



## THE IMPACT OF FUN-BASED LEARNING APPROACH ON ENHANCING ACADEMIC MOTIVATION OF TEENAGERS IN EFL LEARNING

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### ABSTRACT

Since first attend to school until they complete their formal education, teenagers spend more time in schools than in any other place outside their homes. Then, exploring different methods, strategies as well as approaches which can be used by educational institutions and teachers to enhance learners' academic motivation has become a critical educational matter. This current paper aim to analyze the impact of a relaxed and fun environment on the academic motivation of teenagers in English as foreign language learning. A longitudinal study was developed with learners at Cristo Rey School at the Primary Educational Unit in which the academic motivation of learners was examine and analyze, before and after the implementation of a fun-based learning approach in English as foreign language lessons. A mixed research methodology was applied with a random sample of 170 primary learners, age range from 6 to 10 years old. The mathematical-statistical procedure assumed aided to gather, organize and present dataset by means of table. It also included a hypothesis test to explore the significant difference when comparing mean of academic motivation dimensions before and after the implementation of fun-based learning approach. The results showed that the fun-based learning approach implemented contributed to enhance learners' academic motivation in English as foreign language learning.

**KEYWORDS:** English; fun learning approach; academic motivation.



## EL IMPACTO DEL ENFOQUE DE APRENDIZAJE BASADO EN LA DIVERSIÓN Y LA MOTIVACIÓN ACADÉMICA DE LOS ADOLESCENTES EN EL APRENDIZAJE DEL INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA

### RESUMEN

Desde que asisten a la escuela la primera vez hasta que completan su educación formal, los adolescentes pasan más tiempo en la escuela que en cualquier otro lugar fuera de casa. Es por ello que, el estudio de diferentes métodos, estrategias y enfoques pedagógicos que puedan ser utilizados para fortalecer la motivación académica de los estudiantes se ha convertido en un tema educacional importante. El presente artículo tiene como objetivo analizar el impacto de un ambiente relajado y divertido en la motivación académica de los adolescentes en el aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera. Se desarrolló un estudio longitudinal con estudiantes de la Primaria Básica de la Unidad Educativa Cristo Rey en el cual se evaluó y analizó la motivación académica de los estudiantes, antes y después de la utilización del enfoque de aprendizaje divertido en las clases de inglés como lengua extranjera. Se aplicó una metodología de investigación mixta con una muestra aleatoria de 170 estudiantes de primaria, con edades comprendidas entre 6 y 10 años. El procedimiento matemático-estadístico asumido ayudó a recoger, organizar y presentar la información por medio de tablas. Dicho procedimiento incluyó una prueba de hipótesis para explorar si, la diferencia entre los promedios de las dimensiones de la motivación académica antes y después de la implementación del enfoque de aprendizaje divertido, es significativa. Los resultados revelaron que el enfoque de aprendizaje divertido empleado, contribuyó a fortalecer la motivación académica en el aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera.

**Palabras clave:** *inglés; aprendizaje basado en tareas; estrategia; escritura.*

### INTRODUCTION

Exploring different methods, strategies as well as approaches which can be used by educational institutions and teachers to enhance learners' academic motivation has become a critical educational matter since the first-time learners go to school until they finish schooling, teenagers spend more time in schools than in any other place outside their homes. The referred matter is particularly important when dealing with English as foreign language (EFL) also known as English as a second language (ESL).

Much research work has been developed and published regarding motivation and there are several definitions of motivation from different perspectives and research fields,



such fields include psychology, sociology and education. In general terms, motivation is defined as a process in which direct target activity is started and maintained which include all factors determining the degree of willingness to participate in an activity such as requests, desires, needs, impulses and interests. (Sivrikaya, 2019)

Coherent with this definition, persons who actively participate in an activity or process are described as motivated while persons who do not have a motive or inspiration to participate are described as unmotivated. According to Ryan and Deci (2020), motivation should not be viewed from a unidimensional perspective. That is why these researchers defined three types of motivation: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and amotivation.

