Classroom Motivation of Korean EFL Students from the Perspective of Self-determination Theory

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Autonomous motivation and its influence on classroom achievement has been the subject of much research within both educational psychology and second language learning. This study used the principles of self-determination theory (SDT), and the basic concepts of intrinsic-extrinsic motivation, to examine the motivational patterns of 167 middle school students studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Seoul, Korea. The following research questions were addressed: (1) What are the motivational patterns of these students from an SDT perspective, and how do they compare with similar populations in other countries? (2) What is the correlation between these motivational patterns and these students’ classroom achievement in studying English? The Self-Regulation Questionnaire-Academic (SRQ-A), was administered to these participants, and results were correlated with their record of classroom achievement in EFL. Data were subjected to quantitative analysis, and findings indicated that the highest level of motivation for these students was at the extrinsic level of identified regulation, but that the highest level of classroom achievement was attained by those students who were motivated intrinsically. Data from studies done in other countries reflected similar motivational profiles. The study concluded with a discussion of limitations and classroom implications.

I. INTRODUCTION

For many years, the concept of human motivation has been a primary focus for researchers, including the field of second language learning (SLL). There are good reasons for all this attention, as the study of motivation is no less than an attempt to understand basic human behavior and why individuals decide to take action or engage in particular activities. The issue of motivation is an essential part of our daily lives, and few would overlook the important role it plays in human affairs in general, and in education and language learning in particular (Dörnyei, 2001).
The purpose of this study was to examine the pattern of classroom autonomous motivation among Korean EFL students from the perspective of SDT and the principles of intrinsic-extrinsic motivation, and correlate their motivational orientations with classroom achievement. These motivational profiles were compared with those of similar populations in other countries. This may provide some additional insight into how student motivational patterns are related to success or failure in the classroom.

Despite a basic intuitive familiarity with the concept, scholars differ on the nature of motivation, how the process of motivation operates, and what drives human motivation. The word “motivation” is derived from the Latin verb *movere*, which suggests the idea of movement or a drive to complete a particular task (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). For Ryan & Deci (2000), motivation also means an impulse or inspiration to do something and to complete the task. Brophy (1999) describes motivation as a theoretical concept used to describe the initiation, direction, intensity, and persistence of some activity, especially if that activity is goal-directed.

For Dörnyei, a comprehensive explanation for the term “motivation” remains complex and elusive, but he contends that most researchers would agree that motivation is concerned with the following key components:

- *Why* people decide to do something
- *How long* they are willing to sustain the activity
- *How hard* they are going to pursue it (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 8)

One of the key questions for researchers in second language learning (SLL) has been why some students are able to learn another language more easily than others, and what actually separates the good learner from the novice. Despite the disparity of approaches to understanding the very complex construct of human motivation, these researchers seem to agree on one central theme, and that is the importance assigned to motivation in the successful learning of a foreign or second language. The prominent applied linguist Corder (1981), went so far as to say that “given motivation, it is inevitable that a human being will learn a second language if he is exposed to the language data” (p. 8).

Another scholar in the field, van Lier (1996), makes it clear that parents, teachers and experts all tend to agree that the right kind of motivation is the key to successful language classroom achievement. However, he goes on to point out that this unanimous agreement on the significance of motivation does not relieve us from the need to discover what it really is, where it comes from and what is the actual process involved. Dörnyei (2005) also makes a very cogent argument for the primacy of motivation to the success of language learners by saying that:
It provides the primary impetus to initiate L2 learning, and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process; indeed, all the other factors involved in SLA presuppose motivation to some extent. Without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals, and neither appropriate curricula and good teaching are enough on their own to ensure student achievement (p. 65).

