

Gender and Motivational Orientations in Second Language Acquisition: Indonesian Undergraduates

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ABSTRACT

Although gender differences in motivation to learn English have been widely investigated, findings remain inconsistent, particularly in the Southeast Asian context. Limited research has explored how male and female Indonesian students differ in their integrative and instrumental motivational orientations, especially within international learning settings. Therefore, this study aims to examine the relationship between gender and motivational orientations; integrative and instrumental towards English learning among Indonesian undergraduate students at Universiti Utara Malaysia. A total of 89 students from various academic fields participated in a survey using a modified version of Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB, 2004) comprising 20 items. The findings revealed that both male and female students showed high motivation in learning English, with males slightly more motivated than females. While female students demonstrated stronger integrative motivation and males stronger instrumental motivation, these differences likely reflect distinct social and learning orientations. The results suggest that in an English Medium Instruction (EMI) environment, both genders recognise English as essential for academic and professional success. Pedagogically, teachers should design activities that accommodate both motivational orientations—integrative tasks that promote interaction and cultural awareness for female learners, and instrumental tasks related to career goals for male learners. Understanding these orientations enables educators to create more balanced and motivating learning experiences. Future studies should further investigate how motivational orientations relate to learners' English proficiency and academic achievement.

Key words: Gender; Motivational Orientations; Second Language Acquisition; Indonesian Undergraduates

INTRODUCTION

Motivation is widely recognised in applied linguistics as one of the most crucial factors influencing second language acquisition (SLA). Recent studies emphasise that motivation shapes learners' engagement, persistence, and language achievement through the dynamic interaction of cognitive, affective, and contextual factors (Dörnyei, 2019; Ryan & Dörnyei, 2022; Wu, 2022). Within the framework of the L2 Motivational Self System, motivation is viewed as a complex construct encompassing learners' effort, desire, and positive attitudes toward the target language. These motivational orientations significantly affect how learners employ strategies and sustain their learning over time, highlighting motivation's central role in successful SLA. Another key factor that interacts with motivation is gender, which is frequently examined as a sociolinguistic variable influencing language attitudes and learning outcomes (Chaffee et al., 2020; Iwaniec, 2019; Ismail, et. Al 2022; Ismail, & Indriani, J. 2023).

Among the various factors influencing students in learning English as a foreign or second language, motivation is widely recognised as one of the most significant. It determines how much effort learners invest and how they persist in overcoming difficulties during the learning process. Gardner (1985, as cited in Ismail, 2022) emphasised that learners with positive attitudes toward learning English tend to find effective ways to deal with challenges, which ultimately leads to successful language acquisition. Hence, motivated learners can be identified by their consistent effort and desire to improve their English proficiency. In relation to gender, researchers have long been interested in how male and female learners differ in their English learning motivation, as it plays a vital role in shaping learning behaviour and achievement. Studies have shown that gender, motivation, and achievement are interrelated in both EFL and ESL contexts (Chaffee et al., 2020; Iwaniec, 2019; Mahbuber Rahman et al., 2021).

However, the related issue of which one has higher motivation between woman and man students in learning English is still up for debate among English researchers recently. Some scholars believe that compared to male students, female students are more motivated. The results often reveal that female students outperform male students in learning English, despite the fact that students often live in environments with homogenous characteristics including society, culture, language, and educational systems (Al Harthy, 2017). Similarly, According to a study looking at the connection between gender, motivation, and achievement among young English language learners, female students are more successful than male students at learning the language at all group and grade levels. (Bećirović, 2017).

Another previous research also supporting the statement above, in a study exploring how gender differences affects learning outcomes, As Sabiq et al., (2021) resulted that the average survey score was higher for female pupils. The male students' attitudes and desire for studying English were lower due to less exposure to and practice with real-life communication. Additionally; Azubuike & Little, (2019)

looked at how differences male and female English learning motivations affect students' learning achievement. One of the main findings in that article is female students reported having higher motivation and efforts than males. Moreover, the higher motivation and efforts are proportional to achievement that females get. Although both males and females reported high motivation and achievement, female students reported having higher motivation as well as achievement.