As said by the referred authors, intrinsically motivation is driven by the satisfaction of individuals' pleasure doing something. It referred of the fact that a person intrinsically like and enjoy what is doing, whereas extrinsically motivated referred when a persons do something for the outcomes. On the other hand, amotivation is generally observed when persons feel they are not self-sufficient to accomplish the desired outcomes. A motivated person acts as if the outcome depends on forces that are beyond persons' control.

In educational researches, the term academic motivation is a more specific concept which is used to refer learner' attitude towards academic activities. It is recognized as a key factor for academic success. In this sense, academic motivation is defined as a cognitive, behavioral and affecting factors to meet academic goals and is associated with a range of academic measures. (Kotera et al., 2023)

Academic motivation is used for learners' motivation towards academic activities. Regarding EFL, learners' academic motivation is particularly important and it has been studied from different dimensions and perspective.

Seven dimensions can be assumed to measure learners' motivation such dimensions include: intrinsic motivation-to know (IMK), intrinsic motivation-toward

accomplishment (IMA), intrinsic motivation-to experience stimulation (IMES), extrinsic motivation-identified (EMID), extrinsic motivation-introjected (EMIN), extrinsic motivation-external regulation (EMER) and amotivation (AM). (Vallerand et al., 1993)

Furthermore, several tools have been designed and validated to study learners' academic motivation. Such tools include Academic Motivation Questionnaire (AMQs) and Academic Motivation Scale (AMSs). (Vallerand et al., 1993; Algharaibeh, 2021; Koteran et al., 2023)

This paper assumed the High School version of academic motivation scales (AMS-HS). It consists of a 28 items questionnaire and seven dimensions: amotivation, three types of extrinsic motivation (external, introjected and identified regulation) and three types of intrinsic motivation (knowing, accomplishing and experiencing stimulation). The scale has been designed with five levels from 1 (the lowest level) to 5 (the highest level) respectively.

The social conceptualization of education and learning has important implications for the development of learners' motivation. It is clear that the social organization of classrooms and schools, as well as learners and teachers' interactions within and outside the classroom, have major influences on learners' motivation.

Most researchers considered academic motivation of learners as a complex process involving a rich range of factors. It involves numberless of affective, linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural factors. (Stover et al., 2012; Kotera et al., 2023)

Having said that, EFL teachers should explore different methods, strategies and teaching approaches to motivate learners. In other words, approaches which contribute to enhance learners' academic motivation. Such contemporary approaches include project-based learning, problem-based learning, context-based learning, content and language integrating learning and game-based learning. However, the fun-based learning (FBL) approach has gained popularity and research attention since the latest of 20<sup>th</sup> century.

FBL approach is suitable for cognitive level of preschool learners' but it has become a demand for learning from learners of other educational levels. In fact, learners need pleasure as a human being when leaning subjects matter knowledge. Learners who feel happy and relax during learning would be able to quickly achieve learning outcomes, particularly during EFL activities. (Bukit & Marcela, 2023)

Teenagers often seek to have some fun learning experiences in all subject lessons, but they not always find it. Teaching EFL is not easy because learners got no motivation when they cannot understand the teaching material, especially when teachers use traditional teacher centered methods. However, FBL approaches could help them to increase learners' academic motivation. There are several examples of FBL activities such as quizzed competitions, games, songs which could be used by teachers and students with variety of benefit. (Irwansyah & Izzati, 2021)

The literature review showed different conceptions of FBL. It has been seen as a model, an approach, and a strategy. For example, FBL is a holistic approach to education to foster the passion for learning and its continuous development throughout life. FBL approach has different benefits. It encourages collaborative learning through playing activities. One of the most popular ways to implement FBL is by means of songs. (Bustam et al., 2021)

Meanwhile, Wati and Yuniawatika (2020), considered that FBL is a model in learning that supports the development of creative thinking and creates a pleasant learning atmosphere. When students study in a fun atmosphere, motivation to learn is high. With high learning motivation, achievement of learning outcomes can also improve. In addition, a pleasant learning atmosphere can foster student creativity.

