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## The correlation between foreign learners' motivation to learn Vietnamese and learning outcomes: A case study in Hanoi, Vietnam

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#### Abstract

This article examines the correlation between Vietnamese language learning motivation and learning outcomes among foreign learners in Hanoi. A simple random sampling method was used to collect data from 307 foreign learners studying at several universities and language centers in Hanoi. The study found a strong positive correlation between foreign language learning motivation and their learning outcomes. It also revealed that learner interest and self-awareness play crucial roles in determining their motivation to learn. The article draws important conclusions about the role of motivation in Vietnamese language learning outcomes, as well as other factors that may affect learner motivation. Based on the study findings, it proposes that teachers use appropriate teaching methods and classroom organization to cultivate and enhance learner motivation.

**Keywords:** learning motivation, learning outcomes, Vietnamese language acquisition, foreign language learners, teaching methods



### Public Interest Statement

This article explores the relationship between foreign learners' motivation to learn Vietnamese and their learning outcomes in Hanoi, Vietnam. The findings highlight the importance of learner interest and self-awareness in fostering motivation and propose recommendations for teachers to enhance motivation in the classroom.

## 1. Introduction

“Learning outcomes are an important indicator that reflects the results of the learning and training processes for learners. However, studies have shown that many factors affect learners' learning outcomes, including learning motivation, learning style, and self-study ability. Among these factors, motivation in learning has a significant impact on learning outcomes and has been the focus of many domestic and foreign researchers. Specifically, research by Wang, J. H., & Guthrie, J. T. (2004), Ainley, M., Hidi, & Berndorff, D. (2002), Schmidt, R. A., & Bjork, R. A. (1992), Harackiewicz, J. M., Barron, K. E., Pintrich, P. R., Elliot, A. J., & Thrash, T. M. (2002), and Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000) has shown the effects of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on learning outcomes.

Following studies by Weiser et al. (2010), Muhammed Yusuf (2011), and Fabio et al. (2011), it has been agreed that learning motivation is a strong factor that continually affects the learning outcomes of learners and their expectations for academic success. In addition, the study by Suphi et al. (2012) evaluating the correlation between motivation in learning and learning outcomes showed that motivation in learning is an essential factor in predicting learning outcomes.

These studies have shown that while motivation in learning is considered an important factor in achieving good academic results, learners with higher intrinsic motivation in learning tend to automate their learning, withstand tougher academic challenges, and achieve higher results. However, external motivation can also significantly boost learning outcomes, depending on different types of external motivation.

Therefore, motivation in learning is a crucial factor that significantly affects the learning outcomes of learners in general and college learners in particular. This study aims to find out the correlation between learning motivation and learning outcomes of a group of foreign learners studying Vietnamese in Hanoi.

## 2. Theoretical framework

### 2.1. Learning outcomes

Researchers have had differing views on learning outcomes. For example, Young et al. (2003) suggest that learning effectiveness is self-assessed by learners based on the general knowledge gained, skills and abilities developed, and effort put in a particular learning context compared to other contexts. This perspective builds on Bandura's (1986) research and McCloy et al.'s (1994) results.

Kuh & O'Donnell (2013) argue that learning outcomes encompass not only grades but also the skills and knowledge learners acquire during their studies. Pascarella & Terenzini (2005) contend that the importance of learning outcomes lies not just in obtaining a degree but also in developing soft skills such as creative thinking, communication, persuasion, and time management. Additionally, Tinto (1997) asserts that learning outcomes are influenced by several factors other than learners' individual abilities, such as the learning environment, family, community, and society.

Research by Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl (2013) shows that academic performance is closely linked to learners' ability to develop in the working environment, and graduating with good academic

results can improve future employment and income opportunities. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2015) offers a different perspective, stating that learning outcomes should be assessed against different standards based on the purpose of each learning program, such as scientific research standards, professional standards, or community service standards.

In summary, international perspectives on learners' achievement show that academic performance includes various factors beyond grades and should be assessed against different standards depending on the learning program's purpose.

In this study, our objective is to examine the outcomes of Vietnamese language learning among foreign individuals residing in Hanoi, from the perspective of Young et al. (2003). Their perspective highlights the learners' self-evaluation of their overall knowledge, skills, progress, and effort after completing their studies at universities or language centers for foreigners.

## ***2.2. Learning motivation***

Bandura (1986) believed that self-efficacy includes people's assessment of their own organizational ability and their ability to perform necessary actions to achieve action goals. According to Bandura (1986), motivation in learning is not related to individual abilities, but rather to the person's assessment of what he or she can do with whatever abilities they possess. Researchers (Schunk, 1989; Suryasa et al, 2019; Zimmerman et al., 1992) also believed that motivation in learning has an influence on individual learning. Specifically, the above group of researchers suggested that learning motivation affects the choice of learning actions, the effort put into setting goals, planning, and persistence in completing learning tasks. Based on Bandura's (1986) theoretical framework of self-efficacy, Mark Shere et al. (1982) developed a scale of learning motivation. Originally consisting of 36 items, the scale was tested and trialed, resulting in the removal of 13 items with factor loading coefficients below 0.4, leaving 23 items.