Similarly, Firdani et al., (2019) focused mainly on figuring out how the motivation of postgraduate students majoring in English at Syiah Kuala University in Indonesia to acquire English as a second language is influenced by their gender. The study found that there is a significant relationship between gender and motivation among EFL students and that female students are typically more successful and driven than male students when it comes to studying English. Lastly, As Sabiq et al., (2021b) explored English motivational orientation based on gender on learning outcomes. This study revealed that a notable difference and the impact of gender disparities regarding the students' motivation and attitudes. Students' attitudes and motivation were reasonably high for both genders. The average survey score was greater for female students, though.

On the other hands, some scholars also believe that Male students continue to be more motivated than female pupils to learn English. Abdilah & Chowdhury, (2013) examined the influence of gender on Australian families with immigrants from Iraq regarding their drive to acquire English. According to the study, the male participants showed a significant desire to learn English in order to accomplish a range of objectives, including some integrative objectives like being able to communicate well in Australian society where English is the primary language, in addition to some primarily instrumental goals like employment and higher education. On other hand, Due to sociocultural restrictions including childcare responsibilities and other heavy household obligations, female participants had less opportunity to enrol in English classes, which made it more difficult for them to learn the language beyond what they needed on a daily basis. Another research supporting the statement above is Geleto & Studies, (2019), on their study investigating the relationship among gender, English motivation, and achievement of secondary school students, revealed that both male and female student groups are highly motivated to learn English with cooperative learning method. However, the males preferred it more.

From the previous studies above, it can be seen that there are some scholars investigating gender differences and English motivational orientation of secondary school and of university English department students (Mahbuber Rahman et al., 2021; Iwaniec, 2019; Elfiyanto & Fukazawa, 2022; Azubuike & Little, 2019; Muslim et al., 2020; et. al 2023). However; none of them examines gender differences and English motivational orientations of university students from non-English department students or students from various disciplines. Moreover; in Indonesian context, many scholars look at English motivational orientation of

Indonesian students studying in Indonesia. In contrast, very rare of them examines Indonesian students studying abroad.

Santoso & Rindu Kinasih, (2022) to improve English competence of students, English Medium Instruction (EMI) is needed. Thus; this research focuses on investigating Indonesian undergraduates from various disciplines who study at University Utara Malaysia since the university uses English Medium Instruction in learning process. This decision making is also based on the recommendation Sabry Daif-Allah & Aljumah, (2020), in their studies, They suggested that future studies examine the connection between gender and English motivation. Again, (Ismail, 2022) also suggested for further research to investigate how gender and motivational orientation among Indonesian undergraduate students who study abroad are related. Based on the explanation, this article aims to address the similarities and differences of Indonesian students' motivation toward learning English in relation to gender.

Although previous studies have shown that female students often demonstrate higher motivation to learn English compared to male students (Bećirović, 2017; Al Harthy, 2017), findings are not consistent across contexts. Some research suggests that males exhibit stronger instrumental motivation, especially when learning English is linked to academic achievement and career advancement (Abdilah & Chowdhury, 2013; Geleto, 2019). However, little research has been conducted on Indonesian undergraduates studying abroad in English Medium Instruction (EMI) contexts, where gender and motivation may interact differently.

Although numerous studies have explored gender differences in English learning motivation, most have focused on students in English departments or secondary schools within their home countries, primarily examining learners in homogeneous sociocultural and educational contexts. Very few have investigated how gender interacts with motivational orientations in diverse academic disciplines or in international settings where English serves as the primary medium of instruction. In particular, research on Indonesian undergraduates studying abroad remains scarce, leaving limited understanding of how living and studying in an English Medium Instruction (EMI) environment influences their integrative and instrumental motivation. To address this gap, the present study investigates gender differences in motivational orientations among Indonesian undergraduates from various fields of study at Universiti Utara Malaysia, thereby offering new insights into how gender and learning context jointly shape motivation in second language acquisition.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Motivation in language learning

Motivation remains a central factor in second-language acquisition (SLA). Modern conceptualisations move beyond the early socio-educational model to incorporate the learner's self-image and contextual engagement. For example, Zoltán Dörnyei's (2019) *L2 Motivational Self System* (L2MSS) positions learners' ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience as core constructs that shape how learners engage, persist and achieve in language learning.