According to Bustam, Iswanto, Arqam, Juliani, and Khairi (2021), FBL is a strategy which can be used to create an effective learning environment which improve learners' achievements. FBL is also defined as fun learning activity which consists of casual learning by playing, the use of music, social interaction among friends, treasure hunt and various learners-centered activities. (Suraji et al., 2018)

As FBL approach was introduced in pedagogical practices it has become a topic which caught researchers' attention in recent decades. Some research works suggest FLA is appropriate for different educational level and subjects. (Suraji et al., 2018; Wati & Yuniawatika, 2020; Bustam et al., 2021; Mundiri et al., 2022; Bukit & Marcela, 2023)

The literature review shows that English language teachers hold positive attitudes on FBL approach such as game-based learning (GBL). In the same direction, the students also have positive attitude towards FBL and GBL and considered these approaches as a good way to improve EFL. The use of music, social interaction among friends, treasure hunt, writing poems and short stories are the most preferred activities. Along with the above-mentioned ideas, FBL has been established as an innovative approach which was developed from the need of more use of learners-centered methods where learners are involved in a relaxed and fun learning environment. (Ali & Mukhtar, 2017)

Based on preliminary research observations and the result of diagnostic assessment at Cristo Rey School at the Primary Educational Unit, some limitations regarding learners' academic motivations towards EFL learning were observed:

- Poor learners' participation in EFL lessons.
- Learners consider EFL as a formal academic activity which will not help them to get the high school diploma.
- Learners do not experience pleasure and satisfaction while learning EFL.

Consequently, this article deals with the problem on how a relaxed and fun environment could improve academic motivation of teenagers in English as foreign language learning. In addition, the objective of this research paper was to analyze the impact of FBL approach on enhancing academic motivation of teenagers in EFL learning.

## METHODOLOGY

The studied sample consisted of 170 primary-grade learners which ages ranged from 6 to 10 years old at Cristo Rey Educational Unit. The sample was randomly selected. Taking into consideration the purpose of this research paper in which a longitudinal study was designed, it was not necessary to select a control group. Furthermore, researchers considered not to limit a fraction of learners' population from the benefit of using a new pedagogical approach as FBL. All participants of this study took EFL courses in high school.

The academic motivation of learners was explored by means of the Academic Motivation Scale (AMS-HS 28). The referred scale consists of 28 items and seven dimensions: amotivation (AM); intrinsic motivation-to know (IMK); intrinsic motivation-toward accomplishment (IMA); intrinsic motivation-to experience stimulation (IMES); extrinsic motivation-identified (EMID); extrinsic motivation-introjected (EMIN) and extrinsic motivation-external regulation (EMER). (Vallerand et al., 1993)

Learners were asked to complete an Academic Motivation Questionnaire (AMQ) before and after the implementation of FBL approach in EFL lessons. The 28 items questionnaire used is shown in Table 1. Each dimension or type of academic motivation was assessed with the aid of a seven-point Likert scale from 1 to 7.

**Table 1.** *Academic motivation towards L2 learning Questionnaire.*

Background: Dear student, using the scale below, indicate to what extent each of the following items presently corresponds to one of the reasons why you learn English as a Foreign Language, also known English as a Second Language (EFL/ESL/L2). You are encouraged to be frank and honest in your responses.

Scale: Does not correspond at all (1), Corresponds a little (2), Corresponds a little (3), Corresponds moderately (4), Corresponds a lot (5), Corresponds a lot (6) and corresponds exactly (7).



