

Socioeconomic Status or Attending Private English Courses: Which One Is a Better Indicator of High School Students' EFL Motivation?

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Abstract

The present study aimed to shed light on the relationship among students' socioeconomic status, self-reported English proficiency level, the length of attending private institutes, and L2 motivational factors namely: ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, L2 learning experience, integrative motivation, and intended effort. Participants were 320 Iranian students studying English at secondary schools in Tehran, the capital city of Iran. Data were collected through closed-ended questionnaire items entailing EFL motivational factors, socioeconomic status, and demographic information. The results of Spearman Rho test revealed weak or no meaningful relationship between the students' socioeconomic status and their L2 motivation suggesting that socioeconomic status is not an indicative of the school students' EFL motivation regarding tripartite variables of Dörnyei's (2009) L2 Motivational Self System, integrative motivation, and intended effort. However, the length of attending in private language courses and the self-reported English proficiency of the students indicated moderate correlations with their L2 motivation and socioeconomic status. Current findings bear a clear message to the Iranian education policymakers that despite adopting a communicative approach in the latest official English course books, non-official private language institutes still perform more effectively than the Iranian formal education system does in maintaining and enhancing students' EFL motivation.

Keywords: Ideal L2 Self, Ought-To L2 Self, English Language Teaching, Private Language Institutes, Socioeconomic Status.

Introduction

One of the key issues a language teacher should bear in mind is to initiate, maintain and even increase learners' motivation; because, motivation is related to one of the most basic aspects of human mind playing salient role in determining success or failure in any learning situation (Dörnyei, 2001). Therefore, the aim to research motivation in Applied Linguistics and its relationship with other variables is to identify learners' motivational characteristics in order to facilitate language learning/teaching process, maximize the effectiveness of the techniques, tasks, and the syllabi, and to increase learners' motivation towards L2 learning.

Although L2 learners' motivation has been extensively investigated in the field, the role of socioeconomic status, as a social variable, has been rarely investigated in L2 research. Language learning as well as communicating via a language is a social phenomenon, thus social factors have the potential of impacting learning second or foreign languages. Thompson (2008) argues that socioeconomic status of the learners is a factor that besides other variables such as age of acquisition, motivation, language family and literacy needs to be considered when investigating new language acquisition by the students. In this regard, investigating the existence or nonexistence of relationship between socioeconomic status of EFL learners' and their L2 motivation would influence the teaching methodology, curriculum, and the designed syllabus. Certainly the existence of such a relationship would suggest whether language teachers should take their students' socioeconomic status into account when deciding on the methodology, material, and their teaching strategies. On the other hand, syllabus designers and material developers would consequently make different decisions about whether or not to include various types of materials in order to address motivational factors of students who come from different social classes. Moreover, the relationship between SES and motivational factors, on the one hand, and the students' self-reported English proficiency level and the number of years they have attended EFL courses, on the other hand, would be explored.

L2 Motivation

There are various theories and conceptualization of language learning motivation in the field of second and foreign language learning among which Gardner's (1985) integrative and instrumental motivation is the most widely discussed theory of the L2 learning and Dörnyei's (2005) L2 motivational self system is the most recent theory which has been widely utilized as the framework for investigating L2 motivation during the last decade. These two prominent theories of motivation are discussed briefly below.

The most salient part of Gardner's theory of motivation focuses on integrative orientation and instrumental orientation. The integrative motivation, according to Gardner (1985) refers to learners' willingness to communicate, at least, or integrate and even assimilate at most, with the members of the target language community. The instrumental motivation also refers to the instrumental reasons for which L2 learners learn the language such as obtaining a better occupational position, a higher salary, or passing an exam. Brown (2007) emphasizes that "instrumentality and integrativeness are not actually types of *motivation* as such, but rather, as Dörnyei (2001), Gardner and MacIntyre (1991), and others have noted, are more appropriately termed orientation" (p. 170). Gardner's construct was "highly influential" (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 116) and "dominant theory" in early L2 motivation research (Brown, 2007, p. 680).