Another prominent researcher in the field of language classroom motivation, the Canadian social psychologist Robert Gardner, sees motivation as a kind of “energy centre” that involves effort, will or cognition, and enjoyment (Gardner, 1985). Gardner’s socio-educational model of second language learning has been one of the primary research frameworks for scholars in this field since the 1970’s. Instrumental reasons for learning are for such purposes as meeting course requirements or enhancing job opportunities. Integrative motivation is out of a student’s desire to get to know persons of another culture or being able to travel overseas. The intrinsic-extrinsic distinction contained within SDT is similar to the instrumental/integrative dichotomy of Gardner’s model, but it is not identical. Both instrumental and integrative motivations are generally seen as types of extrinsic motivation as they are concerned with goals, sub goals, or objectives, but as Noels et al., (2003) point out this connection is not definitive and integrative motivation could be associated with both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Another difference between SDT and Gardner’s model is that Gardner identifies motivation only with long term goals, and does not consider here-and-now interest in the task or a student’s natural curiosity and enjoyment in a language assignment (van Lier, 1996). Thus, I would suggest that SDT and the concept of intrinsic motivation which does pay attention to a student’s present interest and concerns, as well as future more extrinsic goals, represents a more comprehensive approach to understanding motivation in the classroom.

In light of the above comments, it is readily apparent that of all the variables involved in learning a second language, the factor of student motivation seems to have a major role to play in such a process, and SDT provides a useful framework for understanding this process.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to outline in detail the various stages motivation research has gone through over the past century, but stated simply the research on motivation has generally been focused on three broad traditions: the behaviorist, the cognitive and the constructivist. Within mainstream psychology SDT emerged in the 1970’s with the publication of Deci’s seminal work, Intrinsic Motivation, and in 1985 with Deci and Ryan’s Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior. In
subsequent years the principles of SDT were adopted by researchers in SLL, and this relationship to SLL will be the topic of the next section.

II. SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY AND SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Deci and Ryan initially outlined the basic precepts of SDT in their book *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior*, published in 1985. According to SDT in its basic form, human motivation can be seen to exist on a six-point continuum, from amotivation on the left, through four categories of extrinsic motivation, to intrinsic motivation on the right side of the continuum. The four categories of extrinsic motivation, external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation and integrated regulation, are listed in order of their degree of internalization and self-regulation. A schematic representation of this continuum is shown below at Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amotivation</th>
<th>Extrinsic Motivation</th>
<th>Intrinsic Motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-regulation</td>
<td>External Regulation</td>
<td>Introjected Regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-internalized</td>
<td>Identified Regulation</td>
<td>Integrated Regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intrinsic Regulation</td>
<td>Fully internalized</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation is defined as “the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfactions rather than for some separable reason. When intrinsically motivated, a person is moved to act for the fun or challenge entailed rather than because of external prods, pressures or rewards” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 56). Furthermore, intrinsic motivation is viewed as innate and universal and arises out of three basic psychological needs:

- A need to strive for self-autonomy
- A need to strive for competence
- A need to strive for relatedness

Self-autonomy, also referred to as self-regulation or self-determination, is defined as the degree to which learners regard their activity as being self-initiated and not controlled by
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others (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Ryan & Connell, 1989). This perception of self-autonomy will provide greater value to the activity and enhance motivation to engage in it over the long term. Intrinsic motivation is the most autonomous and self-determined form of behavior and is fully internalized and integrated by the learner.

2. Extrinsic Motivation

SDT consists of several mini-theories, one of which is Organismic Integration Theory, which postulates that humans are naturally inclined toward internalization of experience, assuming they have the necessary encouragement to do so. Thus, internalization is a natural process where humans actively seek to transform extrinsic or external regulation into a more internalized type of self-regulation (Ryan, 1995). This process of internalization occurs across the four distinct categories of extrinsic motivation as follows:

1) External Regulation – This is the least autonomous form of extrinsic motivation and includes being motivated by external reward or punishment as operant reinforcement. This form of operant conditioning can take the form of grades, monetary rewards, or even the threat of parental confrontation or a desire on the part of the student to be praised. Internalization, if it occurs, is unstable in nature and tends to disappear once external rewards or punishment are removed.

2) Introjected Regulation – This involves a degree of internalization of external regulation, but it is not integrated within the self and, therefore, cannot be considered to be self-determined (van Lier 1996). For example, a student studies hard because he/she will feel guilty and shameful if results are bad.

3) Identified Regulation – This is a more self-determined form of motivation as there is a conscious acceptance of the behavior as personally important. This identification with an action allows for a higher degree of self-autonomy and a change in the locus of causality toward the self. For example, the student feels he should study hard because he wants to do it.