Empirical evidence supports that the ideal L2 self (a learner's vision of themselves as proficient in the target language) and the L2 learning experience (their engagement with classroom, social and cultural contexts) are especially strong predictors of motivated behaviour and proficiency outcomes. In contrast, the ought-to L2 self (external pressures and obligations) shows more variable predictive power across contexts. From this theoretical vantage, motivation can thus be understood as a multifaceted construct integrating cognitive (future self-guides), affective/attitudinal (positive orientation toward learning), and behavioural (effort, persistence) dimensions within socio-educational and cultural contexts. This aligns with learners' goal-setting and strategy-use research which link sustained effort and favourable attitudes with successful language learning (e.g., the ideal L2 self promotes strategic behaviour). Given that your study examines how gender might relate to differing motivational orientations (integrative vs instrumental) among Indonesian undergraduates, the L2MSS framework provides a robust lens to interpret how male and female learners might differ in how they *visualise themselves, feel about English-learning contexts, and act on those orientations*. Specifically, since integrative and instrumental motivations reflect differing orientations toward the language (culture/community vs practical/rational reasons), the L2MSS helps us understand *why* one orientation might dominate for one gender group over another in a given institutional and cultural environment.

Gender in English Learning Motivation

The majority of human rights are now shared equally by men and women. However, there is still a discrepancy in their accomplishments according to language motivation study. In this study, gender refers to the categorization of people as male or female students. In formal settings, female students have been observed to be more engaged and to develop valuable and complex ideas than male students, who appear to be learning more slowly and experiencing more difficulties with some tasks and abilities like reading and writing (Abdilah & Chowdhury, 2013). Despite several researches arguing against the stereotype that women are better than men in learning languages like English, (Mahbuber Rahman et al., 2021; Iwaniec, 2019; Elfiyanto & Fukazawa, 2022; Azubuike & Little, 2019; Muslim et al., 2020; (As Sabiq et al., 2021a), in contrast, (Abdilah & Chowdhury, 2013; Geleto & Studies, 2019) stated that men are better than women.

Durán (2011) proposed that teachers should be kept up to date on issues like gender, how they can present themselves, and how to treat them. This was in relation to gender in the EFL classroom. This will make them more watchful and accountable as language instructors and stop any disparities in treatment. Children must understand how gender interactions exclude them and how language frequently reproduces or reinforces particular behaviours, which gives room for inequity and negative emotions. Therefore; this study focuses on looking at students' English motivation in relation to gender.

Integrative and Instrumental Motivation

The well-known scholars that introduced a socio-psychological model with two integrative and instrumental motivations are Gardner and Lambert. According to Gardner and Lambert (1972) state that integrative motivation refers to language learning for intrinsic purposes and cultural enrichments, while instrumental motivation refers to language learning to get more clear or realistic goals. Furthermore, Instrumental motivation reflected the practical importance that language learning puts, such as increasing one's job potential, to get a better job, and other practical purposes. Additionally, this is defined by 'the desire to obtain social recognition or economic benefits through knowledge of a foreign language,' while the inclusive orientation represents the 'will or desire of the learner' to be like representative members of the 'other' language community"

Motivation in Second Language Acquisition

Motivation in SLA has traditionally been explained through Gardner and Lambert's (1972) socio-psychological model, which distinguishes between integrative and instrumental orientations. Integrative motivation reflects a learner's desire to integrate into the target language community, while instrumental motivation refers to practical goals such as employment, examinations, and academic advancement. Later frameworks, such as Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self System, highlight the learner's vision of themselves as L2 users, linking motivation to identity. Gender, as a sociolinguistic factor, influences how learners orient themselves toward integrative or instrumental goals (Oxford, 1996; Chaffee et al., 2020). In this study, motivation and gender are conceptualised as interrelated variables in SLA that shape Indonesian undergraduates' English learning orientations

Previous Related Study

A considerable body of research has examined the relationship between gender and motivation in English language learning, but findings remain mixed across different contexts. Mulawarman, Prihandono, Suhatmady, and Iswari (2021) investigated Indonesian senior high school students' motivation in online English learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their study found that both male and female students maintained high motivation, but female students tended to demonstrate stronger instrumental orientation and better self-regulation. This suggests that

gender plays a role in shaping learners' strategies when dealing with technology-mediated English learning. A systematic literature review on EFL motivation in Southeast Asia highlighted that higher education learners generally possess strong motivation, with extrinsic or instrumental orientation dominating over integrative motives (CELT Journal, 2022). The review also emphasised that gender differences emerge across studies, though in varying degrees, pointing to the contextual dependency of motivation in SLA.

