

Examining Grit and Motivation in Learning French as a Foreign Language Through the Lens of Social Cognitive Theory

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ABSTRACT

Learning a foreign language comes with its own set of challenges as students are required not only to learn something new but also to familiarize themselves with an entirely different culture embedded within the language. This can pose a challenge to students' motivation in learning a foreign language which may also affect their perseverance and sustained interest (grit) in the learning process. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the grit and motivation in foreign language particularly in the context of French language through the lens of Social Cognitive Theory. A total of 277 undergraduate students studying French as a third language at a public university in Malaysia participated in this study by answering questionnaires comprising validated scales measuring grit and motivation. The data, which were later analysed using SPSS, indicated that students' motivation was not related to gender or academic stream. However, several interconnected factors were found to influence motivation. These factors include personal factors (consistency of interest and perseverance of effort), behavioural factors (self-efficacy, intrinsic value, and test anxiety) as well as environmental factors (cognitive strategy use and self-regulation). The study further provides an overview of how grit acts as an important element in sustaining students' motivation. Pedagogical implications include the need for educators to design learning environments that foster resilience, goal-setting, and long-term commitment among French as foreign language learners.

Keywords: Grit, Motivation, Social Cognitive Theory, French as a foreign language, self-regulation

INTRODUCTION

Background of study

In an increasingly competitive academic landscape, learners are influenced by a complex range of motivational factors in the learning process. To support their learning journey, they often depend on grit, motivation, beliefs, and strategies among others. What drives learners to persist and remain motivated in learning French as a foreign language despite linguistic and academic challenges? Learners' well-being has become more and more important in today's educational environment because they face many pressures and challenges, particularly in learning French as a foreign language, where exposure to immersive language settings is often restricted (Uçmaz, 2026). Therefore, grit and motivation play a huge role in supporting learners' foreign language acquisition. Additionally, from the perspective of Social Cognitive Theory, learners' performance is also determined through the interaction of individual characteristics, learning behaviour, and contextual variables.

Central to this discourse are two psychological constructs: one of which is grit, which refers to persistence and passion for long-term and higher-order goals in L2 learning (Ueno & Park, 2025), while motivation is "wanting"

(Baumeister, 2016). Moreover, grit can be used to predict learners' academic success and future development. According to Allen et al. (2021), grit is made up of two main parts: staying committed to long-term goals and continuing to work hard even when things are difficult. Similarly, Duckworth et al. (2019) describe grit as strong passion and steady effort in working toward long-term goals.

Individually, these constructs have been extensively linked to different dimensions of language learning. Prior studies have shown that they are associated with human and psychological variables, including gender (Guo et al., 2023), as well as key learner-based constructs such as self-efficacy (Guo et al., 2023; Ueno & Park, 2025; Uçmaz, 2026). In addition, they have been linked to communicative outcomes such as willingness to communicate (WTC) (Shahrokhi & Dehaghani, 2025), and to affective and psychological dimensions, including well-being and resilience (Uçmaz, 2026). Together, these findings show that these constructs influence many aspects of learners' language learning experiences.

Several gaps still exist in the existing body of literature, despite many studies on grit, motivation, and related learner variables in second language learning. Most research to date has examined these constructs separately and their interactions, the current study is introducing a new dimension by looking at Social Cognitive Theory in the Malaysian context. Taken together, grit and motivation are examined not only in relation to each other but also alongside personal, behavioural, and environmental constructs to explore how these variables interact. Moreover, there is a limited number of studies that place emphasis on learning French as a foreign language, especially when learners have limited access to authentic language environments in multicultural settings. Hence, this study remains relevant as it aims to explore the role of grit and motivation in influencing French language learning within the framework of Social Cognitive Theory.

Statement of Problem

Learning a foreign language, particularly the French language, is generally acknowledged as a comprehensive and challenging journey which needs linguistics expertise, mental perseverance and motivation. Students of French normally encounter obstacles, for instance modest or restricted experience in authentic interactions, fearfulness in displaying abilities and lack of confidence in uttering conversations (Ahmad & Wan, 2024). These difficulties produce low achievement and affect students' motivation in learning the French language (Chang, 2025). Various studies have emphasised that being successful in foreign language learning is mainly due to cognitive ability and non-cognitive reasons, which include motivation, resilience, and perseverance (Dörnyei, 2009 as cited in Ahmed, 2025). Additionally, another psychological ability which has been claimed as an important determinant in foreign language learning is grit. Angela Duckworth claimed grit as perseverance and passion in pursuing long-term goals (Duckworth et al., 2007). In educational settings, grit reflects students' ability to sustain effort, remain resilient in the face of challenges, and continue pursuing learning goals despite difficulties. In foreign language learning contexts, students frequently encounter obstacles such as communication anxiety, fear of making mistakes, limited exposure to authentic language use, and slow language progress (Adisa et al., 2025). Learners with higher levels of grit may be more likely to persist through these difficulties and maintain commitment to mastering the target language. On the other hand, learners with lower levels of grit may become discouraged and lose interest when faced with challenges (Song 2024).

In addition to grit, motivation has consistently been identified as one of the most influential factors in successful second and foreign language acquisition. Motivation determines learners' willingness to invest effort, participate actively in classroom activities, and sustain long-term engagement in learning the target language (Gardner, 1985; Lapadat & Lapadat, 2023; Seng et al., 2026). According to Dörnyei (2009), motivated learners tend to exhibit stronger commitment, higher self-confidence, and greater persistence in language learning tasks. In the context of learning French as a foreign language, motivation may be influenced by various factors such as students' attitudes toward French culture, perceived usefulness of the language, classroom experiences, peer influence, and teacher support. Nevertheless, motivation is often unstable and may decline over time when students experience repeated difficulties or lack opportunities to use the language meaningfully.