4) Integrated Regulation – This is the most self-determined form of extrinsic motivation. External regulation has been internalized and entirely integrated within the self and brought into congruence with needs and values that already become part of the self. Thus, this form of motivation shares many of the same qualities as intrinsic motivation, but it is still considered extrinsic in nature as activities performed for this kind of motivation are driven by external regulation and not done for their inherent interest or enjoyment.
For the purpose of this present study, the categories of amotivation and integrated regulation will not be measured. Integrated regulation is not generally evident until an individual reaches adulthood (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991), and therefore the middle school population used in this study is considered too young to have achieved this sense of integration.

The process of internalization along the continuum described above is not necessarily developmental in nature. As Ryan and Deci indicate, it is not necessary to progress through each step of the internalization process, but an individual can initially adopt a particular regulation at any point along the continuum, depending on individual circumstances and prior experiences (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Deci and Ryan (1985) stress the distinct dichotomy between extrinsic and intrinsic forms of motivation. Despite the internalization and integration that may occur, even to the fully integrated level, externally-imposed regulation always maintains its extrinsic identity because it is not innate and is not done for simple pleasure or interest, and is externally imposed. But, as van Lier (1996) argues, one should consider the possibility that a dynamic relationship exists between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and they may begin as separate entities, but they may merge and become more closely intertwined and it may become impossible to distinguish one from the other.

Many new theoretical approaches to understanding motivation in the second language classroom were initiated in the 1990’s after a call for such action by Oxford (1994, 1996), Dörnyei (1994), and Crookes and Schmidt (1991). SDT, originally formulated as a theory of understanding autonomous motivation within mainstream psychology, has subsequently been adopted by many researchers within educational psychology (Brophy, 1999; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002; Stipek, 2002) and within SLL (Benson, 2001; Dörnyei, 1998, 2001, 2005; Goldberg & Noels, 2006; Noels, Clément, & Pelletier, 1999, 2001; Vandergrift, 2005; van Lier, 1996; Williams & Burden, 1997).

Perhaps the most compelling adaptation of SDT for second language learning contexts has been by Noels et al. (1999, 2001, 2003). Noels et al. (2003), describe the development of a new instrument to assess the different subtypes of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for the language classroom. They also investigate the link of these subtypes to other variables, such as Gardner’s instrumental and integrative orientations. Noels also investigates the relationship between the motivational subtypes of SDT and other variables such as interest in travel, friendship, knowledge and Gardner’s concept of instrumental orientation and found that instrumental motivational orientation and SDT extrinsic motivation were strongly correlated (but see below for further comparison of Gardner’s model and SDT).

Other findings contained in Noels et al. (2003) suggest that learner motivation can be assessed using the Deci and Ryan intrinsic-extrinsic continuum. On a practical level, Noels suggests that those who may enjoy learning an L2 may not feel personally involved in the
learning process and they may view language learning as a kind of game that has little importance in everyday life. Thus, it may be necessary to persuade students that besides being interesting and enjoyable, language learning is also personally of great importance to them.

Vandergrift (2005) argues that the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation constitute a powerful framework for studying educational motivation, and especially in the context of SLL. For Brown (2000), the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation form a very powerful construct for an understanding of autonomous motivation. Brophy (1999) also argues that SDT represents the most compelling and productive line of work presented so far to describe intrinsic motivation in the classroom.


Studies particularly relevant to this paper include Ryan and Connell (1989), which included a survey of the motivation of 718 U.S. elementary students in the U.S., using the SDT scales of external, introjected, identified and intrinsic reasons for studying. Results of this test showed means to be as follows: external (M = 2.85); introjected (M = 2.71); identified (M = 3.23); intrinsic (M = 2.32). Identified regulation was the most prominent motivational factor for these U.S. students.

Two other studies done in Asia, also using the SDT intrinsic-extrinsic continuum, (Hayamizu, 1997; Yamauchi & Tanaka, 1998), also showed similar results. Hayamizu surveyed a total of 483 junior high school students (239 boys and 244 girls) and revealed that means and standard deviations for the four types of motivation among these students were as follows: external (M = 14.57, SD = 4.69); introjected (M = 15.46, SD = 4.17); identified (M = 18.86, SD = 4.21); intrinsic (M =17.25, SD = 4.88). Identified regulation was again the most important motivating factor for these Japanese students. Based on this finding, Hayamizu concludes that such extrinsic motivation at the identified level “has been overlooked in educational settings because only intrinsic motivation has been emphasized” (p. 107).