In the Indonesian context, Subekti and Sinaga (2022) examined the role of gender in instrumental motivation and self-efficacy among non-English majors. While both male and female students were highly motivated, gender differences in instrumental motivation and self-efficacy were not statistically significant, though males reported slightly higher scores. This indicates that gender influences may not always produce large variations but still shape motivational patterns. Wulandari (2024) conducted a qualitative study exploring EFL learners' motivation and attitudes in English learning. The findings showed that beyond integrative and instrumental orientations, learners' attitudes toward the use of English in social interaction strongly affected their motivation. Gender was found to influence the way learners positioned themselves in classroom interactions and engagement, offering new insights into the affective dimension of motivation. In the Southeast Asian region, Dhakal (2022) investigated Thai EFL students from science and technology backgrounds. The study revealed that both male and female students were highly motivated, with instrumental motivation scoring slightly higher than integrative. While overall gender differences were not statistically significant, female learners consistently reported stronger motivation in both integrative and instrumental domains. Taken together, these studies indicate that gender influences motivational orientations in diverse ways depending on sociocultural and educational contexts. They also highlight the need to investigate such dynamics in under-researched populations, such as Indonesian undergraduates studying in English Medium Instruction (EMI) environments abroad. This provides the rationale for the present study, which seeks to contribute to the literature on SLA by examining gender differences in motivational orientations among Indonesian students at Universiti Utara Malaysia

METHOD

Design and Samples

This study employed a quantitative survey design to investigate gender differences in Indonesian undergraduates' motivation to learn English. The instrument used was Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB, 2004), adapted into 20 items measuring both integrative and instrumental motivation on a five-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was translated into Indonesian and piloted with 30 students to ensure clarity and reliability, yielding a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.889. The main participants were 89 Indonesian undergraduate students at Universiti Utara Malaysia (45 males and 44 females) from various academic disciplines, including

Business Management, International Affairs, and Information Technology. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and all participants provided informed consent prior to data collection. They were informed about the purpose of the research, assured that their participation would have no academic consequences, and that their responses would remain confidential and be used solely for research purposes. To ensure anonymity, no personal identifiers were collected, and all data were stored securely for analysis. The collected data were analysed using SPSS version 26 to identify similarities and differences in motivational orientations between male and female students.

Instrument and Procedure

This section presents the research instrument and the procedures employed in the study. The main instrument was an adapted version of Gardner's *Attitude/Motivation Test Battery* (AMTB, 2004), which has been widely utilised in studies exploring motivational orientations in second language acquisition (SLA). The adapted questionnaire consisted of 20 items divided into two dimensions: 10 items measuring integrative motivation and 10 items measuring instrumental motivation. All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). The adaptation process involved several steps to ensure the instrument's contextual and linguistic appropriateness for Indonesian learners. First, the original AMTB items were translated into Bahasa Indonesia through a translation and back-translation procedure to maintain conceptual equivalence. Second, the content of each item was reviewed by an expert in applied linguistics to assess the content validity, clarity, and cultural relevance of the statements. Based on their feedback, minor revisions were made to wording and phrasing to ensure that the items were easily understood and contextually appropriate for Indonesian respondents.

A pilot study was then conducted with 30 undergraduate students to examine the instrument's reliability and preliminary validity. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient obtained was 0.889, which exceeds the acceptable threshold of 0.70 for social science research, indicating strong internal consistency. Furthermore, the experts confirmed that the adapted items adequately represented the constructs of integrative and instrumental motivation, supporting the instrument's content validity. Following these procedures, the final questionnaire was distributed to 89 Indonesian undergraduate students enrolled at Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). Participants represented diverse academic disciplines, including Business Management, International Affairs, and Information Technology. Among them, 45 were male and 44 were female students. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality of all responses was strictly maintained for research purposes only.

Data Analysis

The data collected through the questionnaires were analysed quantitatively using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Descriptive

statistics, such as means and standard deviations, were calculated to summarise the overall levels of integrative and instrumental motivation for both male and female students. To address the research question regarding gender differences, an independent samples t-test was employed to compare male and female students' scores on both motivational orientations. This statistical test was chosen as it allows for determining whether significant differences exist between two independent groups. In addition, reliability testing was carried out using Cronbach's Alpha to ensure internal consistency of the questionnaire items. The results showed a high reliability coefficient ($\alpha = 0.889$), indicating that the instrument was suitable for the main study. The outcomes of the analysis are presented in the following section under Results and Discussion.