The most dominant theory of L2 motivation at the present time is Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) L2 Motivational Self System. This theory consists of three leading factors of L2 motivation namely: ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self and L2 learning experience. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) define them as: "the learner's vision of oneself as an effective L2 speaker, the social pressure coming from the learner's environment and positive learning experiences" respectively (p. 86). Dörnyei (2009) argues that there exists a distinction to the instrumental motivation and claims that instrumentality has two aspects: promotion vs. prevention. He further explains that instrumental motives with a promotion focus (e.g. to learn English for career promotion) are related to the Ideal L2 Self; whereas, instrumental motives with a prevention focus (e.g. to study in order not to fail an exam) are related to the Ought-to L2 Self. According to You and Dörnyei (2014), L2 Motivational Self System "has generally been accepted as an integrative synthesis of several previous constructs and approaches in L2 motivation research" (p. 3). Totally, according to the recent findings (e.g. Taguchi, Magid, & Papi, 2009; You & Dörnyei, 2014), the ideal L2 self is claimed to subsume integrativeness and internalized

instrumental motives and is often the strongest component of the L2 Motivation Self System; while, ought-to L2 self correlates with less internalized instrumental motives, and contributes less to motivated learning behaviour (Islam et al., 2013).

Socioeconomic Status

The definition of SES depends on the field in which it is to be measured (e.g. Winkleby et al., 1992). Here, the researcher aims to discuss SES in an educational perspective. Therefore, the definition and components to be included in the current study are regarded in the educational perspective. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the U.S. Department of Education and the Institute of Education Sciences, socioeconomic status in a broader definition is “one’s access to financial, social, cultural, and human capital resources” (2012, p. 30).

There have been various indicators taken into account in measuring students’ SES; however, the most frequently used variables about parents’ SES are: income, educational attainment, and occupational prestige (Hauser, 1994; Huseynpur et al., 2015a, 2015b; NCES, 2012). A family’s income may enable students to access higher quality of resources which contribute to better educational achievement, for instance through giving the opportunity for higher income families to reside in a better neighbourhood which can provide better educational resources like libraries, more equipped schools, etc. With regard to parent’s educational attainment, higher levels of education may lead parents to connect with teachers (Ciabattari, 2010) or result in their higher education-related expectations from their children (Davis-Kean, 2005). Parents’ occupational prestige may help them “develop connections with others in high positions within a community and draw on those connections for information and support for navigating the educational system” (Horvat, Weininger, & Lareau, 2003; as cited in Dickinson & Adelson, 2014).

Students’ residential area (neighbourhood SES) and the school they attend (school SES) can also be treated as indicators of students’ SES. Residential area provides resources and facilities such as inspiring neighbours, libraries, safe and quiet neighborhood. Schools also may influence students’ achievements and motivation by providing them good teachers, good facilities such as libraries and labs, and motivating environment.

Some empirical studies have indicated that different components of the SES correlate positively with one another; this may add up to the prospective influence on the educational factors. For instance, Huseynpur et al. (2015a) indicated that variables of the students’ SES such as father’s educational level, mother’s educational level, family income level, school SES, and neighbourhood SES correlate to each other positively. That is, the more educated the students’ parents are, the higher income they are likely to have, the better neighborhood they are likely to live, and the better schools they may possibly attend.

Socioeconomic Status and L2 Motivation

Second Language learning has undoubtedly been influenced by general pedagogy; however, according to Williams (1994), it differed from learning other subject matters in some aspects because of its social nature and its interrelation with social factors. In this regard, Gardner and Lambert (1972) assert that learning a foreign language is affected by some socio-cultural factors such as language attitude, and by no means is it a socio-culturally neutral field. The focus of analysing the impact of societal and cultural variables has usually been on motivational features of language learners belonging to different ethnical groups (Graham & Hudley, 2007) and different socioeconomic groups (Brooks-Gunn et al., 2007). Coleman et al. (1966) argue that students’ background features have implications for the quality of educational opportunities they have obtained. Hence, “a large amount of research has recognized the importance of social factors by routinely including SES as a control variable in statistical models” (Dickinson & Adelson, 2014).

For instance, Yuet (2008, as cited in Akram & Ghani, 2013) argues that students’ socioeconomic background plays a role in their L2 motivation because low-income parents may often be busy with providing livelihood and consequently may have less or no time to dedicate to promoting their children’s intellectual development. Echevarría and Graves (2011) remark that “socioeconomic status, maternal educational level, parents’ English proficiency level, and home literacy experiences all affect a student’s acquisition of language” (p. 35). Duncan and Magnuson (2005) state that various indicators of socioeconomic status, such as family income

and wealth, parents' skills and educational status, the quality of the neighborhood, and associated social position and privileges, account for the difference between higher class and lower class students' achievement, higher achievement on the part of students from socioeconomically higher families.