Notwithstanding the fact that both grit and motivation have been widely studied in educational psychology, there remains insufficient understanding of how these variables interact within the context of learning French as a foreign language. Existing studies have predominantly focused on English language learning, leaving other

foreign language contexts comparatively underexplored. The majority of research on grit in language learning has concentrated on learners of English as a second or foreign language, particularly in Asian and Western educational settings. Consequently, there is limited empirical evidence regarding whether grit functions similarly among students learning French as a foreign language. This represents a significant gap in the literature because learners of French may encounter unique linguistic, cultural, and educational challenges that differ from those experienced by learners of English.

Moreover, previous studies often examine grit and motivation as separate variables without adequately exploring the relationship between them (Werner et al. 2018; Wang. 2021; Martin et al., 2022). While motivation may encourage learners to begin studying a foreign language, grit may influence their ability to sustain effort and overcome obstacles over an extended period. Understanding the relationship between these two variables is important because learners who are highly motivated may still struggle to persist when facing difficulties if they lack perseverance. Similarly, students with strong perseverance may experience reduced learning outcomes if they lack sufficient motivation. Therefore, examining both grit and motivation together may provide a more comprehensive understanding of students' experiences in French language learning.

This study addresses this limitation by employing the framework of Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory. Social Cognitive Theory claims that human behaviour is shaped through reciprocal interactions among personal factors, environmental influences, and behavioural patterns (Bandura, 1986). Within foreign language learning contexts, students' motivation and perseverance are likely influenced not only by internal characteristics but also by classroom environments, teacher support, peer interactions, and opportunities for successful language use. The application of Social Cognitive Theory is particularly relevant because language learning is a socially situated process. Students develop beliefs about their language abilities through interactions with teachers, classmates, and learning experiences. Learners who receive positive reinforcement and supportive feedback may develop stronger confidence and persistence, whereas those exposed to negative experiences may experience reduced motivation and engagement.

However, limited studies have specifically examined grit and motivation among learners of French as a foreign language using Social Cognitive Theory as an explanatory framework. As a result, there is insufficient understanding of how environmental and cognitive factors contribute to students' perseverance and motivational development in French language classrooms. In many educational institutions, French language instructors continue to face challenges in maintaining students' interest and long-term engagement in learning the language. Some students demonstrate enthusiasm at the beginning of the course but gradually lose motivation due to perceived language difficulty, lack of confidence, or limited opportunities to practice French outside the classroom. Without a deeper understanding of the factors that influence perseverance and motivation, educators may struggle to design effective instructional strategies that encourage sustained learning engagement. Investigating grit and motivation through the lens of Social Cognitive Theory may provide valuable insights into how teachers and institutions can create supportive learning environments that foster resilience, confidence, and continued effort among learners. Moreover, research focusing on psychological factors in foreign language learning is particularly important in multilingual and multicultural educational contexts where students may encounter varying levels of exposure, support, and encouragement for learning French. Identifying the role of grit and motivation may help educators better understand why some learners remain committed despite difficulties while others disengage from the learning process. Such understanding may contribute to the development of teaching approaches and intervention strategies aimed at improving students' language learning experiences and outcomes.

Therefore, this study seeks to examine grit and motivation in learning French as a foreign language through the framework of Social Cognitive Theory. Specifically, the study aims to explore the relationship between grit and motivation among learners of French and to understand how personal and environmental factors influence students' persistence and engagement in foreign language learning. By addressing the existing gaps in the literature, this study may contribute to broader discussions on psychological factors in foreign language education and provide practical implications for language teachers, curriculum developers, and educational institutions seeking to enhance students' motivation and perseverance in learning French.

Objective of the Study and Research Questions

This study is done to explore grit and motivation using social cognitive theory.

Specifically, this study is done to answer the following questions;

1. Is there a significant relationship between motivation across gender?

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between motivation across gender

2. Is there a significant relationship between motivation across streams?

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between motivation across streams

3. How do learners' personal factors affect learning motivation?

4. How do learners' behavioural factors affect learning motivation?

5. How do learners' environmental factors affect learning motivation?

6. Is there a significant relationship between all components in learning motivation?

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between all components in learning motivation

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework of the Study

Social Cognitive Theory and Learning Motivation

At the heart of this study lies Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), a framework that has profoundly shaped how researchers understand human learning and motivation. Unlike theories that focus solely on internal traits or external rewards, SCT proposes that learning follows a model of triadic reciprocal determinism - a dynamic, ongoing interaction between three interconnected forces: personal cognitive factors, behavior, and the environment. The framework is marked for a theory that students act as an active agent rather than the opposite (passive) agent of knowledge. Their learning engagement really plays alongside their social experiences, emotions and personal beliefs. This is where the factor of self-efficacy plays its role, a learner's belief in their own capacity to succeed at a given task. For a foreign language learner, this implies when the students are capable of organizing and executing the actions required to reach a certain level of language proficiency. Recent researchers have supported the link between motivation and self-efficacy. For example, Mekheimer (2025) utilized SCT within an EFL e-learning environment, which results in self-efficacy as the main variable of student's motivation, study techniques and level of satisfaction in their studies. Furthermore, a study by Zhang et al. (2024) on the self-regulated learning of multilingual students demonstrated that academic success and engagement are driven by emotional regulation, self-efficacy and motivation. These researchers corroborate the link between SCT and student motivation and persistence and disengagement, a central core investigation into grit and motivation among learners of French as a foreign language.