Why do you learn English as a second language (L2)?							
1. Because I need at least a L2 in order to find a high-paying job later on.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Because I experience pleasure and satisfaction while learning L2.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Because I think that learning L2 will help me better prepare for the career I have chosen.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Because I really like to learn L2.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Honestly, I don't know; I really feel that I am wasting my time learning L2.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. For the pleasure I experience while surpassing myself in my L2 studies.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. To prove to myself that I am capable of learning L2.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. In order to obtain a more prestigious job later on.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. For the pleasure I experience when I discover new things never seen before.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Because eventually it will enable me to enter the job market in a field that I like.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Because for me, learning L2 is fun.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. I once had good reasons for learning L2; however, now I wonder whether I should continue.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. For the pleasure that I experience while I am surpassing myself in one of my personal accomplishments learning L2.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7





14. Because of the fact that when I succeed in learning L2, I feel important.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Because I want to have "the good life" later on.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. For the pleasure that I experience in broadening my knowledge about subjects which appeal to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. Because this will help me make a better choice regarding my career orientation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. For the pleasure that I experience when I am taken by discussions with interesting teachers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. I can't see why I learn L2 and frankly, I couldn't care less.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. For the satisfaction I feel when I am in the process of accomplishing difficult academic activities in L2.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. To show myself that I am an intelligent person.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. In order to have a better salary later on.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. Because my L2 studies allow me to continue to learn about many things that interest me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. Because I believe that learning L2 will improve my competence as a worker.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. For the "high" feeling that I experience while reading in L2 about various interesting subjects.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. I don't know; I can't understand what I am doing learning L2.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. Because learning L2 allows me to experience a personal satisfaction in my quest for excellence in my studies.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

28. Because I want to show myself that I can succeed in my L2 studies.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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**Source:** Vallerand, et al. (1993).

The longitudinal study consists of an exploration of academic motivation in two specific situations, before (pre-FBL approach) and after (post-FBL approach) with the purpose of tracking academic motivation of learners towards EFL lessons. FBL activities such as listen music, social interaction among friends, treasure hunt, writing poems and writing short stories were implemented during EFL lessons for a period of six weeks.

A hypothesis test was used. A T-Test for two dependent means was chosen taking into consideration that there were only seven pairs of means (less than 30). The means of academic motivation dimensions were compared before and after FBL approach implementation to observe if there was a significant difference between them. An alternative hypothesis was assumed as  $H_a: \mu \neq H_o$ , with  $H_o$  as the null hypothesis. The difference score calculations, as well as the values of  $t$  and  $p$  were calculated with the aid of an online statistical calculator ([www.socscistatistics.com](http://www.socscistatistics.com)).

## RESULTS

As referred above, the main objective of this research paper was to analyze the impact of FBL approach on enhancing academic motivation of teenagers in EFL learning. The information was gathered by means of AMQ and processed with the aid of Microsoft Office Excel 2019.

Learners' academic motivation dimensions, means, Cronbach alpha coefficient and mean difference are displayed in Table 2. Two particular situations, before and after FBL approach implementation were considered which are identified as pre-FBL and post-FBL approach. The results were measure in a period of six weeks in which FBL was mostly used in EFL lessons.



**Table 2.** Means, standard deviations, Cronbach alpha.

Dimensions	Before FBL		After FBL		Mean Difference
	Mean	Cronbach $\alpha$	Mean	Cronbach $\alpha$	
IMK	1,36	0,66	5,39	0,84	4,03
IMA	1,38	0,67	5,41	0,85	4,02
IMES	1,40	0,89	5,44	0,82	4,04
EMID	1,37	0,88	5,47	0,87	4,10
EMIN	1,33	0,77	5,45	0,86	4,12
EMER	1,43	0,82	5,43	0,82	4,00
AM	3,29	0,88	2,21	0,90	-1,08