Empirical Findings

Empirical studies have shown different and sometimes contradictory results obtained from investigating the link between SES and other education-related variables such as achievement, learning styles, and motivation. For example, Blake (1989) revealed that high socioeconomic status of the students' results in more intellectual ability and better performance in school, and parents of high SES provide more encouragement and support for tertiary education than the parents with low SES do. Ainley and Long (1995) in their study on 14-year-old students, reported correlations of 0.23 and 0.21 between father's occupation with achievement in maths and reading; and, Alexander et al. (1975) reported a correlation of 0.31 for father's occupation with the students' achievement.

Kormos and Kiddle (2013) explored the effect of socioeconomic status on the motivational factors of Chilean EFL learners (male and female) from the capital city Santiago. All the participants were in the second grade of the four-year program of upper secondary education. The students' socioeconomic status was not measured directly by the researchers; instead they were categorized based on the information regarding the participants' socioeconomic status adopted from the previous Chilean education administration records based on the schools they were attending: Low, upper low, middle, upper middle, and high. In respect to measuring the students' motivational characteristics they measured 13 motivational factors among which from Dörnyei's L2MSS only "ideal L2 self" has been included. The findings in Chilean study revealed that students' social class had an average medium-size effect on motivational factors with self-efficacy beliefs being the most strongly related to socioeconomic status. According to other results, the most significant differences in motivation, self-regulation and learner autonomy were found between upper-middle and high social class students, on the one hand, and low and lower middle class students, on the other hand (Kormos & Kiddle, 2013). Moreover, the study disclosed that social class had a medium effect on learners' ideal L2 selves.

In another study in which geographically residential privileges rather than precise SES have been taken into account, Lamb (2012), taking L2 Motivational Self System as a framework, investigated language learning motivation of high school students (13-14 years old) in three different contexts in Indonesia: a metropolitan city, a provincial town, and a rural district. He found that motivation was "similar in strength and character in the two urban settings [metropolitan and provincial] but significantly different in the rural setting" (Lamb, 2012). Lamb also revealed that students in provincial areas had the strongest instrumental goals; to him, is due to their desire to move in metropolitan areas to access further education.

In another study, Akram and Ghani (2013) investigated the relationship of socioeconomic status with language learning motivation of 240 Pakistani university students (male and female) in intermediate level from different colleges of Punjab coming from urban areas (154 participants) and rural area (90 participants). They reported that due to the lack of standard instrument to measure SES in Pakistan, they have only assigned the participants into two classes: lower SES class and higher SES class, according to their parents' salary and occupational status. They found that there is statistically significant relationship between students' SES and their L2 motivation. They also reported that there was a significant difference in the parental encouragement received by the students from higher SES and lower SES; higher SES students had stronger parental encouragement due to facilities provided by their parents such as English books and other side material. In respect with English class anxiety, socioeconomically lower students indicated more anxiety than the students belonging to high socioeconomic status. In contrast, higher SES students showed more positive attitude towards English people than the lower SES students did.

Gayton (2010) who investigated 11 high school teachers: four in Scotland, four in Germany and three in France in order to determine the existence of any differences in the influence of socioeconomic status on foreign language learning motivation of the pupils of two categories: the pupils for whom English was a mother tongue, and the others for whom English was as a foreign language. According to the results, in all

three contexts, SES was indeed linked to language learning by means of a “pupil’s mobility” which is possibility to travel abroad. Due to the participants’ responses Gayton (2010) finds that pupils belonging to lower social classes who did not have any opportunities to travel abroad manifested less favourable attitudes toward foreign language learning. She infers a positive correlation between socioeconomic status and L2 learning motivation of the students. Melati Sukma (2019) also reported a positive significant correlation between motivation parental SES of a group of Indonesian university EFL students with an almost moderate effect size ($r = .28$). Hol and Yavuz (2017) informed a meaningful relationship between EFL students’ SES and their internal attributions to success. Paradewari and Mbato (2018) indicated that the learners with higher family SES had higher positive attitude than their peers from lower SES families towards learning English as a foreign ($r = .16$).