Grit in Learning

Grit is widely recognised as a valuable non-cognitive attribute and positive personality characteristics that contributes to educational achievement, continuous learning, and overall personal development (Duckworth et al., 2007; Duckworth and Quinn, 2009). The concept of grit is generally explained through two major components, namely persistence of effort (PE) and consistency of interest (CI). Persistence of effort describes an individual's determination to continue striving toward long-term objectives when faced with setbacks, difficulties, or failure. In contrast, consistency of interest refers to the ability to maintain sustained focus and commitment towards particular goals and activities over an extended period in order to build relevant skills and competencies (Duckworth and Quinn, 2009). These two dimensions are considered essential elements that

influence individual motivation, performance and achievement. Students with higher grit levels are more willing to take on challenging tasks and persevere through demanding situations, thereby enhancing their personal growth, motivation, and development in learning. According to Duckworth et al. (2007) students achieve better academic performance and higher grade point averages (GPAs) with higher motivation and grit levels, besides cognitive intelligence as another indicator of success.

Past Studies

Past Studies on Grit in Learning Motivation

Numerous research efforts have been conducted to examine what factors influence second language (L2) learning, specifically investigating the impact of variables related to self-regulated learning (SRL) such as self-regulation, grit, and motivation on academic performance. In this regard, the study by Ueno and Park (2025) was done to investigate whether SRL factors such as self-regulation, grit, self-efficacy, intrinsic value, and growth mindset are linked to English proficiency among university learners in Japan. This research closely examines these connections among 47 first-year university learners from an English-related major at a Japanese private university. To measure English proficiency, the researchers employed TOEFL ITP scores, while a questionnaire on a 5-point Likert scale was used to measure SRL variables. The results revealed that some self-regulation (awareness, goal, and emotion control) was highly correlated with grit and self-efficacy, nevertheless no correlations were discovered between most of the variables studied. Therefore, this study implies that further research involving learners from diverse learning environments is required, as the current study focused on a specific context. Thus, additional data on SRL and language proficiency should be collected, as these contexts may play a major role.

The study by Guo et al. (2023) is done to investigate issues regarding the influences of motivation and grit on learners' self-regulated learning (SRL) and English learning achievement, with a specific focus on comparing these influences between male and female students. In this study, the respondents were primary school learners in Hong Kong and a total of 723 respondents participated, consisting of 302 males and 421 females. To collect the data, the study utilized two 5-point Likert scale questionnaires to measure motivation, grit, and SRL strategy use, as well as a standardized English proficiency test covering vocabulary, reading, comprehension, and listening. The study found that there were generally no gender differences in motivation, grit, and SRL strategy use, except for growth mindset where females scored higher. However, females outperformed males in English achievement. In addition, grit was identified as the strongest predictor of SRL strategy use for all learners, while self-efficacy predicted critical thinking and English results for everyone. Moreover, intrinsic motivation and growth mindset only predicted English results for male students. Based on these findings, EFL teachers should focus on building learners' grit through goal-setting and scaffolding to improve SRL strategy use. Furthermore, teachers should also use attractive materials to stimulate male learners' intrinsic motivation and provide feedback that fosters a growth mindset to improve their performance.

Overall, self-regulated learning (SRL) factors such as self-efficacy, grit, motivation, and growth mindset are linked to learners' English performance and achievement, as demonstrated by the two studies. Ueno and Park (2025) found that the links between SRL factors and English proficiency appear to be limited and highly influenced by the educational context. Conversely, Guo et al. (2023) found significant relationships, specifically where grit and self-efficacy support the use of SRL strategy and English performance. Collectively, these studies illustrate that learning outcomes are supported by SRL factors; nevertheless, their influences may vary based on the context, learners, and educational level. Accordingly, for the present study, self-efficacy, intrinsic value, and test anxiety are psychological factors that may shape learners' learning motivation, although the level of effect differs among learners and settings.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

Learners' success in learning largely depends on their level of motivation. (Rahmat & Thasrabiab, 2024). According to Martin et al. (2022), motivation is derived from grit. Motivational beliefs and self-regulated learning strategies. Grit comprises learners' consistency of interest and perseverance. Next, motivational beliefs refer to self-efficacy, intrinsic value, and test anxiety. Lastly, self-regulated learning strategies comprise

cognitive strategy use and self-regulation. The components in Bandura's (2001) social cognitive theory correspond with the variables in this study, as shown in Figure 1 below. Grit is developed in personal factors, and learners gain their grit from their consistency of interest and perseverance. Next, behavioural components for motivation are rooted in learners' self-efficacy, intrinsic value, and test anxiety. For learners to stay motivated, the environment they are in needs to support their desire to succeed. In the context of this study, this is achieved through cognitive strategy use and self-regulation. This study also explores if the three motivating factors are related.