Meanwhile, Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan are two psychologists who proposed the concept of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation in the field of educational psychology. In their studies on learning motivation, Deci and Ryan found that a person's motivation in learning can be divided into two main categories: Intrinsic motivation and Extrinsic motivation.

Intrinsic motivation is fueled by one's natural curiosity, passion, and interest in a learning topic or content. Learners find it interesting and exciting to learn about a particular topic and want to explore and learn more about it on their own. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is motivated by external factors such as money, career advancement, love, praise, or punishment. Learners feel motivated for an external purpose, such as achieving a good result, getting a good grade, or winning an award.

Both types of motivation play an important role in promoting a learner's learning and success. However, intrinsic motivation often leads to lasting motivation and creates a passion, curiosity, and enthusiasm with the subject of study, while external motivation often only achieves short-term effects. Studies by Deci and Ryan provided evidence that intrinsic motivation is strongly associated with satisfaction, enhanced psychological well-being, and promotion of self-development, while extrinsic motivation can cause stress and unresponsiveness to larger academic challenges.

## ***2.3. Correlation between Motivation in Learning the Vietnamese Language and Vietnamese Language Learning Outcomes***

The correlation between motivation in learning the Vietnamese language and Vietnamese language learning outcomes can be seen as a parallel relationship with mutual influence. The interest in learning the Vietnamese language can play an essential role in achieving good results in Vietnamese language

learning.

Firstly, having an interest in the Vietnamese language can provide learners with motivation to study harder and persevere. If learners are interested in the Vietnamese language, they tend to actively participate in learning activities such as reading books, listening to music, watching movies, and discussing, which helps them acquire language knowledge and skills faster and more efficiently.

Secondly, an interest in learning the Vietnamese language can help learners develop language skills more naturally and easily. When learners are interested in the Vietnamese language, they tend to use the language more often and confidently, aiding them in developing language skills more naturally and effortlessly.

Lastly, having an interest in learning the Vietnamese language can also help learners develop an understanding and love of the cultures and languages of Vietnam, where the language is spoken. This helps learners achieve a deeper level of language knowledge and skills and become more motivated to learn the Vietnamese language.

However, there may be cases when learners achieve good results in Vietnamese language learning despite not having an interest in the language, but due to their hard work and perseverance in their studies. Overall, having an interest in learning the Vietnamese language can help learners achieve better results in Vietnamese language learning.

## 2. Research organization and methodology

### *Research sample and area*

The sample for this study is a convenience random sample of foreign learners who are currently studying in Hanoi during the academic year 2021-2022. The sample includes learners from institutions such as Hanoi National University of Education, Hanoi University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Military Science Academy, etc. Given the difficulty of determining the exact number of foreign learners studying Vietnamese in Hanoi during this period, the Cochran formula was used to calculate the minimum sample size required. A total of 307 subjects were surveyed using a Google Form questionnaire between November 2021 and February 2022.

### *Methodology*

The methods used in this study include document research, questionnaire surveys, and data processing using SPSS version 20.0. The questionnaire survey is the main research method, which consists of two parts. The first part consists of questions related to the personal information of the subjects, while the second part contains two scales: (1) The scale of learning motivation (Shere et al., 1982), which includes 23 items for two groups of factors, "Intrinsic motivation" and "External motivation," and (2) The learner's self-assessed learning outcome scale (Young et al., 2003), which consists of 6 items. Both scales use Likert scales with 5 levels: 1 being the lowest - completely incorrect and 5 being the highest - absolutely correct. The Scale of Motivation in learning is evaluated based on the average score. A higher average score indicates that more learners perceive their expressions of interest in learning as appropriate, and vice versa.

The academic achievement scale measures the frequency of learners' assessment of the knowledge, skills, development, and effort they have gained after studying at some universities, academies, and Vietnamese language centers for foreigners in Hanoi. The higher the grade point average, the better the learning efficiency, while the lower the grade point average, the lower the learning efficiency. The study provides 6 criteria for learners to self-assess their Vietnamese language learning results, including: (1) Knowledge of grammar and vocabulary; (2) Communication skills; (3) Reading and writing skills; (4)

Flexibility and creativity; (5) Personal development; and (6) Effort and learning spirit. Quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire were processed using SPSS 20.0. The results of Cronbach’s Alpha reliability test and EFA exploratory factor analysis show that the scales have sufficient reliability and structural validity to analyze the obtained data (Table 2).