In Iran, there are a few studies which investigated the relationship of SES and L2 learning factors. Huseynpur et al., (2015b) found no meaningful relationship between Iranian high school student’ SES and their learning styles. In another study, Ghaemi and Yazdanpanah (2014) revealed that SES of the female university students majoring at English Translation in Iran had a negative association with their achievement in final exams. They explained that this may be due to the mid/high SES students being in welfare and therefore their lack of motives or purposes to spend time and effort for learning. Whereas, their low SES peers desire a better life, so they have stronger motivation to put more effort in order to score higher.

As mentioned above, a very few number of studies have targeted to probe the relationship between students’ SES and L2 motivation; however, they lack any comprehensive SES measure. For example, Kormos and Kiddle (2013) relied only on governmental categorization of the schools ignoring the social class differences among the students of a school by assigning the same socioeconomic status to all of the students of a particular school. Lamb’s (2012) study also controlled the residential factor of the participants by assigning them to three categories: metropolitan, provincial and rural students. Akram and Ghani (2013) assigned the participants into two categories, high and low SES students, while SES is a continuum rather than a bipolar variable. To fill in the gap, this study aimed to investigate any possible relationship of Iranian EFL learners’ perception of their socioeconomic status with their English motivation including tripartite variables of Dörnyei’s L2 Motivational Self System besides integrativeness, and intended effort. Moreover, the relationships of the self-evaluated English proficiency level and the length of attending private EFL classes on the one hand, with L2 motivational factors and SES of the students, on the other hand, were also probed. In the current study, SES dimensions were measured subjectively through questionnaire items answered by the students.

Methodology

Participants

This study investigates language learners in Tehran, the capital city and the largest city of Iran. Farsi is the main language used as the first or second language by residents of Tehran. In this research 320 male students who were all in the senior secondary school and aged 15 to 18 answered the questionnaires.

Instruments

The instruments used in this study involve three main sections including L2 motivational factors, SES, and demographic variables. To investigate the L2 motivation of the participants, five scales were used including tripartite variables of Dörnyei’s (2005, 2009) L2 Motivational Self System namely a) ideal L2 self: L2 learners’ future self image as an effective L2 speaker, b) ought to L2 self: the social pressure coming from the environment such as parents and peers, and c) L2 learning experience: positive learning experiences. Besides, two more variables intended effort (learners’ motivated learning behavior) and integrative motivation (learners’ desire to communicate or integrate with the members of the target language) have also been added to the motivational factors. All the items of the five motivational factors in this study were adopted from the Farsi version of the questionnaire developed by Taguchi et al. (2009). The items were measured either by six-point Likert or rating scales. At each end of the rating scale 1 shows “not at all” and 6 shows “very much”. The reliability of the motivation questionnaire reported in Taguchi et al. (2009) as well as the reliability calculated in the current study is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Item Numbers and Alpha Values of the L2 Motivational Factors

Scales	Item # in the original Questionnaire (Taguchi et al., 2009)	Reliability reported in the original Study	Reliability calculated in the current Study
Ideal L2 Self	9, 17, 25, 33, 41, 51	.79	.809
Ought-to L2 Self	1, 10, 18, 26, 34, 43	.75	.773
L2 Learning Experience	54, 59, 63, 67, 71, 75	.82	.847
Intended Effort	8, 16, 24, 32, 40, 50	.79	.793
Integrativeness	56, 69, 73	.56	.678

Drawing on the aforementioned obstacles regarding SES assessment, five scales of SES namely family income, neighbourhood SES, school SES, fathers' and mothers' educational levels were measured through 5-point Likert scales: Low, Quite Middle, Middle, Quite High, and High. Due to the fact that students usually go to schools closer to their homes, "it is likely that school and neighbourhood SES measures would correlate highly" (NCES, 2012, p. 21). Furthermore, it is a rule of Education Administration in Iran to oblige the students to enrol in a school that is the closest to their home for that they have to provide the school authorities a document such as an accommodation ownership or rental document in order to verify their home address. This means that most of the students of a particular school come from almost the same residential areas and have nearly similar neighbourhood SES. Data regarding school SES were provided by the Department of Education of Tehran who were asked to rate the SES of the approached schools as Low, Quite Middle, Middle, Quite High, and High according to their own systematic evaluations. Finally, the students' overall SES were calculated by averaging the higher educational level between parents and other four above-mentioned components of SES. The participants also answered a self-evaluated English proficiency level item along with informing the length of experiencing English courses in private institutes.