RESULT

The aim of this investigation is to look into the similarities and differences of Indonesian undergraduates' motivation toward learning English in relation to gender at UUM. To address the objective, here are the results of this research.

The Differences and Similarities of Overall Motivation Level in Relation to Gender

This research used a T-test method to indicate the variations and convergences in students' motivation based on their gender. Two tables below indicate the differences and the similarities.

Table 2 Overall Level of Motivation in Relation to Gender

Students' gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Level of motivation
Male	45	4,05	,762	,114	High
Female	44	3,94	,717	,108	High

The table shows that both male and female students have a high level of motivation to learn English. Male students ($M = 4.05$) show slightly higher motivation than female students ($M = 3.94$), though the difference is minimal.

Table 3. T-test of Overall Motivation in Relation to Gender

Independent Samples Test									
	Levene's Test Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tail ed)	Mean Differ- ence	Std. Error Differ- ence	95% confidence interval of the difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	,970	,327	,660	87	,511	,103	,157	-,208	,415
Equal Variances not assumed			,660	86,873	,511	,103	,157	-,208	,415

In comparison to table 2, this table 3 shows that male students outperformed female students in learning English in terms of overall motivation. However; the difference was not significant as according to table 3 above, the result of T-test is $t = 0.660$, $df = 87$, $p > 0,05$

The Differences and Similarities of Overall Integrative and Instrumental Motivation Levels Related to Gender

This section solely presents the mean scores and the T-test of integrative and instrumental based on gender.

Table 4. Level of Integrative and Instrumental Motivation based on Gender

	Studen ts' gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Level of motivation
Integrative	Male	45	4,06	,896	,133	High
	Female	44	4,11	,752	,113	High
Instrument al	Male	45	4,03	,792	,118	High
	Female	44	3,77	,831	,125	High

Table 5. T-test of Integrative and Instrumental Motivation based on Gender

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig. <i>two-tailed</i>	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the difference	
									Lower	Upper
Integrative	Equal variances assumed	2,94	,09	-,28	87	,78	-,04	,17	-,39	,30
	Equal Variances not assumed			-,28	85,06	,78	-,04	,17	-,39	,29
Instrumental	Equal variances assumed	,15	,70	1,48	87	,14	,25	,172	-,08	,59
	Equal Variances not assumed			1,48	86,57	,14	,25	,172	-,08	,59

As reported in table 4 above, students, both male and female exhibited strong integrative and instrumental motivation. In the mean scores of the table, it can be concluded that female students with mean =4,11, Std. Deviation = 0,752 were higher motivated in integrative motivation than male students with mean =4,06, Std. Deviation = 0,896. On the contrary, male students with mean =4,03, Std. Deviation = 0,792 were higher motivated in instrumental motivation than female students (mean =3,77, Std. Deviation = 0,831). Moreover; based on table 5, in the result of the Independent T-test, it reveals that there is no discernible difference in integrative and instrumental motivation between male and female students. as the Sig's score of integrative (sig. = 0,9) and instrumental motivation (0,70) is $p > 0,05$.

The Differences and Similarities of Overall Integrative and Instrumental Motivation Levels based on Gender

This section solely presents the individual items of integrative and instrumental motivation due to gender. To investigate the mean scores of the items, this research used descriptive statistics and used independent T-test to know the distinction between instrumental and integrative motivation among students of different genders

