also self-study and focus on the activities which can raise their performance level as well as the motivation for learning English. Moreover, if the learners come to know their learning needs, they can also discuss it with their teachers in case they feel they are lagging behind in any language area.

The findings of the study can also be beneficial for the curriculum designers. If in some educational context or institute, the teachers understand the learning needs of their students, they design the syllabus in accordance with the requirements of the students' learning needs. In most of the cases, the teachers and curriculum designers are different personnel. If the teachers understand the learning needs and skill requirements of the students, the teachers can prepare insightful reports for the curriculum designers to design better and relevant curriculum and syllabuses in foreign languages.

The findings of the study may also contribute to inform the English language policymaking in the context of Iraqi university-level EFL learners. The policymakers can use such studies to get valuable insight and information about the general levels of Iraqi students' motivation and academic performance in English language. By this, the policymakers can change their policies in accordance with the current condition of the learning levels of these students. The policymaking can then positively affect the curriculum designing, teaching and learning of the Iraqi EFL learners.

7. Limitations and Recommendations

Firstly, this study is limited to the context of Iraqi EFL learners. It is probable that other contexts, such the developed countries, may produce different results in the shape of motivation and academic performance levels of the learners. Furthermore, the learners who are the native speakers of English may have different motivation and performance levels in English. Secondly, this study is the most relevant to the university-level learners of English as a foreign language. The learning in adults is usually different from the learning in children (Illeris, 2006). Children usually cannot take control of their learning whereas adult can do so. University level learner also have different type of learning due to their concerns such as acquiring a job and getting good grades. Children may usually be integratively motivated. Thirdly, the study employed quantitative approach in its investigation. Any other study using mixed method approach or qualitative approach may produce different results. Lastly, the number of the samples is 200. In case, the study is conducted with a larger sample, different results may be obtained. So, the future researcher and users of this study should take all these limitations into account.

The future researchers may employ a methodology different from the study's methodology. They may add several other research methods to investigate the same area. For instance, using a mixed method research approach is hoped to provide in-depth insight about the motivation and academic performance of these learners. Using the qualitative approach may also provide the subjective feelings of the learners regarding their attitude towards learning English.

The future researchers may also use a different or larger number of samples. In this way, the potential of the study to be generalized will be increased, and more valuable information may be revealed about the EFL learning abilities of the Iraqi university-level students. Using a larger sample can increase the reliability and authenticity of the relevant information.

The future researchers can investigate the levels of motivation and academic performance of EFL learners in the contexts other than Iraq. They can involve other variables as moderating or mediating variables in their studies. This is hoped to provide better information.

8. Conclusion

The study concludes that the current sample of Iraqi university-level EFL learners' levels of motivation and academic performance need to be raised because the motivation levels and English language performance levels are currently average. For the current age of information and global communication, English is a necessary tool. If the performance and motivation of these learners is not increased, they may lag behind in their future prospects and overall academic performance. It is because in the current age, English is considered a global language and tool for communicating across the world.

The study also concludes that there is a relationship between these Iraqi EFL learners' motivation and academic performance in English. Therefore, the learners' motivation must be given ample attention so that their positive engagement and motivation can increase their involvement and performance in English language. Overall, the study concludes that Iraqi EFL learners EFL learning motivation must be raised for their increased English language performance

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