Procedure

The first researcher, attended the schools and briefed the aims and procedure of the research with the headmasters and/or assistants. After being granted the access to the classes, the teachers were briefed about the topic, the aims, and the average time needed for completion of the questionnaires. To obtain more cooperation from the students and keep the class quiet, the teachers were requested not to leave the class while the students were completing the questionnaires. The confidence was given to the students that they do not need to write their names on the sheets so that they could honestly state their real ideas concerning the questionnaire items. They were clarified that nobody at their school or anyone out of the school in Education Administration would have access to the collected data. Further, the students were asked to raise their hands in case they had questions to ask, so as to be answered by the researcher personally aiming not to disturb the other participants. The students were asked to make sure that there were no items left unanswered. Finally, the sheets were collected and the participants and the teachers were appreciated.

Findings

All the questionnaire data got computer-coded and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 was used to analyse the data. The main applied statistical procedure was correlation-based analyses. Based on the results displayed in Table 2 it can be concluded that the present data indicated a normal distribution since the ratios of skewness and kurtosis over their standard errors were in the range of +/- 1.96. However, the nonparametric test of Spearman *Rho* correlation was run to investigate the relationship between the variables because the SES scales and self-reported English level were ordinal variables.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Testing Normality Assumptions

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis		
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Years in Institute	319	1	10	4.43	3.319	.493	.145	-1.286	.289
English Level	309	1	5	3.16	1.322	-.279	.147	-1.097	.293
Income Level	320	1	5	3.13	.858	-.118	.145	.561	.288
Neighbors' SES	320	1	5	3.31	1.021	-.269	.145	-.166	.288
School SES	320	1	5	2.79	1.323	.007	.145	-1.229	.288
Father's Edu.	320	1.00	5.00	3.1514	.97403	.085	.145	-.447	.288
Mother's Edu.	320	1.00	5.00	3.0845	.92849	-.116	.145	-.214	.288
Total SES	320	1.33	5.00	3.2513	.69542	-.229	.145	.066	.288
Ideal L2 Self	320	1.00	6.00	4.7004	1.10852	-1.161	.145	1.202	.288
Ought to L2 Self	320	1.00	6.00	3.9575	1.11793	-.439	.145	-.437	.288
L2 Learning Exp.	320	1.00	6.00	4.1985	1.22138	-.704	.145	-.227	.288
Intended Effort	320	1.00	6.00	4.2308	1.07571	-.682	.145	.086	.288
Integrative	320	1.00	6.00	4.6708	1.14054	-.908	.145	.229	.288
Valid N (listwise)	309								

It should be noted that the students' total socioeconomic status was measured through averaging the highest parental educational attainment with family income level, residential SES, and school SES. Results of Spearman *Rho* correlation as displayed in Table 3, revealed that the students' family income level and their school SES level did not have any significant relationships with any of the L2 motivational factors ($p > .05$). However, father's education level, $r_s(320) = -.13, p < .05$, and mother's educational level, $r_s(320) = -.12, p < .05$, indicated statistically significant but weak negative relationships with the students' ought-to L2 self. The participants' total SES, $r_s(320) = .12, p < .05$, and neighborhood SES, $r_s(320) = .15, p < .05$, indicated weak but statistically significant positive relationship with ideal L2 self. Thus, there were either no or weak association between EFL students' socioeconomic status, on the one hand, and their ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, L2 learning experience, integrative motivation, and intended effort, on the other hand. The students' self-evaluated English proficiency level was strongly associated with the number of years they were attending private English courses in non-governmental educational institutes, $r_s(309) = .52, p < .01$. Moreover, both English proficiency level and the length of attending private English courses had significant positive correlation with total SES and all its dimensions with weak to strong effect sizes, $.18 \leq r_s \leq .42, p < .01$. Except from ought-to L2 self with no significant association, the other four L2 motivational factors had weak to almost moderate correlation with both English proficiency level and the length of attending private English courses, $.12 \leq r_s \leq .29, p < .05$. More details on the correlation coefficients and p -values are available on Table 3. The correlation effect sizes were interpreted based on McGrath and Meyer's (2006) recommendations on corresponding Cohen's d with correlation coefficient values, according to which, coefficients between .100 and .239 could be interpreted as small, .240 to .369 as moderate, and .370 and higher as strong effect sizes.