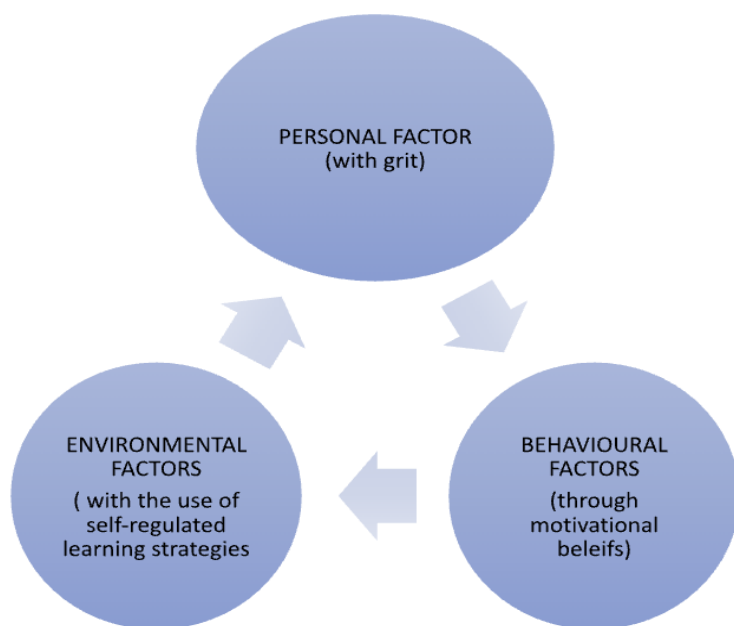


Figure 1- Conceptual Framework of the Study

Grit and Motivation using Social Cognitive Theory

METHODOLOGY

This quantitative study is done to explore grit and motivation using social cognitive theory. A convenient sample of 277 participants responded to the survey. The instrument used a 5 -point Likert scale survey and is rooted from Martin et al. (2022) to reveal the variables in table 3 below. Table 1 below shows the categories used for the Likert scale; 1 is for Never, 2 is for Rarely, 3 is for Sometimes, 4 is for Very Often and 5 is for Always.

Table 1- Likert Scale Use

1	Never
2	Rarely
3	Sometimes
4	Very Often
5	Always

Table 2- Distribution of Items in the Survey

PART	VARIABLE		CONSTRUCT	No Of Items
TWO	PERSON -GRIT	i	CONSISTENCY OF INTEREST	6
		ii	PERSEVERANCE	6
THREE	BEHAVIOUR- MOTIVATIONAL BELIEFS	i	SELF-EFFICACY	6
		ii	INTRINSIC VALUE	7
		iii	TEST ANXIETY	4
FOUR	ENVIRONMENT-	i	COGNITIVE STRATEGY USE	7

	SELF-REGULATED LEARNING STRATEGIES			
		ii	SELF-REGULATION	7
	TOTAL NO OF ITEMS			43 (.871)

Table 2 shows the distribution of items in the survey. Part two has 12 items on Person. Part three has 17 items on Behaviour. Part four has 14 items on Environment.

Table 2 also shows the reliability of the survey. The analysis shows a Cronbach alpha of .871 for all 43 items; thus, revealing a good reliability of the instrument chosen/used. Further analysis using SPSS is done to present findings to answer the research questions for this study.

Table 3- Reliability Levels, Cronbach's Alpha Ranges, and Their Interpretations

Reliability Level	Cronbach's Alpha range	Interpretation
Excellent	0.9 and above	Indicates very high internal consistency
Good	0.80-0.89	Reflects strong internal consistency
Acceptable	0.70-0.79	Indicates acceptable internal consistency
Questionable	0.60-0.69	Reflects questionable internal consistency
Poor	Below 0.6	Indicates poor internal consistency

In order to determine the internal reliability of the instrument, reliability analysis is conducted. Table 3 above shows the distribution and interpretation of Cronbach Alpha range. According to Ahmad et al. (2024) Cronbach Alpha scores between 0.7 to 0.9 is considered acceptable to excellent.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Analysis

According to Zienefuss et al. (2021), demographic data are reported using percentages to demonstrate the representativeness of the sample and support the generalizability of the findings to a larger population. Reporting demographic information also provides a clear overview of the participants' characteristics, enabling readers to better understand the composition of the study sample.

Table 4- Percentage for Demographic Profile

Question	Demographic Profile	Categories	Percentage (%)
1	Gender	Male	22%
		Female	78%
2	Discipline	Science	63%
		Non-Science	37%

Table 4 presents the demographic profile of the respondents based on gender and academic discipline .The findings indicate that the majority of the respondents were female, comprising 78% of the sample, while male respondents accounted for 22%. In terms of educational background, most respondents came from the science stream, representing 63% of the participants, whereas 37% were from the non-science stream.

Inferential Statistics

According to Shah (2024), the t-test serves three main functions. First, it is used to compare the means of two groups or to compare the mean of a single group with a known value. This enables researchers to determine whether the observed differences in mean scores are statistically significant rather than the result of random variation. Second, the t-test is employed to test hypotheses regarding group means, such as evaluating whether a treatment has a significant effect on a variable or whether there are meaningful differences in performance between two groups. Third, the t-test helps identify statistically significant differences by producing a p-value.

When the p-value is below the predetermined significance level, typically 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating that the observed difference is statistically significant and unlikely to have occurred by chance.

Findings for Gender

This section presents data to answer research question 1: Is there a significant relationship between motivation across gender?

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between motivation across gender

Table 5: T-Test for motivation across gender

Group Statistics					
	Q1GENDER	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
MOTIVATION	MALE	61	3.5963	.33901	.04341
	FEMALE	216	3.6764	.33158	.02256

Independent Samples Test										
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
						One-Sided p	Two-Sided p			
MOTIVATION	Equal variances assumed	.119	.731	-1.658	275	.049	.099	-.08009	.04831	-.17520 .01502
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.637	94.866	.052	.105	-.08009	.04892	-.17721 .01703

A two-sample t-test was performed to compare motivation across gender. There was no significant difference in motivation across gender ($p=0.099$). The null hypothesis of Ho1 was not rejected.

Findings for Stream

This section presents data to answer research question 2: Is there a significant relationship between motivation across streams?

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between motivation across streams

Table 6: T-Test for motivation across stream

Group Statistics					
	Q2SPM	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
MOTIVATION	Science	174	3.6795	.30808	.02336
	Non-Science	103	3.6236	.37334	.03679

Independent Samples Test										
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
						One-Sided p	Two-Sided p			
MOTIVATION	Equal variances assumed	6.164	.014	1.347	275	.090	.179	.05588	.04150	-.02581 .13757
	Equal variances not assumed			1.282	183.247	.101	.201	.05588	.04357	-.03009 .14185

A two-sample t-test was performed to compare motivation across streams. There was no significant difference in motivation across streams ($p = 0.201$). The null hypothesis was not rejected for Ho2.

