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Research Article

English Language Competence and Motivation of Grade 12 Students in Relation to Academic Performance: Implications for Educational Intervention

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the English language competence and learning motivation of Grade 12 students and their relationship to academic performance. Using standardized questionnaires, data were collected from 201 students. The findings revealed that students are moderately competent in English and highly motivated to learn. However, neither language competence nor motivation showed a significant relationship with academic performance.

Keywords: English, Language competence, Motivation, Academic performance, Communicative competence

Background

The Philippines is often regarded as one of the world's largest English-speaking nations, with English officially recognized as one of its national languages. Despite this, recent data from the EF English Proficiency Index, the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), and average IELTS scores of Filipino test-takers indicate a steady decline in English language proficiency among Filipinos (Santos et al., 2022). This downward trend has raised concerns from various sectors.

According to a 2023 report by the *Manila Times*, foreign business groups have urged the Philippines to intensify efforts to reverse this decline. They warn that continued deterioration in English skills may threaten the country's global competitiveness. Paulo Duarte, president of the European Chamber of Commerce of

the Philippines, emphasized that the nation's English advantage is a key factor in attracting foreign investment and fostering international trade.

Although there is an extensive body of research exploring language competence, motivation, and academic performance separately, few studies examine the dynamic interplay among these factors within the educational context. Many existing investigations tend to isolate one variable, overlooking how language proficiency and motivation may jointly influence student achievement. This fragmented approach limits our understanding of how to support learners more holistically.

To address this gap, the present study seeks to explore the interconnected roles of English language competence and student motivation in shaping academic performance. Specifically,

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it aims to answer the following research question: How do English language proficiency and student motivation interact to influence academic performance among Filipino students?

In summary, this study underscores the critical role of both language competence and motivation in influencing students' academic performance. By closely examining the interaction between these variables, the research aims to provide deeper insights that can inform the development of more effective educational strategies to support student success.

Literature Review

English Language Competence of Students

Shobika (2023) asserts that communicative competence is the foundation of language learning competencies. The pupils need to be educated and trained in written and oral English language skills in order to achieve those competencies. The primary measure of a student's proficiency in English as an international language is the acquisition of the language. Her research demonstrates that students must acquire and study both the communicative competence—which is defined as the learner's ability to use language as determined by language knowledge, skills, and attitude, including grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence—and the components of English competences, which include listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

Learning Motivation

According to Alizadeh, any challenging activity's success or failure can be largely explained by motivation. It is the drive to accomplish a task. The concept of motivation is crucial in second language acquisition. It is regarded as one of the essential components needed to acquire a language properly (Santos, 2022).

Academic Performance of Students

According to Brew et al., (2021), researchers and educators have long been interested in examining the factors that affect students' academic performance quality. Academic performance is influenced by a wide range of factors, such as the educational background and financial status of parents, the subject matter

expertise of teachers, absenteeism, the accessibility and availability of textbooks, libraries, practical labs, meal services, and many more. Academic achievement has been found to be significantly influenced by the home environment. Children living in poverty could be exposed to less stimulating physical environments and learning opportunities. Secondary school education is meant to serve as the cornerstone and basis for higher education at postsecondary institutions. Every nation's educational system is in danger when students consistently do worse academically in senior high school.

Academic Performance of Students and English Language Competence

Using corpus analysis, Pereda et al. mentioned in Fontillas et al. (2022), pioneered a study on the impact of several languages on second language acquisition. The purpose of their investigation was to identify potential interferences between a target language and a language. According to reports, the suggested project is novel since it bases its conclusions on an extensive corpus's error analysis, and the findings were highly beneficial for SFL instructors and students in Flanders. Additionally, it closes a gap in the literature on SFL and change-of-state verbs. While the research unmistakably demonstrates that a variety of factors other than English proficiency are important to academic success, it is argued that there may be a minimum level below which a lack of sufficient English proficiency significantly contributes to academic failure for each institution, or even for each program within an institution. Each institution may choose this level on its own, but in the interim, a number of measures can be done to set fair requirements for English language proficiency.

Academic Performance of Students and Learning Motivation

These results are at odds with those of Zhang and Whang (2023), who found some noteworthy correlations between academic achievement, personality attributes, and motivation to learn English. In specifics, it showed that, when grade and gender were held as control factors, the motivation to study English as

well as the openness personality could both positively predict the academic success of English majors. It's also important to remember that agreeableness has the potential to reduce the positive predictive effect of English learning motivation on academic achievement.

Methods

The study sought to determine the English language competence and motivation of students to be correlated to their academic performance. A Descriptive Research Design was utilized. According to McCombes (2023), Descriptive research aims to accurately and systematically describe a population, situation or phenomenon. It can answer what, where, when and how questions, but not why questions. Two

hundred one (201) Grade 12 students under TVL strand were the respondents of the study through stratified random sampling technique. This study used two standardized questionnaires. Part I of the instrument determined the English language competence of students in terms of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and comprehension and was authored by Eslit (2023). Part II of the instrument determined the learning motivation of students adopted from Jin et.al (2014). Since the instruments were standardized, validity and reliability tests were not conducted. The academic performance of the students was taken from their grades during the second grading period, School year 2023 – 2024 using DepEd Order 8, s. 2015 or the school report card.

Results and Discussions

Level of English Language Competence

Table 1. Level of English Language Competence of Grade 12 Students as a Whole and in terms of Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening and Comprehension.