Table 3. Spearman Rho Correlations; Motivational Factors, SES, L2 Proficiency, the Length of Attending Private L2 Courses

		Ideal L2 Self	Ought-to L2 Self	L2 Learning Exp.	Intended Effort	Integrativeness	Year Institute	English Level
Dad Education	Rho	.052	-.125*	-.035	-.051	-.011	.287**	.265**
	Sig.	.385	.035	.552	.390	.851	.000	.000
	N	320	320	320	320	320	319	310
Mum Education	Rho	.092	-.119*	-.021	-.025	.042	.321**	.254**
	Sig.	.122	.044	.727	.678	.482	.000	.000
	N	320	320	320	320	320	319	310
Family Income Level	Rho	-.005	.017	.023	.067	-.061	.183**	.186**
	Sig.	.935	.772	.704	.264	.305	.002	.002
	N	320	320	320	320	320	319	310
Neighbours' SES	Rho	.152*	.020	.007	.078	.097	.156**	.264**
	Sig.	.010	.738	.902	.192	.104	.008	.000
	N	320	320	320	320	320	319	310
School SES	Rho	.115	-.081	-.056	-.040	.018	.422**	.326**
	Sig.	.052	.172	.350	.499	.766	.000	.000
	N	320	320	320	320	320	319	310
Total SES	Rho	.120*	-.089	-.040	-.009	.040	.411**	.349**
	Sig.	.043	.134	.504	.885	.497	.000	.000
	N	320	320	320	320	320	319	310
Year Institute	Rho	.260**	.029	.169**	.124*	.212**		.502**
	Sig.	.000	.632	.004	.046	.000		.000
	N	319	319	319	319	319		309
English Level	Rho	.289**	.051	.256**	.210**	.236**	.502**	
	Sig.	.000	.397	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	310	310	310	310	310	309	

Discussion

The current study indicated strong correlation between the senior secondary school students' self-evaluated English proficiency level and the length of attending English courses in private English institutes. The reason lies in the private institutes success in providing efficient L2 education to their learners while the governmental schools have failed in educating L2 learners in spite of six academic years of official L2 classes in junior and senior secondary schools. On the other hand, the students' English proficiency level and the length of attending private English courses had significant association with their total SES and its dimensions. For instance, the results revealed a strong correlation between the students' length of attending private English courses with their total SES and school SES. This may be due to the common interpretation that families with higher SES status better afford paying for a longer time for the tuition fees of the L2 courses in non-governmental institutes.

With respect to the relationship between SES and motivational factors, this study revealed that motivational factors in this study either did not correlate or correlated weakly with the students' SES. This was in contrary to Kormos and Kiddle's (2013) report of moderate correlations between Chilean students' SES and L2 motivation. Likewise, it contradicts Paradewari and Mbato's (2018) findings which revealed significant but weak positive correlations of L2 learners' SES and their positive attitude towards learning English as a foreign language. But current findings seem to be in line with Lamb's (2012) study in which students from an Indonesian metropolitan city and a provincial town did not differ in their motivation to learn English as a

foreign language. However, Lamb (2012) revealed that students from rural areas significantly differed from those coming from urban areas. Because there was no participant in this study to be from rural areas, the current research findings cannot be compared in this regard. Current research findings also contradicted that of Akram and Ghani (2013) which reported a significant relationship between Pakistani university students' SES and integrative motivation.

The contradiction in respect of relationship between SES and motivation may be due to the different populations in this research with those of the other researches such as Akram and Ghani (2013). As in this research, only students of senior high schools coming from a metropolitan city who were in average 15 years old were investigated; while in Akram and Ghani's (2013) study, the participants were university students from both rural and urban areas. Therefore, age variation between both studies' populations may be the reason for different results obtained. In Lamb's (2012) study also motivation did not differ between participants from a metropolitan city and those from a provincial town; it only changed between rural and urban students. While, in this study, only urban students from metropolitan city of Tehran participated in the research.