Descriptive Statistics

Why is there a need to report the mean and standard deviation? According to Vetter (2017), Mean (M) represents the average, or centre of a data set. Standard deviation (SD) indicates the typical distance of individual observations from the mean which shows the data's variability or spread. A low SD means the data points are clustered close to the mean while a high SD indicates they are more spread out. A higher SD indicates greater variability in responses, while a lower SD indicates more consistency.

Findings for Personal Factors

This section presents data to answer research question 3: How do learners' personal factors affect learning motivation? In the context of this study, this is measured by (i) consistency of interest and (ii) perseverance.

Table 7- Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) for CONSISTENCY OF INTEREST

ITEM	M	SD
GCIQ1 I often set a goal but later choose to pursue a different one.	3.07	0.76
GCIQ2 New ideas and new projects sometimes distract me from previous ones.	3.04	0.96
GCIQ3 I become interested in new pursuits every few months.	3.21	0.97
GCIQ4 My interests change from year to year.	3.17	1.02
GCIQ5 I have been obsessed with a certain idea or project for a short time but later lost interest.	2.80	1.02
GCIQ6 I have difficulty maintaining my focus on projects that take more than a few months to complete.	2.82	1.06

Table 7 shows that the findings for the Consistency of Interest construct indicate moderate levels of changing interests and difficulties in maintaining long-term focus among participants. Mean scores ranged from 2.80 to 3.21, suggesting that respondents somewhat agreed with statements related to shifting goals, changing interests, and being distracted by new ideas or projects. The highest mean score was recorded for becoming interested in new pursuits every few months ($M = 3.21$), followed by changes in interests from year to year ($M = 3.17$). Participants also reported occasionally setting goals but later pursuing different ones ($M = 3.07$) and being distracted by new ideas ($M = 3.04$). Lower mean scores were observed for losing interest in projects after a short period ($M = 2.80$) and difficulty maintaining focus on long-term projects ($M = 2.82$). The standard deviation values, ranging from 0.76 to 1.06, indicate moderate variability in participants' responses. Overall, the results suggest that participants experienced some inconsistency in maintaining sustained interest and focus over time.

Table 8- Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) for Perseverance Of Effort

ITEM	M	SD
GCPQ1 I have achieved a goal that took years of work.	3.22	0.96
GCPQ2 I have overcome setbacks to conquer an important challenge.	3.49	0.80
GCPQ3 Setbacks don't discourage me.	3.25	0.94
GCPQ4 I finish whatever I begin.	4.03	0.75
GCPQ5 I am a hard worker.	3.79	0.79
GCPQ6 I am diligent.	3.67	0.79

Based on Table 8, the Perseverance of Effort subscale indicates that participants generally reported moderate to high levels of grit across all six items.. The highest mean score was recorded for GCPQ4 ("I finish whatever I begin," $M = 4.03$, $SD = 0.75$), suggesting that task completion is the most strongly endorsed behavior among respondents. This was followed by "I am a hard worker" ($M = 3.79$, $SD = 0.79$) and "I am diligent" ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 0.79$), indicating a solid self-perceived work ethic. Overcoming setbacks to conquer important challenges also scored relatively high ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 0.80$), while achieving long-term goals ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 0.96$) and not being discouraged by setbacks ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 0.94$) received the lowest means, with the latter two also

showing slightly greater variability in responses. Overall, the findings suggest that respondents demonstrate a reasonably strong disposition toward perseverance, particularly in task completion and industriousness, though resilience in the face of long-term challenges appears comparatively less consistent.

Findings for Behavioural Factors

This section presents data to answer research question 4: How do learners' behavioural factors affect learning motivation? In the context of this study, this is measured by (i) self-efficacy, (ii) intrinsic value, and (iii) test anxiety.

Table 9- Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) for SELF-EFFICACY (6 items)

ITEM	M	SD
MBSEQ1 Compared with other students in this French class, I expect to do well	3.39	0.89
MBSEQ2 I'm certain I can understand the ideas taught in this course	3.78	0.69
MBSEQ3 I expect to do very well in this class.	3.81	0.81
MBSEQ4 Compared with others in this class, I think I'm a good student	2.89	0.90
MBSEQ5 I am sure I can do an excellent job on the problems and tasks assigned for this class.	3.63	0.76
MBSEQ6 I know that I will be able to learn the material for this class	3.88	0.71

The mean and standard deviation scores for learners' self-efficacy are shown in Table 9. Overall the results indicate that learners demonstrated a moderately high level of confidence in their learning abilities. The highest mean score was MBSEQ6 ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 0.71$), showing fairly consistent responses, which indicated that learners believed that they would be able to understand and acquire the learning resources. Along the same line, the learners felt that they were expected to do very well (MBSEQ3, $M = 3.81$, $SD = 0.81$). Furthermore, they were also convinced that they could comprehend the ideas taught in the class (MBSEQ2, $M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.69$), and they believed that they could perform an excellent job in tackling the problems and tasks assigned to them (MBSEQ5, $M = 3.63$, $SD = 0.76$). In addition, the learners were moderately positive that, when compared to their peers, they expected to do well (MBSEQ1, $M = 3.39$, $SD = 0.89$). However, the lowest mean was recorded for item (MBSEQ4, $M = 2.89$, $SD = 0.90$) which suggested that learners were less confident that they were good students compared with others, and the responses were more varied.