**Source:** Authors

The mathematical-statistical procedure included a hypothesis tests. A T-Test was assumed for two dependent means. There were less than 30 pairs of means (the seven dimensions of academic motivation). The hypothesis test aided to compare and determine if there is a significant difference of means values before and after FBL application. An online T-Test calculator was used to process the information. The statistical results of this hypothesis test are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.** T-Test for two dependent means. Source: [www.socscistatistics.com](http://www.socscistatistics.com)

Dimensions	Treatment 1	Treatment 2	Diff (T2-T1)	Dev (Diff-M)	Sq. Dev
	Mean Before FBL	Mean After FBL			
IMK	1,36	5,39	4	0,64	0,41
IMA	1,38	5,41	3	-0,36	0,13
IMES	1,40	5,44	4	0,64	0,41



EMID	1,37	5,47	3	-0,36	0,13
EMIN	1,33	5,45	4	0,64	0,41
EMER	1,43	5,43	4	0,64	0,41
AM	3,29	2,21	4	0,64	0,41
			10	6,64	44,13
			4	0,64	0,41
			12	8,64	74,7
			4	0,64	0,41
			0	-3,36	11,27
			-1	-4,36	18,98
			-8	-11,36	128,98
			M: 3,36		S: 281,21

Difference Score Calculations:

*Mean:* 3,36

$$\mu = 0$$

$$S^2 = \frac{SS}{df} = \frac{281,21}{(14 - 1)} = 21,61$$

$$S_M^2 = \frac{S^2}{N} = \frac{21,61}{14} = 1,55$$

$$S_M = \sqrt{S_M^2} = \sqrt{1,55} = 1,24$$

T-value calculation:

$$t = (M - \mu)/S_M = (3,36 - 0)/1,24 = 2,7$$

The value of  $t$  is 2,700765. The value  $p$  is 0,01817. The result is significant at  $p < 0.05$

## DISCUSION

There was a mean increment in all dimensions of learners' academic motivation after the implementation of FBL approach. As shown in Table 2, the dimension (IMK) experienced a mean increment from 1,36 to 5,39 (a difference of +4,03). Whereas, the mean of dimension (AM) decreased from 3,29 to 2,21 (a difference of -1,08).

The highest improvement was observed in dimension (EMIN) which experienced a change in mean from 1,33 to 5,45 (an increment of +4,12) while the least improvement was observed in dimension (EMER) which experienced a change in mean from 1,43 to 5,43 (an increment of +4,00).

Cronbach alpha was used to estimate the internal consistency of the AMS applied. Cronbach's coefficient ranged from 0.66 to 0.90 in all dimensions of academic motivation dimensions which are consistent with (Vallerand, et al., 1993). This proved that the results derived from this dataset had high reliability and consistency.

The  $p$  value of 0,01817 was less than the significance level ( $p < 0.05$ ). According to this referred value, the null hypothesis is rejected. In other words, T-Test showed that there is a significant difference in in terms of learners' academic motivation between Pre-FBL and Post-FBL means. It was observed that, the implementation of FBL approach significantly enhance learners' academic motivation towards EFL.

## CONCLUSIONS

The study has shown a way to explore the effectiveness of FBL approach enhancing learners' academic motivation towards EFL lessons. The learners were exposed to different activities which make the classroom context a relaxed and fun environment and learners' academic motivation was measured to track its improvements.



A comparison between the means values of learners' writing performance has revealed that there was an increment in all academic motivation dimensions but amotivation of primary learners at Cristo Rey School which participated in this longitudinal study. It can be concluded that after FBL approach implementation, the learners experienced an improvement in academic motivation toward EFL lessons.

The assumed hypothesis test proved and supported the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a: \mu \neq H$ ). Furthermore, there is a significant different between pre-FBL means and post-FBL means in terms of academic motivation of primary learners towards EFL lessons at Cristo Rey School which took part in the study. In other words, FBL approach enhanced academic motivation of learners towards in EFL lessons. However, some other features of EFL approach could be strengthened in future research such as the size of the sample as well as the impact of cultural and social backgrounds on learners' academic motivation towards EFL.

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