Yamauchi & Tanaka (1998) studied 356 elementary school children in Japan (180 boys and 176 girls). There were several different aspects to this study, but included was an assessment of the four types of SDT motivation, external, introjected, identified and intrinsic. Results showed external (M = 2.25, SD = 0.66); introjected (M = 2.35, SD = 0.66); identified (M = 3.11, SD = 0.67); intrinsic (M = 2.80), SD = 0.72). This pattern is identical to that presented by Hayamizu, with identified regulation again being the most often mentioned reason for these students to study. A summary of these data is provided in Table 5.
III. METHOD

1. Participants

The study was conducted among a total of 167 Korean middle school students studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at two separate middle schools located on a middle class section of Seoul, Korea. These students ranged in age from 12 to 15, and consisted of 117 females and 50 males. The male participants were from a co-educational class, and the females were from a girls’ only classroom.

2. Survey Instrument

These participants were administered an SDT survey instrument, the Self-Regulation Questionnaire–Academic (SRQ-A) (Ryan & Connell, 1989). The SRQ-A has been extensively used in studies of autonomous educational motivation, and validity and reliability have been tested and proven acceptable. Internal consistency for the SRQ-A subscales range from .62 to .82, and extensive evidence for construct validity has been shown (Ryan & Connell, 1989). The survey questionnaire is considered one of the most appropriate and most common methods for collecting data in second language research. Some of the reasons for this wide use of the survey are due to the fact that it is easy to construct, quite flexible, and uniquely capable of gathering a large amount of information quickly in a form that is easy to process. One of the advantages of using a questionnaire which has had extensive use in previous research is that its validity and reliability have been established. The presence of these two properties is essential if a survey instrument is to have any value in research. Reliability of the research instrument is essential to allow for confidence that the results will be repeatable if the same behaviors are measured again. Validity is also important because it allows one to determine if the measure does actually measure what one hopes it does (Goodwin, 2002). These positive aspects to the use of survey-type instruments are constrained to some extent by the inherent limitations discussed below under Study Limitations, such as the possibility that responses may not always be frank, or students may not completely understand the questions.

This instrument was designed specifically for use with students in late elementary and middle school. It consists of a total of 32 questions, asking why students do various school-related tasks, and is designed to measure four levels of a participant’s educational motivation, using the SDT categories of external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation and intrinsic regulation. The responses to each question are given on a four-point Likert scale of Very true, Sort of true, Not very true, and Not at all true. The scale also has a built-in scoring system, designating the questions associated with each type
of motivation, with Very True scored as four, Sort of True as three and so on. Listed below are the item numbers associated with each of the four subscales:

- **External Regulation**: 2, 6, 9, 14, 20, 24, 25, 28, 32
- **Introjected Regulation**: 1, 4, 10, 12, 17, 18, 26, 29, 31
- **Identified Regulation**: 5, 8, 11, 16, 21, 23, 30
- **Intrinsic Regulation**: 3, 7, 13, 15, 19, 22, 27

This instrument, and indeed the entire survey procedure, was translated and administered in Korean. The method of translation was a very important consideration in the conduct of the study. In reviewing the English version of the survey, I did not see any cultural conflicts within the wording of the questions themselves. The procedure used for translation is taken from Brislin (1986) and Vallerand et al. (1992), and is referred to as back-translation. This involved one bilingual, myself, translating the scale from English to Korean, and another bilingual retranslating from Korean to English without the use of the original scale. No problems or conflicts were found, thus it was assumed “there must be readily available words and phrases in the two languages which the translators could use” (Brislin, 1986, p. 160).