Table 10- Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) for INTRINSIC VALUE (7 items)

ITEM	M	SD
MBIVQ1 I prefer class work that is challenging so I can learn new things.	3.48	0.76
MBIVQ2 It is important for me to learn what is being taught in this class.	4.21	0.68
MBIVQ3 I like what I am learning in this class.	4.15	0.77
MBIVQ4 I think I will be able to use what I learn in this class in other classes.	3.93	0.78
MBIVQ5 Even when I do poorly on a test I try to learn from my mistakes.	4.41	0.66
MBIVQ6 I think that what I am learning in this class is useful for me to know.	4.29	0.72
MBIVQ7 I think that what we are learning in this class is interesting.	4.35	0.66

The mean and the standard deviation scores for learners' intrinsic value are presented in Table 10. On the whole, the results demonstrate that learners placed a high level of importance and interest in their learning. The highest mean score was recorded for item MBIVQ5 ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 0.66$), which shows that despite performing poorly on a test, learners attempt to learn from their errors. Moreover, they view the learning content in the class as engaging (MBIVQ7, $M = 4.35$, $SD = 0.66$). Similarly, the content taught in this class is considered beneficial by learners (MBIVQ6, $M = 4.29$, $SD = 0.72$). Furthermore, the knowledge delivered is regarded as important by learners (MBIVQ2, $M = 4.21$, $SD = 0.68$). Additionally, they enjoy what they are learning (MBIVQ3, $M = 4.15$, $SD = 0.77$). Besides that, they believe that what they learn can be used in other courses (MBIVQ4, $M = 3.93$,

SD = 0.78). Nevertheless, the lowest mean score recorded for MBIVQ1 ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 0.76$). In general, the low standard deviation values show that the responses were fairly consistent.

Table 11- Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) for TEST ANXIETY (4 items)

ITEM	M	SD
MBTAQ1 I am so nervous during a test that I cannot remember facts I have learned.	3.21	0.99
MBTAQ2 I have an uneasy, upset feeling when I take a test.	3.07	1.04
MBTAQ3 I worry a great deal about tests.	3.53	0.99
MBTAQ4 When I take a test I think about how poorly I am doing.	3.41	1.10

Table 11 presents the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) values for the four items measuring test anxiety. The findings show that respondents generally experienced a moderate level of test anxiety. Among the items, “I worry a great deal about tests” recorded the highest mean score ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 0.99$), indicating that worrying about tests was the most common feeling among respondents. This was followed by the statement “When I take a test I think about how poorly I am doing” ($M = 3.41$, $SD = 1.10$). Meanwhile, the item “I have an uneasy, upset feeling when I take a test” obtained the lowest mean score ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 1.04$). Overall, the results suggest that respondents experienced noticeable anxiety and concern during tests.

Findings for Environmental Factors

This section presents data to answer the research question 5 : How do learners’ environmental factors affect learning motivation? In the context of this study, this is measured by (i) cognitive strategy use and (ii) self-regulation

Table 12- Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) for COGNITIVE STRATEGY USE

ITEM	M	SD
SRLSCSUQ1 When I study, I put important ideas into my own words.	4.07	0.74
SRLSCSUQ2 I always try to understand what the teacher is saying even if it doesn't make sense.	3.99	0.81
SRLSCSUQ3 When I study for a test, I try to remember as many facts as I can.	4.26	0.94
SRLSCSUQ4 When studying, I copy my notes over to help me remember material.	3.96	0.94
SRLSCSUQ5 When I study for a test, I practice saying the important facts over and over to myself.	4.24	0.76
SRLSCSUQ6 When I am studying a topic, I try to make everything fit together.	4.18	0.76
SRLSCSUQ7 When reading I try to connect the things I am reading with what I already know.	4.18	0.72

Table 12 presents the Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) scores for learners’ cognitive strategy use in learning French. Overall, the findings indicate that the respondents demonstrated a relatively high use of cognitive strategies, as all mean scores ranged from 3.96 to 4.26. The highest mean score was recorded for Item SRLSCSUQ3; “When I study for a test, I try to remember as many facts as I can”, ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 0.94$), which suggests that learners frequently try to remember as many facts as possible when studying for a test. This was followed closely by Item SRLSCSUQ5 ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 0.76$); “When I study for a test, I practice saying the important facts over and over to myself”, which indicates that learners often practise repeating important facts to themselves. Meanwhile, the lowest mean score was found for Item SRLSCSUQ4 ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.94$); “When studying, I copy my notes over to help me remember material”, which shows that copying notes to aid memory was the least preferred strategy among the respondents, although it was still moderately high. Meanwhile, the standard deviation values, ranging from 0.72 to 0.94, reveal a moderate level of variation in learners' responses. In particular, Item SRLSCSUQ7 recorded the lowest SD value ($SD = 0.72$); “When reading I try to connect the things, I am reading with what I already know”, this indicates greater consistency among respondents in connecting new information with prior knowledge. Overall, the results suggest that learners actively employ various cognitive strategies to support their learning and academic performance.

Table 13- Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) for SELF-REGULATION

ITEM	M	SD
SRLSSRQ1 I ask myself questions to make sure I know the material I have been studying.	3.98	0.88
SRLSSRQ2 When work is hard I either give up or study only the easy parts.	2.89	0.97
SRLSSRQ3 Even when study materials are dull and uninteresting, I keep working until I finish.	3.84	0.74
SRLSSRQ4 Before I begin studying, I think about the things I will need to do to learn.	3.95	0.76
SRLSSRQ5 I often find that I have been reading for class but don't know what it is all about.	3.16	0.91
SRLSSRQ6 When I'm reading, I stop once in a while and go over what I have read.	3.71	0.85
SRLSSRQ7 I work hard to get a good grade even when I don't like a class.	3.98	0.88