Table 2 presents the results of the reliability test and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) conducted on the measures of learning motivation and Vietnamese language learning outcomes, as assessed by the learners

Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha		Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)		
		Cronbach’s Alpha	Corrected Item - Total Correlation	KMO	Eigen values and Total Variance Explained	Factor Loading
Learning Motivation scale (15 items)*				0.881 (Sig. = 0.000)	2.799 (60.730%)	2 factors , factor loading from 0.639 to 0.893
Intrinsic motivation	10	0.927	0.616-0.854			
Extrinsic motivation	5	0.797	0.465-0.758			
Academic achievement scale	5**	0.909	0.702-0.875	0.877 (Sig. = 0.000)	74.42	1factor, factor loading from 0.806 to 0.928

Note:

\* The scale of learning motivation has 8 items that were rejected because they did not meet the requirements of the factor loading coefficient in the EFA analysis and the total variable correlation in the Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient analysis. Therefore, the total number of items in this scale was reduced to 15 items, compared to the original scale which had 23 items.

\*\* The learning outcome scale has had 1 item removed due to a low variable correlation coefficient, resulting in a total of 5 items, as opposed to the original 6-item scale.

## 2. Research results

The results in Table 3 indicate that all learners’ interest in learning Vietnamese has an average score of over 3.15, suggesting that learners perceive their interest in learning the language to be at a good level. Therefore, the participants in this study seem to have sufficient confidence in their ability to self-study. This result is both similar to and different from other research studies, such as N.Truong and Wang’s (2019) study on “Self-efficacy of Vietnamese students in learning English” and D.N. Thien et al.’s (2020) study that found learners’ interest in learning to be generally quite good. Our study surveyed several universities in Hanoi, further confirming that the interest of foreign learners in learning Vietnamese is generally quite good.

Table 3: The average score and standard deviation of self-assessed learning interest by learners

Foreign language learning motivation	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Intrinsic motivation	3.200	0.840
Extrinsic motivation	3.150	0.850

The results of Table 4 show that the learning outcomes, as assessed by the learners themselves, are quite effective (with a general mean of 3.890 and a standard deviation of 0.780). The variables that measure the different aspects of learning outcomes range from 3.630 to 4.040. The aspect of “Effort and learning spirit” received the highest rating from learners (with a mean of 4.040 and a standard deviation of 0.940), while the aspect of “Reading and writing skills” received the lowest rating (with a mean of 3.630 and a standard deviation of 1.070). Thus, the majority of learners participating in this survey rated their Vietnamese learning outcomes as effective.

**Table 4: Average score results and the standard deviation of learning outcomes were determined through learners’ self-assessments**

Self-assessment on learning outcome	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Knowledge of grammar and vocabulary	3.870	0.890
Communication skills	3.930	0.850
Reading and writing skills	3.630	1.070
Personal growth	3.970	0.820
Effort and learning spirit	4.040	0.940
General	3.890	0.780

Table 5 shows that the interest in learning Vietnamese has a positive and relatively strong correlation with learners’ Vietnamese learning outcomes, indicating that as learners develop their interest in learning, their learning outcomes tend to be higher. External motivation has the strongest correlation with learners’ learning outcomes ( $r = 0.413, p < 0.01$ ), meaning that if learners are trained to improve their interest in learning Vietnamese, they can further enhance the effectiveness of their learning in the context of classrooms and school activities. Intrinsic motivation has a weaker correlation with learners’ learning outcomes ( $r = 0.220, p < 0.01$ ). This research finding is consistent with the results of other scholars, such as Wang et al. (2018) and Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004), who have demonstrated a positive correlation between learning interest and learning outcomes of university students. Thus, an increased interest in learning is likely to lead to better learning outcomes for learners and may also increase their motivation to continue learning at higher levels.

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**Table 5: Results of the correlation between learning interest and self-assessed learning outcomes**

Learning motivation	Academic achievement
Intrinsic motivation	0.220**
Extrinsic motivation	0.413**

Note: \*\*if  $p < 0.01$

### 3. Conclusion

The research results confirm a strong correlation between learners’ motivation and their learning outcomes. Studies have shown that learners with a high interest in learning generally achieve better academic results than those with no interest in learning. These findings highlight the importance of encouraging and facilitating learners to develop an interest in learning, which can lead to better academic performance and a greater likelihood of continuing their studies at higher levels.

Based on the results of this study, it is suggested that teachers at universities in Hanoi should learn how to encourage and cultivate learners’ interest in learning. They should also use teaching methods and forms of teaching organization that are appropriate for learners’ abilities in order to help them improve their Vietnamese language proficiency.

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