As Brislin indicates, back-translation is not a final answer to ensuring adequate translation and, if possible, all materials should be pre-tested with a population similar to the one to be used in the study. This pre-test was accomplished by administering the survey instruments to several Korean children, including several of my family members of a similar age to the participants in this study, and no difficulties were encountered in understanding the questions and completing the answers. These pre-test students were given the same instructions for completing the surveys as the students who participated in the study itself, and they easily and quickly answered the questions. The English version of the SRQ-A is shown at Appendix A.

### 3. Data Analysis and Results

1) Regarding Research Question #1

What is the motivational stance of these Korean students from an SDT perspective, and how do they compare with other studies of similar populations in other countries?

Coding of the data was performed using Excel and the analysis of the data was conducted by the use of SPSS for Windows. Analysis of the data from the SRQ-A survey instrument in regard to research question #1, provided a picture of the motivational stance of these students. These results showed that most of these EFL students were extrinsically motivated to study English, with identified regulation which is the most internalized form of extrinsic regulation, being the most frequent reason cited. This was followed by external
regulation, introjected regulation, and intrinsic regulation was the least often stated reason for studying English among these students. This pattern is shown below in Table 2.

**TABLE 2**

Descriptive Statistics for SRQ-A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>External</th>
<th>Introjected</th>
<th>Identified</th>
<th>Intrinsic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>2.520</td>
<td>2.401</td>
<td>2.654</td>
<td>2.146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>0.436</td>
<td>0.625</td>
<td>0.630</td>
<td>0.670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>2.222</td>
<td>3.000</td>
<td>2.857</td>
<td>3.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Valid N (listwise) 167

As indicated in Table 2, the differences in mean scores appear to be very small, especially between identified and external, and external and introjected. Thus, these results were tested and the differences between the mean scores of the four subscales were found statistically significant. Internal consistency estimates (Cronbach's Alpha) for each reason category ranged from .53 to .72, indicating a moderate level of internal consistency.

**TABLE 3**

Statistical Summary Showing Means, Standard Deviations, Pairwise Comparisons, and Effect Sizes Motivational Pattern

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ext.</th>
<th>Introj.</th>
<th>Id.</th>
<th>Intrins.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ext.</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(.436)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introj.</td>
<td>.202</td>
<td>2.401</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(.625)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Id.</td>
<td>.227</td>
<td>.428</td>
<td>2.654</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(.630)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrins.</td>
<td>.633</td>
<td>.432</td>
<td>.861</td>
<td>2.146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(.670)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 4**

Correlations among Categories of the SRQ-A and Classroom Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>167</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. External</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Identification</td>
<td>.77*</td>
<td>.67**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Identification</td>
<td></td>
<td>.67**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.56**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Intrinsic</td>
<td>.54**</td>
<td>.49**</td>
<td>.67**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Achievement</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>.20**</td>
<td>.39**</td>
<td>.56**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level
** Correlation is significant at the .01 level

1 Means and standard deviations are shown on the diagonal; Effect sizes are below diagonal (people within-group std. dev. = .59). The results of pairwise comparisons are above the diagonal with a '*' indicating significance at .05 or less. Effect size at .2 is considered the small, at .5 medium, and at .7 or above large (Cohen, 1988).
Table 4 indicates that classroom achievement correlates most closely with students who are intrinsically motivated, even though the level is moderate at .56. These correlations were found to be statistically significant.

### TABLE 5
Comparison of Means from Four Studies of SDT Motivational Patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>External</th>
<th>Introjected</th>
<th>Identified</th>
<th>Intrinsic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This Study</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>2.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryan &amp; Connell (1989)</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>2.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hayamizu (1997)</td>
<td>14.57</td>
<td>15.46</td>
<td>18.86</td>
<td>17.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yamauchi, H. et al. (1998)</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding Table 5, it is important to consider that, while the student populations in these studies are similar they are not identical in all cases, ranging from elementary students (Ryan & Connell, Yamauchi) to junior high. In two cases, Hayamizu (1997) and this study, student demographics are the same at the junior high or middle school level. Sample size also varies in each case. Survey instruments used in each study, while differing slightly, all measured the same SDT variables of intrinsic, external, introjected and identified motivation. However, despite these distinctions, these studies are considered comparable for purposes of this study in that they demonstrate the tendency for all these students to be motivated extrinsically at the level of identified regulation. The simplex order patterns are the same for the first two studies and the same for the two studies done in Japan, although overall differences between the two groups are evident, especially that the scores for external and intrinsic are reversed.