Table 6. Mean Scores of Specific Items for Integrated Motivation

	Students' gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error mean	Significance level *p<.05
Studying English is important for me because it will help me to participate more freely in the activities of other cultural groups.	Male	45	3,96	1,24	,18	,30
	Female	44	4,20	1,06	,16	
Learning English helps me to better understand the ways of life of native speakers of English	Male	45	4,02	1,19	,17	,93
	Female	44	4,11	1,14	,17	
Studying English is important because it will help me make many friends from many parts of the world	Male	45	3,96	1,14	,17	,89
	Female	44	4,07	1,12	,17	
Learning English is important for me because I can understand English stories, novels, and literature	Male	45	4,00	1,14	,17	,35
	Female	44	4,07	,95	,14	
Learning English helps me to be open-minded and friendly like native English speakers	Male	45	4,04	1,10	,16	,35
	Female	44	4,27	,89	,13	
Studying English is important because it will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people	Male	45	4,20	,96	,14	,71
	Female	44	4,30	,85	,12	
Studying English is important because it will allow me to be more at ease with people who speak English	Male	45	4,24	,80	,12	,98
	Female	44	4,18	,89	,13	
I learn English because I like English movies and songs	Male	45	4,00	1,24	,18	,12
	Female	44	4,09	1,05	,15	
Studying English is important because it will allow me to learn about the culture and social life of English-speaking people	Male	45	3,98	1,27	,18	,89
	Female	44	3,82	1,20	,18	
Learning English helps me to easily make friends with foreigners	Male	45	4,24	1,13	,16	,89
	Female	44	4,02	1,08	,16	

Based on table 6 above, in comparison, it can be concluded that comparatively to male students, female students scored higher on seven integrative motivation items; the top item was I think it's crucial to study English because it will enable me to engage in other cultural groups' activities with greater freedom. On the other hand, male students outperformed female students in terms of the three integrative motivation items, with the highest item for male students being It's crucial that I study English since it will make me more comfortable with English-speaking folks. Furthermore, table 6 above shows that there isn't a statistically significant difference between male and female learners in terms of integrative motivation as all the significant scores of the items above are more than 0,05.

Table 7. Mean Scores of Individual Items of Instrumental Motivation

	Students' gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error mean	Significance level *p<.05
Studying English is important because I will need it for my career	Male	45	4,16	1,10	,16	,70
	Female	44	4,07	1,10	,16	
Learning English can be important for me because it will make me a more knowledgeable person	Male	45	3,98	1,27	,18	,71
	Female	44	3,70	1,26	,19	
Studying English is important because I will need it for my academic life since it will enable me to search and access more literature resources and reading materials on the internet	Male	45	3,96	1,31	,19	,85
	Female	44	3,80	1,23	,18	
Learning English can be important for me because it will help me to further my studies	Male	45	3,98	1,27	,18	,33
	Female	44	3,77	1,13	,17	
Learning English is important to me because it will help me to achieve at my university	Male	45	4,00	1,38	,20	,27
	Female	44	3,80	1,19	,18	
Studying English is important because other people will respect me more if I know English	Male	45	3,82	1,23	,18	,59
	Female	44	3,61	1,24	,18	
Learning English is important to me because it will help me when I travel abroad	Male	45	4,09	,82	,12	,03
	Female	44	3,73	1,08	,16	
Learning English can be important for me because it will help me to further my studies	Male	45	4,09	,84	,12	,04
	Female	44	3,75	1,08	,16	
Studying English is important because it will be useful in getting a good job with a hefty salary	Male	45	4,18	,80	,12	,33
	Female	44	3,89	,84	,12	
Learning English helps me to read English books, articles, newspapers, and magazines	Male	45	4,07	,96	,14	,03
	Female	44	3,64	1,16	,17	

According to data presented in table 7 above, it reveals that male students had a higher level of all the 10 items of instrumental motivation than female students. Moreover, the marked distinctions between male and female students are found in the 3 items as their significant scores are less than 0.05. The 3 items are “I think it is vital to learn English since it will be useful when I travel overseas” (sig = 0.03), For me, it can be crucial to learn English since it will enable me to pursue my academic goals (sig = 0.04), It is easier for me to read books, articles, newspapers, and magazines in English when I speak it. (sig = 0.03). However, the difference of other 3 items was not significant as their significant scores were more than 0,05.

The present findings contribute to understanding how gender influences motivational orientations in learning English among Indonesian undergraduates in an English-Medium Instruction (EMI) environment. Rather than focusing on which group scored higher, these results should be viewed through the lens of how social and contextual factors shape learners' motivational orientations. The slightly higher instrumental motivation among male students and the stronger integrative motivation among female students reflect different but complementary perspectives on the role of English in academic and personal development.