English Language Competence	N	Mean	Interpretation
Reading	201	3.39	Moderate
Writing	201	3.21	Moderate
Speaking	201	3.19	Moderate
Listening	201	3.33	Moderate
Comprehension	201	3.32	Moderate
As a whole	201	3.29	Moderate

The results indicate that the level of English language competence of students is moderate with a mean of 3.39, in terms of writing, the students' competence in English is moderate with a mean of 3.21. In terms of speaking, the level of students' competence is moderate as well with a mean of 3.19, listening also obtained a moderate level with a mean of 3.33 and comprehension on moderate level with a mean of 3.32. As a whole, the level of English language competence of students is moderate with a mean of 3.29. This means that students are moderately competent in English in terms of reading, writing, speaking, listening and comprehension giving emphasis on speaking which

obtained the lowest mean. This implies that students are not very good in terms of performing the English language like writing and speaking the language and still need to improve.

Santos et al. (2022) provided support for the study's findings by examining the various elements that impact students' English language competency. Based on the EF English competency Index, the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), and the average score of Filipino IELTS takers, they claim that over time, a progressive decline in English language competency has been seen among Filipinos.

Level of English Learning Motivation

Table 2. Level of English Learning Motivation of Students of Grade 12 Students.

Learning Motivation	f	Mean	Interpretation
Very High	18		
High	133		
Moderate	47		
Low	3	3.66	High
Very Low	0		
Total	201		

The level of English learning motivation of students, 18 of the respondents obtained a very high level, 133 obtained high level, 47 got moderate level, and 3 got low level of English learning motivation. As a whole, the level of learning motivation of students is high with a mean of 3.66.

This implies that students are highly motivated to learn English which is very important

indication in today's generation where students' learning is being questioned and challenged by some due to some performances in various assessment like the PISA.

The findings are corroborated by Filgona et al. (2020), who assert that while students' attendance in class does not guarantee that they desire to learn, it does mean that students' drive to learn is particularly important.

Level of Academic Performance

Table 3. Level of Academic Performance of Students.

Academic Performance	f	Mean	Interpretation
Outstanding	97		
Very Satisfactory	59		
Satisfactory	41		
Fairly Satisfactory	4	88.67	Very Satisfactory
Did not meet expectations	0		
Total	201		

Academic performance of students, as indicated by their general weighted average, is presented. Thus, it can be noted that most of the respondents obtained a very satisfactory rating with 97 out of 201 total number of respondents, while 59 of the respondents attained very satisfactory rating, 41 got satisfactory rating and 4 are fairly satisfactory. As a whole, the level of academic performance of the respondents is very satisfactory with a mean of 88.67. This implies that students are performing very

well in their academics. This also suggests, relevant to the high level of learning motivation as revealed in table 2, that students are really eager to learn.

Martin et al. (2022) have reported that, in contrast to the study's findings, the variables that characterize the overall profile of students with low academic achievement and that have demonstrated the strongest predictive power for subpar performance are primarily associated with the students themselves.

Relationship between English Language Competence and Academic Performance*Table 4. Relationship between English Language Competence and Academic Performance of Students.*

Level of English Language Competence	Level of Academic Performance					Total
	Outstanding	Very Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Fairly Satisfactory	Did not meet Expectations	
Very High	6	3	3	0	0	12
High	38	23	13	1	0	75
Moderate	43	24	20	3	0	90
Low	7	8	5	0	0	20
Very Low	3	1	0	0	0	4
Total	97	59	41	4	0	201

Computed Value (G) :

0.067 p-value : 0.480

Decision : Accept Ho

Interpretation : Not significant at 0.05 level of significance

Findings show that most of the respondents obtained a moderate level of English language competence with 90 out of 201 total number of respondents where 43 got outstanding academic performance, 24 got very satisfactory, 20 got satisfactory, and 3 obtained fairly satisfactory level of academic performance. This means that there is no significant relationship between the level of English language competence of the students and their academic performance. This

implies that academic performance is not significantly influenced by their English language competence.

The study's results contradict Devi's (2023) assertion that there is a substantial correlation between students' academic accomplishment and language proficiency, meaning that pupils with higher English proficiency can achieve at a higher academic level.

Relationship between English Learning Motivation and Academic Performance*Table 5. Relationship between English Learning Motivation and Academic Performance of Students.*

Level of English Language Motivation	Level of Academic Performance					Total
	Outstanding	Very Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Fairly Satisfactory	Did not meet Expectations	
Very High	7	6	5	0	0	18
High	71	36	25	1	0	133
Moderate	18	17	9	3	0	47
Low	1	0	2	0	0	3
Very Low	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	97	59	41	4	0	201

Computed Value (G) :

0.126 p-value : 0.267

Decision : Accept Ho

Interpretation : Not Significant at 0.05 level of significance

The data indicate that most of the respondents obtained outstanding level of academic performance where 7 have very high, 71 have high, 18 have moderate, and 1 got low level of

English learning motivation. This means that there is no significant relationship between the level of English learning motivation of the students and their academic performance. This

implies that the English learning motivation of students does not affect the level of their academic performance.

The result of the study is not congruent to the findings of Zhang and Whang (2023), who found some noteworthy correlations between academic achievement, personality attributes, and motivation to learn English.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this research study, several conclusions can be drawn. Students demonstrate moderate competence in English across reading, writing, speaking, listening, and comprehension. They also show high motivation to learn English and perform very satisfactorily in their academic work. However, neither English language competence nor English learning motivation significantly influences students' overall academic performance.

These results have important policy and pedagogical implications. To address the moderate proficiency, especially in productive skills like speaking and writing, educators should strengthen instruction in these areas by incorporating more interactive and communicative teaching methods. Revisiting curriculum delivery to include technology-assisted learning and collaborative activities can provide students with more opportunities to practice and improve their language skills. Additionally, given that language competence and motivation alone do not predict academic success, schools should adopt a holistic approach that integrates the development of critical thinking, study skills, and time management alongside language instruction. Teacher training programs must also be updated to equip educators with strategies to identify and support diverse student needs effectively.

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