2) Regarding Research Question #2

What is the correlation between these motivational patterns and these students’ classroom achievement in studying English?

Analysis of this research question measures the relationship between student motivation patterns and their English classroom achievement as shown by their scores on the most recent classroom assessment test. As to the four types of motivation on the SDT continuum, each of them shows a positive relationship with achievement, although three were low, and intrinsic was the highest at a moderate relationship of .56 followed by identified regulation at .39, external regulation at .29 and introjected at .20, as shown in Table 4. These numbers were found to be statistically significant.
V. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine the motivational stance of Korean middle school students in the EFL classroom, relate this profile to their classroom achievement and compare it to other studies done under the SDT framework in both western and non-western contexts.

Two general research questions were addressed:

(1) What are the motivational patterns of these Korean students from a SDT perspective, and how do they compare with student motivation among similar populations in other countries?
(2) What is the correlation between these motivational patterns and these students’ classroom achievement in studying EFL?

Analysis of the data showed that most of the Korean students are extrinsically motivated at the level of identified regulation. This pattern is also evident in the comparative studies which used the principles of SDT to examine classroom autonomous motivation, two done in Japan and one in the U.S. Identified regulation is again the predominant reason for these students to engage in their studies, as shown in Table 5. As indicated previously, despite some differences in student demographics, these comparable studies demonstrate the tendency toward extrinsic motivation for all of these students in both western and non-western contexts.

This would tend to support the findings of this present study which also showed Korean students to be similarly motivated at the identified level of extrinsic motivation in the classroom.

Furthermore, this present study and the study by Ryan & Connell (1989) indicate that intrinsic motivation is the least mentioned reason listed by these students for engaging in classroom learning. This finding in the case of these Korean students may be surprising and unexpected due to the demonstrated high enthusiasm for education in the general Korean populace (Lett, 1998; Seth, 2000; Weidman & Park, 2000). Apparently, this high level of interest is not fueled by intrinsic drives such as personal interest and curiosity and innate love of learning, at least when it comes to learning English among this age-group of students. It would indicate that learning English is not fun or inherently interesting for these students, and they engage in this activity more for extrinsic reasons such as desire to please parents, pass university entrance exams, or obtain a better job.

However, this study also shows that those students who are intrinsically motivated do achieve the greatest success in learning English, as shown by their proficiency scores.
VI. CONCLUSIONS, STUDY LIMITATIONS, AND CLASSROOM IMPLICATIONS

1. Conclusions

These findings indicate that most of these students were extrinsically motivated at the identified level in these EFL classrooms. Also, their classroom achievement was most closely correlated with intrinsic motivation. These results would seem to be not in accord with the expectation that these Korean students would most likely be motivated to learn for intrinsic reasons, given the high level of interest in education in Korea. One reason for this may be because these students are studying English and studying English may have some unique motivational characteristics for Koreans. Other studies using SDT to assess motivational patterns in other subject areas may well reveal different motivational profiles, and this would be an interesting topic for future research. In one other such study done in a science classroom among junior high school students in the U.S., this tendency toward identified regulation also prevailed (Lee & Brophy, 1996). But many more studies of this kind would be necessary to confirm this prevalence of identified regulation in all subject areas.

The finding that intrinsic motivation is most closely related to classroom achievement would be expected, based on the principles of SDT, and many other studies (Sansone & Harackiewicz, 2000).

As indicated previously, despite the limited confirmation of the results of this study by comparison to the few studies using SDT that have been done, and because of the study limitations listed below, these conclusions must be considered tentative.

2. Study Limitations

The following factors constitute limitations on the findings of this study:

- The relatively small size of the number of participants makes generalization of the findings difficult.
- Another limitation lies in the cross-sectional nature of this investigation. For example, longitudinal reviews, such as diary studies over a period of time, could further help to determine the exact nature of the relationship between these variables.
- The fact that the survey instrument used in this study were translated from the English into Korean may also be a possible limitation to its ultimate reliability. Even though this was done in a careful manner, following procedures outlined by Brislin, it is possible some misunderstanding on the part of the participants in completing the
surveys could have taken place.