Table 13 presents the Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) scores for learners' self-regulation strategies in learning French language.. The findings indicate that the respondents generally demonstrated a moderate to high level of self-regulation, with mean scores ranging from 2.89 to 3.98. The highest mean scores were recorded for Item SRLSSRQ1; "I ask myself questions to make sure I know the material I have been studying", and Item SRLSSRQ7; "I work hard to get a good grade even when I don't like a class", (M = 3.98), these suggest that learners frequently monitor their own understanding by asking themselves questions and remain motivated to achieve good grades even in subjects they do not enjoy. Item SRLSSRQ4; "Before I begin studying, I think about the things I will need to do to learn", also showed a relatively high mean score (M = 3.95, SD = 0.76), indicating that learners tend to plan their learning activities before beginning to study. In contrast, the lowest mean score was observed for Item SRLSSRQ2 (M = 2.89, SD = 0.97); "When work is hard I either give up or study only the easy parts", this implies that fewer learners tend to give up or focus only on easier tasks when faced with difficulties. The standard deviation values generally ranged from 0.74 to 0.97, reflecting a moderate level of variability in responses. Overall, the results suggest that learners possess positive self-regulation behaviours that support persistence, self-monitoring, and academic motivation in their learning process.

Exploratory Statistics

According to He (2024), correlation is a statistical technique that shows how strongly two variables are related to each other or the degree of association between the two. It's a common tool for describing simple relationships without making a statement about cause and effect. This section presents data to answer the research question on correlation. According to He (2024), coefficient is significant at the .05 level and positive correlation is measured on a 0.1 to 1.0 scale. Weak positive correlation would be in the range of 0.1 to 0.3, moderate positive correlation from 0.3 to 0.5, and strong positive correlation from 0.5 to 1.0.

Findings for the Relationship between components in learning motivation

This section presents data to answer the research question 6 : Is there a significant relationship between all components in learning motivation?

Ho3 : There is no significant relationship between all components in learning motivation

To determine if there is a significant association in the mean scores between components in learning motivation, data is analyzed using SPSS for correlations. Results are presented separately in table 14 below.

Table 14- Correlation between Personal, Behavioral and Environmental Factors.

Correlations				
		PERSONAL FACTORS	BEHAVIOURAL FACTORS	ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS
PERSONAL FACTORS	Pearson Correlation	1	.384**	.412**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001
	N	277	277	277
BEHAVIOURAL	Pearson Correlation	.384**	1	.605**

FACTORS	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001
	N	277	277	277
ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS	Pearson Correlation	.412**	.605**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	
	N	277	277	277

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 14 shows there is a moderate significant relationship between personal and behavioural factors ($r=.384^{**}$) and ($p<.001$). There is a strong positive significant relationship between behavioural and environmental factors($r=.605^{**}$) and ($p<.001$). Lastly, there is a moderate positive relationship between environmental and personal factors ($r=.412^{**}$) and ($p=.000$). Hence the null hypothesis for H_{o3} is rejected.

CONCLUSION

Summary of Findings and Discussions

This study examined multiple constructs and factors associated with motivation among students learning French as a foreign language. Upon analysis, the findings revealed that gender and academic stream did not have a significant impact on students' motivation. As a result, null hypotheses H_{o1} and H_{o2} were accepted. The finding regarding gender differences aligns with previous literature; however, contrasting findings were observed concerning the relationship between academic stream and motivation. While gender consistently showed no significant relationship with motivation (Keat, Hassan, & Ramli, 2017; Makesavanh & Min, 2022; Bećirović, 2017), findings on academic stream have been inconsistent. Some researchers found that science stream students were more motivated than art stream students (Thang & Jaafar, 2011), whereas other studies concluded that there was no significant relationship between academic stream and motivation (González-Becerra, 2019; Joel & Erick, 2025). Therefore, the findings of this study are consistent with studies reporting no significant relationship between academic stream and motivation.

Besides these two elements, this study also analysed a number of factors that shape students' motivation. Personal factors, particularly grit, were also investigated in this study. The findings revealed that consistency of interest moderately affected students' motivation, while the perseverance component showed a stronger influence on motivation. These findings align with studies conducted by Feng and Papi (2020) and Sun, Yang, and Sun (2026), which reported similar results.

Furthermore, based on the collected and analysed data, this study concluded that the remaining factors, namely behavioural and environmental factors, play an important role in students' motivation. Similar to previous studies, researchers agreed that components of environmental factors, such as cognitive strategy use and self-regulation, positively contribute to motivation and learning engagement (Sharipudin et al., 2026; Arepin & Rahmat, 2026; Zhang, 2024). Likewise, studies by Santi, Gorghiu, and Pribeanu (2024) as well as Sharipudin et al. (2026) reported findings consistent with this study, concluding that behavioural factors, including self-efficacy, intrinsic value, and test anxiety, significantly affect students' motivation and learning behaviour.

Ultimately, this study also proposed the third null hypothesis, which stated that there is no significant relationship between the components of learning motivation. However, H_{o3} was rejected as the findings revealed a significant positive relationship between personal, behavioural, and environmental factors in students' learning motivation. Therefore, the overall findings of this study showed that although gender and academic stream did not significantly affect students' motivation, the other components were found to have a significant influence on students' motivation.

Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

Theoretical and Conceptual Implications

Numerous studies have been conducted to examine the contributors to students' motivation. This study contributes to the existing literature by integrating several established motivational factors within a single

framework to provide a more comprehensive understanding of students' motivation to learn. The findings revealed significant relationships between personal, behavioural, and environmental factors, which supports the theoretical assumptions discussed in Sections 2.1 and 2.3 that students' motivation is influenced by interconnected internal and external factors.