The tendency of male students to demonstrate higher instrumental motivation can be interpreted as a response to the pragmatic demands of studying in an EMI university setting, where English proficiency is closely linked to academic performance and future career opportunities. This finding supports Mori and Gobel's (2006) and Abdilah and Chowdhury's (2013) observations that male learners often view English as a tool for achieving tangible outcomes. Conversely, the stronger integrative motivation among female students aligns with Oxford's (1996, cited in Xuejun, 2020) and Bećirović's (2017) arguments that women are generally more oriented toward social interaction and cultural integration through language. In this sense, motivation is not merely a personal trait but a reflection of social roles and identity construction in language learning.

Interestingly, this study's findings contrast with several previous works (As Sabiq et al., 2021; Al Harthy, 2017; Bećirović, 2017; Azubuike & Little, 2019; Firdani et al., 2019) that found female students to be more motivated overall than male students. One plausible explanation is that in EMI contexts like UUM, both male and female learners are equally exposed to academic and linguistic challenges that require constant English use. Thus, motivation may be influenced more by institutional context and learning environment than by gender alone. This interpretation is supported by Abdilah and Chowdhury (2013) and Geleto and Studies (2019), who reported that male students in similar contexts demonstrated strong motivation due to academic and professional pressures.

From a theoretical perspective, these results align with Gardner and Lambert's (1972) socio-psychological model of motivation, which posits that learners' attitudes and goals are shaped by their sociocultural environment. The EMI setting of UUM appears to integrate both instrumental and integrative motives, suggesting that language learning motivation is context-dependent rather than fixed. The stronger integrative motivation among female students also resonates with Durán's (2011) sociolinguistic view that women tend to seek social connection and identity through language use.

In pedagogical terms, understanding students' motivational orientations can help educators design more effective instruction. Teachers can incorporate both instrumental and integrative activities, such as task-based projects that connect English use to students' future careers and interactive discussions that promote cultural exchange. By aligning instructional strategies with students' motivational profiles, educators can foster sustained engagement and a more balanced development of both orientations.

These results can be interpreted that both male and female learners have a strong awareness of the importance of English to achieve individuals' needs in life. Female learners are motivated to learn English for social, cultural, or integrative purposes such as to socialize with people from different countries, to understand English movies or songs, to know more about others' cultures. However, male English

learners are more likely to acquire English for practical reasons, such improving one's employment, to improve their career's potential, and to other practical purposes. The main causes of why the different levels of motivation appear between males and females are socialization, cognitive development, and social behavior (Block, 1993 & Nyikos, 1990, as cited in Brown, 2000). Moreover, women have more interest in social events than men; women tend to choose to be less aggressive than men; women are less competitive and more cooperative than men. Based on that finding, it is suggested that English tutors need to design English learning materials or English learning environment with integrative motivation approach for females and instrumental learning approach for males. The novelty of this study lies in extending SLA research to Indonesian undergraduates studying abroad. Most Indonesian studies have focused on learners within domestic contexts (Muslim et al., 2020; Santoso & Kinasih, 2022). By highlighting the interplay between gender and motivation in an international EMI setting, this research contributes to applied linguistics by providing insights into how sociolinguistic variables such as gender shape motivational orientations in SLA.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated gender differences in motivational orientations among Indonesian undergraduates studying in an English Medium Instruction (EMI) context at Universiti Utara Malaysia. The findings revealed that both male and female students possessed high levels of motivation to learn English, with males showing slightly stronger instrumental motivation and females demonstrating stronger integrative motivation. These results highlight that while both genders are aware of the importance of English for academic and personal development, their orientations differ: male students tend to focus on pragmatic and career-related purposes, whereas female students are more motivated by social and cultural integration. However, this study has several limitations. The sample size was limited to Indonesian undergraduates studying at a single Malaysian university, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the research relied solely on self-reported questionnaire data, which may not fully capture learners' dynamic motivational processes. Future studies are encouraged to employ mixed-method approaches, including interviews or classroom observations, to gain deeper insights into how gender and contextual factors interact to shape English learning motivation across different EMI settings. Practically, the findings suggest that teachers and curriculum developers should design instructional materials and classroom strategies that address both instrumental and integrative needs. For instance, male students could benefit from tasks emphasizing real-world applications and career relevance, while female students may respond better to activities promoting cultural understanding and social engagement. By aligning teaching approaches with students' motivational orientations, educators can foster more effective and inclusive English learning experiences.

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