- The use of self-report surveys can be inherently problematic due to the possibility that respondents’ answers may not always be completely frank. Such surveys are vulnerable to extraneous factors such as the instructions given to the participants or the fact that students may not understand the intent of the question or they may answer in accordance with their perception of the “correct answer”. Each of these factors may constitute some threat to validity. Despite these cautions, self-report surveys are still considered the best method of measuring the relatively unobservable construct of motivation (Dörnyei, 2001).

3. Classroom Implications

The lesson here for classroom pedagogy seems to be that, as van Lier (1996), Brophy (1999) and other scholars have pointed out, learning is essentially not always fun or interesting in and of itself and in fact most students are not intrinsically motivated to learn. As this paper indicates most learners among the Korean student populations studied herein are motivated to learn at the extrinsic level of identified regulation in terms of SDT, and may be more interested in learning English for instrumental reasons such as ability to pass university entrance exams, attain employment in the global market, or please their families.

As Ryan (1995) further indicates, most social development and learning for children comes from the assimilation of cultural, social and educational skills that are neither spontaneous, or inherently interesting or satisfying to the child. This and other studies have also shown that those students who are actually intrinsically-oriented have the greater success in achievement. This seems to suggest that teachers need to concentrate greater effort at enhancing student levels of basic interest and natural curiosity about learning English. This requires the enhancement of student self-regulation and autonomy in the learning process, encouraging student perceptions of competence by providing positive feedback, and reducing dependence upon purely external or introjected forms of control such as rewards or punishment (Fisher, 1978; Kohn, 1993). Once the student is able to assimilate and internalize these values, intrinsic orientation will be enhanced and better classroom achievement and language proficiency are predicted to follow.

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**APPENDIX A**

**Self-Regulation Questionnaire-Academic (SRQ-A)**

There are four major sections (A, B, C, D), and each section contains eight responses. Please read carefully, and circle the number of responses which describes you the closest.

**A. Why do I do my English homework?**

1. Because I want the teacher to think I’m a good student.
   (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true

2. Because I’ll get in trouble if I don’t do my English homework.
   (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true

3. Because it’s fun to do my English homework.
   (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true

4. Because I will feel bad about myself if I don’t do my English homework.
   (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true

5. Because I want to understand English.
   (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true

6. Because that’s what I’m supposed to do.
   (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true

7. Because I enjoy doing my English homework.
   (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true

8. It’s important to me to do my English homework.
   (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true
B. Why do I work on my English classwork?

9. That the teacher won’t yell at me.
   (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true

10. Because I want the teacher to think I’m a good student.
    (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true

11. Because I want to learn new things.
    (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true

12. Because I’ll be ashamed of myself if I didn’t get it done.
    (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true

13. Because it’s fun to work on English class work.
    (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true

14. Because that’s the rule.
    (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true

15. Because I enjoy doing my English class work.
    (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true

16. Because it’s important to me to work on my English classwork.
    (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true

C. Why do I try to answer hard questions in English class?

17. I want the other students to think I’m smart.
    (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true

18. I feel ashamed of myself when I don’t try.
    (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true

    (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true

20. Because that’s what I’m supposed to do.
    (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true

21. To find out if I’m right or wrong.
    (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true

22. Because it’s fun to answer hard questions.
    (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true

23. Because it’s important to me to try to answer hard questions in English class.
    (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true

24. Because I want my English teacher to say nice things about me.
    (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true
D. Why do I try to do well in English?

25. that’s what I’m supposed to do.
   (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true

26. my English teacher will think I’m a good student.
   (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true

27. Because I enjoy doing my English well.
   (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true

28. I will get in trouble if I don’t do well.
   (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true

29. Because I’ll feel really bad about myself if I don’t do well.
   (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true

30. Because it’s important to me to try to do well in English.
   (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true

31. Because I will feel really proud of myself if I do well.
   (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true

32. Because I might get a reward if I do well.
   (1) Very true (2) Sort of true (3) Not very true (4) Not at all true

Applicable levels: elementary and middle school
Keywords: autonomous motivation, self-determination theory, Korean EFL students, classroom achievement

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