The other factors causing difference in the findings may be the socio-cultural differences between the population of the current study and those of the abovementioned studies. Although Iran is socio-culturally and socioeconomically diverse country, education among all types of Iranian families is of great salience. Taguchi et al. (2009) argue that Iranians (especially disadvantaged families) consider it essential to learn English in order to find a good job and get promotion in many careers, and as a result to elevate their socioeconomic status. On the other hand, when we compare findings in this study with findings of Kormos and Kiddle (2013), which had the ideal L2 self as a common variable with the current study, it could be inferred that the relationship between Dörnyei's tripartite variables of L2 motivational self system with SES of English learners may be country-bound: differ from one country to another. Because, in Chilean context, the students' ideal L2 self correlated with their SES with a moderate effect size; whereas, the current study failed to reveal meaningful or relatively important correlations.

Limitations and Delimitations

The sample to investigate the current study was only chosen from male senior high school students in Tehran. The students reported on their experience of taking L2 courses in private language institutes through a questionnaire item. The future researchers are suggested to target university students and also students from other Iranian cities, and include both sexes as the population of their study. Students of other L2 languages such as French, Chinese, German, and Spanish can also be investigated in the future studies.

Conclusion

This study investigated the relationship among Iranian senior high school students' SES, and motivation. Scales and items of L2 motivation were adopted from Taguchi et al. (2009) for motivational variables and some more items were added to measure the students' socioeconomic status, and demographic information. SPSS version 26 was used to analyse the data and Spearman *Rho* test was run to probe the relationship between the variables. Results of the study indicated that there were no serious meaningful relationships between the students' socioeconomic status and their motivational factors. The findings indicated that either Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) L2 Motivational Self System and Gardner's (1985) integrativeness plus the L2 learners' intended effort in the approached sample are not SES-bound or the conceptualization and the scales developed to represent the targeted factors do not have validity for distinguish the learners according to their socioeconomic status. The results also revealed that the students with longer attendance to private EFL courses were more likely to perceive their English proficiency higher. Other findings revealed that the students' perception of their English proficiency level and the length they had attended EFL courses in private institutes associated positively with their L2 motivation and socioeconomic status. It can be inferred that higher socioeconomic status is more likely to be indicative of longer possibility of affording the tuition fees of the private EFL courses, higher perception of English proficiency level, and relatively more motivation to learn English. Although according to the findings, socioeconomic status was positively

associated with the length of attending private EFL courses which was itself positively associated with L2 motivation, no direct association was revealed between the students' socioeconomic status and L2 motivation. This conveys that L2 motivation may be getting affected more directly from other factors such as attending in private EFL institutes than from the SES dimensions.

Although in the recent decade, attempts were made to substitute traditional grammar-translation approach with communicative approach based on developing four language skills in the official EFL curriculum (Kheirabadi & Alavimoghaddam, 2019), the current results still indicate that EFL learners attending private L2 courses perceive higher levels of English motivation compared to their peers who only attend English courses in official schools.

Pedagogical implications and directions for future research

The findings in the current study possess respected pedagogical implications in Educational fields especially in L2 teaching and learning. Although socio-cultural factors have indicated to impact educational variables, according to the current findings this was not true about the relationship between socioeconomic status and L2 motivational factors targeted in the current study. In fact, the findings indicated that no statistically significant difference may be in L2 motivation of Tehrani EFL learners coming from socioeconomically different families. In this respect, English teachers do not need to employ any different strategies to motivate students coming from different SES families. Likewise, there seems to be no need to take students' socioeconomic status into account when designing language learning tasks for improving the Iranian EFL learners' ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, L2 learning experience, integrative motivation, and intended effort. But we must be cautious about interpreting and generalizing the findings of the current study because only the students of senior secondary schools of Tehran were the population of the sample and only five factors of L2 motivation were investigated. Therefore, another studies are required to explore relationship between socioeconomic status and more range of L2 motivational factors of EFL learners. Educationists and policy makers are also advised to probe the reasons due to which the private institutes played more successful role than the official section in motivating and improving EFL learners' L2 proficiency; thus, they should implement successful strategies in the official EFL settings and rubric.

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