In addition, this study specifically focuses on students learning French as a foreign language, which contributes to the limited literature on motivation in foreign language learning contexts in Malaysia. Different subjects and languages may have distinct determinants that influence students' motivation levels. Moreover, different foreign languages may exhibit different motivational patterns due to differences in linguistic and cultural characteristics (Zhang & Xu, 2025). Therefore, this study extends existing motivational research by highlighting the importance of considering language-specific learning contexts when examining students' motivation.

Pedagogical Implications

With these findings, it is evident that educators need to take into account various elements within the learning environment to gain a clearer understanding of the challenges they may encounter during lessons. This can better prepare them to address students' problems effectively and equip them to provide appropriate support for students in need. Educators may also become more aware of motivational factors that they may not have previously emphasized.

Through these findings, it is hoped that educators will be able to create a more supportive learning environment which may subsequently help students perform better in their lessons and become more proficient in French as a foreign language.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future researchers may venture into qualitative research to gain a deeper understanding of students' feelings, experiences, and levels of determination during lessons. New themes may emerge through interviews and observations conducted by future researchers. Furthermore, additional factors may be integrated alongside the existing factors examined in this study to provide a more comprehensive understanding of students' motivation.

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APPENDIX

GRIT, MOTIVATION, AND SELF- REGULATED LEARNING

(This instrument is adopted from Martin et al. 2022)

PART	VARIABLE		CONSTRUCT	No Of Items
TWO	PERSON -GRIT	i	CONSISTENCY OF INTEREST	6
		ii	PERSEVERANCE	6
THREE	BEHAVIOUR- MOTIVATIONAL BELIEFS	i	SELF-EFFFCACY	6
		ii	INTRINSIC VALUE	7
		iii	TEST ANXIETY	4
FOUR	ENVIRONMENT- SELF-REGULATED LEARNING STRATEGIES	i	COGNITIVE STRATEGY USE	7
		ii	SELF-REGULATION	7
	TOTAL NO OF ITEMS			43

SURVEY

PART 2- PERSON -GRIT

CONSISTENCY OF INTEREST

ITEM	1	2	3	4	5
GCIQ1 I often set a goal but later choose to pursue a different one.					
GCIQ2 New ideas and new projects sometimes distract me from previous ones.					
GCIQ3 I become interested in new pursuits every few months.					
GCIQ4 My interests change from year to year.					
GCIQ5 I have been obsessed with a certain idea or project for a short time but later lost interest.					
GCIQ6 I have difficulty maintaining my focus on projects that take more than a few months to complete.					

PERSEVERANCE OF EFFORT

ITEM	1	2	3	4	5
GCPQ1I have achieved a goal that took years of work.					
GCPQ2 I have overcome setbacks to conquer an important challenge.					
GCPQ3 Setbacks don't discourage me.					
GCPQ4 I finish whatever I begin.					
GCPQ5 I am a hard worker.					
GCPQ6 I am diligent.					

PART 3- BEHAVIOUR -MOTIVATIONAL BELIEFS

SELF-EFFICACY (6 items)

ITEM	1	2	3	4	5
MBSEQ1 Compared with other students in this French class, I expect to do well					
MBSEQ2 I'm certain I can understand the ideas taught in this course					
MBSEQ3 I expect to do very well in this class.					
MBSEQ4 Compared with others in this class, I think I'm a good student					
MBSEQ5 I am sure I can do an excellent job on the problems and tasks assigned for this class.					
MBSEQ6 I know that I will be able to learn the material for this class					

INTRINSIC VALUE (7 items)

ITEM	1	2	3	4	5
MBIVQ1 I prefer class work that is challenging so I can learn new things.					
MBIVQ2 It is important for me to learn what is being taught in this class.					
MBIVQ3 I like what I am learning in this class.					
MBIVQ4 I think I will be able to use what I learn in this class in other classes.					
MBIVQ5 Even when I do poorly on a test I try to learn from my mistakes.					
MBIVQ6 I think that what I am learning in this class is useful for me to know.					
MBIVQ7 I think that what we are learning in this class is interesting.					

TEST ANXIETY (4 items)

ITEM	1	2	3	4	5
MBTAQ1 I am so nervous during a test that I cannot remember facts I have learned.					
MBTAQ2 I have an uneasy, upset feeling when I take a test.					
MBTAQ3 I worry a great deal about tests.					
MBTAQ4 When I take a test I think about how poorly I am doing.					

PART FOUR - ENVIRONMENT-SELF-REGULATED LEARNING STRATEGIES

COGNITIVE STRATEGY USE

ITEM	1	2	3	4	5
SRLSCSUQ1 When I study, I put important ideas into my own words.					
SRLSCSUQ2 I always try to understand what the teacher is saying even if it doesn't make sense.					
SRLSCSUQ3 When I study for a test, I try to remember as many facts as I can.					
SRLSCSUQ4 When studying, I copy my notes over to help me remember material.					
SRLSCSUQ5 When I study for a test, I practice saying the important facts over and over to myself.					
SRLSCSUQ6 When I am studying a topic, I try to make everything fit together.					
SRLSCSUQ7 When reading I try to connect the things I am reading with what I already know.					

SELF-REGULATION

ITEM	1	2	3	4	5
SRLSSRQ1 I ask myself questions to make sure I know the material I have been studying.					
SRLSSRQ2 When work is hard I either give up or study only the easy parts.					
SRLSSRQ3 Even when study materials are dull and uninteresting, I keep working until I finish.					
SRLSSRQ4 Before I begin studying, I think about the things I will need to do to learn.					
SRLSSRQ5 I often find that I have been reading for class but don't know what it is all about.					
SRLSSRQ 6 When I'm reading, I stop once in a while and go over what I have read.					
SRLSSRQ7 I work hard to get a good grade even when I don't like a class.					