

Exploring Motivation and Fear of Learning a Foreign Language Using the Herzberg Theory

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study is to explore the satisfaction and dissatisfaction factors for learning a foreign language among learners at a public university in Malaysia. It also seeks to understand how learners perceive their satisfaction and dissatisfaction and find the relationship between satisfaction and dissatisfaction for learning a foreign language. The data were collected through a quantitative survey and was distributed to 351 male and female students of the foreign language learners. The instrument of the survey and questionnaires are divided into 5 main sections. Section A for the demographic item has 3 items. Section B consists of integrative and instrumental which has 4 items on motivation to learn. Section C has 10 items on communication apprehension. Section D has 5 items on fear of negative evaluation. Section E has 8 items on test anxiety. The findings showed that there is a relationship between satisfaction and dissatisfaction for learning a foreign language. Correlation analysis shows that there is a weak significant association between satisfaction and dissatisfaction ($r=.257^{**}$) and ($p=.000$).

Keywords: Learning foreign language, Communication Apprehension, Negative Evaluation, Test Anxiety

INTRODUCTION

Background of Study

Learning a foreign language does not merely involve mental processing but also emotional challenges experienced by learners. Before going into the main discussion, it is important for readers to understand that this study explores the dual emotional experiences of learners, particularly motivation and fear, during the process of learning a foreign language. This study uses Herzberg's theory (1959) to interpret how students feel motivated or fearful when learning a language. Although the theory was originally developed in workplace psychology, recent studies have shown its relevance in analysing learner satisfaction and dissatisfaction in educational research (Rathi et al., 2025; Zubbir et al., 2024; Ibrahim et al., 2023 and Vu & Yen, 2025).

Motivation has been widely studied in the context of foreign language learning and defined as a key factor in influencing learners' persistence (McCoach & Flake, 2018), academic achievement (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, cited in Xu, 2008; Meşe & Sevilen, 2021; Yue et al., 2022; Guo & Bai, 2022) and active engagement. According

to McCoach and Flakes (2018), motivation is the psychological force that drives students to realize their greatest potential. Theoretically, motivation is defined by Reeve (2015) as an internal mechanism that is regulated by personal needs and desires. Gardner (1985) further defined motivation as a combination of sustained effort, a desire to achieve specific learning goals, and a positive attitude toward the language learning process. In this context, motivation consisted of both intrinsic elements, “motivators,” which are reflected in learners’ desire for personal growth, enjoyment in communication, and cultural curiosity, and extrinsic “hygiene” factors, such as grades, job prospects, and social integration (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

On the other hand, fear of learning is frequently explained using the Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA), which is widely correlated to learners’ self-perception, beliefs, emotions, and behaviours that develop in the process of learning a new language (Horwitz, 1986). They may experience various emotions during the language learning process, such as nervousness when speaking in front of others, worry about being judged by teachers or peers, and feeling stress during exams. These situations not only influence learners’ performance but can also affect their fluency and confidence (Fakieh-Alrabai, 2014). Herzberg (1959) described these experiences as “dissatisfiers” or hygiene factors, considered external conditions in the learning setting such as teacher behaviour, classroom atmosphere, and peer pressure. According to Qurashi et al. (2021), these dissatisfiers will make learners trigger satisfaction feelings, although they do not contribute directly to satisfaction, but if these elements are absent in the classroom, it can trigger dissatisfaction. Based on Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy, learners’ belonging and safety must be fulfilled first before they can start the learning process, but if these elements are distracted by the presence of fearful feelings such as shame or disengagement in the classroom (Prescott & Simpson, 2004), learners will prioritize avoiding fear over concentrating on their learning process.

Despite the fact that both motivation and fear often coexist in classroom settings, existing research has produced inconsistent findings on examining these two factors within one theoretical framework, even though each has been widely examined in language learning research. Herzberg’s theory offers a useful perspective to analyse the relationship between motivation and fear within a single setting, distinguishing motivation as a factor contributing to satisfaction and hygiene factor as the one contributing to dissatisfaction. In language learning research, this theory helps explain how both motivation and fear influence and shape learners’ experiences. Thus, it helps in describing the relationship between these constructs and providing a more comprehensive understanding, rather than treating motivation and fear as separate elements. A previous study has suggested that the relationship between these two factors may vary depending on the learning context. Hence, this study focused on students learning Arabic as a third language, with data drawn specifically from this group.

Statement of Problem

Recent studies highlighting the use of Herzberg’s theory have been increasingly applied, which is to explore the relationship between motivation (satisfier) and fear (dissatisfier) in foreign language learning (Rathi et al., 2025; Zubbir et al., 2024 and Ibrahim et al., 2023). However, the findings have shown inconsistency in how these two elements are related. Research from Ibrahim et al. (2023) has shown only a weak positive correlation between these elements, motivation and fear, which points to them operating as two separate elements. Meanwhile, Rathi et al. (2025) reported in his study that there is a strong positive correlation, indicating that learners can experience a high satisfaction level and a high dissatisfaction level at the same time.

These inconsistent relationships between motivation (satisfiers) and fear (dissatisfiers) explain that this relationship is not fixed but may be different, resulting in different specific learning contexts. Rathi et al. (2025) explicitly recommended investigating the role of context in shaping the relationship between satisfier and dissatisfier. This suggestion aligns with this current study, especially this study to examine learners of Arabic in a foreign language as a context of study.

Thus, this study explores how learners of Arabic as a foreign language in a multilingual environment experience and relate their satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the process of learning Arabic. Understanding this relationship in this specific context will help the teachers and the researchers in providing the practical guidance for creating teaching strategies that sustain motivation and reduce dissatisfaction.

Objective of the Study and Research Questions

This study is done to explore satisfaction and dissatisfaction factors for learning a foreign language. Specifically, this study is done to answer the following questions;

How do learners perceive their satisfaction for learning a foreign language?

How do learners perceive their dissatisfaction for learning a foreign language?

Is there a relationship between satisfaction and dissatisfaction for learning a foreign language?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework of the Study

Motivation-Hygiene Theory, proposed by Frederick Herzberg in 1959, identifies two key factors influencing workplace motivation: motivators and hygiene factors. Motivators or intrinsic factors, such as achievement, recognition and personal growth, directly contribute to job satisfaction and enhance individual performance. In contrast, hygiene factors or extrinsic factors like salary and company policies, do not inherently motivate but their absence leads to dissatisfaction. This theory extends beyond the workplace, impacting education and learning. In educational settings, factors like achievement and positive recognition can enhance learner motivation. Engaging and relevant content as well as project-based learning empower students and promote intrinsic motivation. Additionally, fear associated with foreign language learning, viewed as a hygiene factor, serves as a "dissatisfier." Elements like communication apprehension and test anxiety hinder the learning process and affect relationships within the educational environment. While alleviating fear is crucial, it does not automatically elevate motivation; rather, it establishes a neutral state, allowing motivators to become effective. Thus, removing fear is essential for the emergence of genuine motivation driven by achievements and personal growth.

Motivation to Learn a Foreign Language

Foreign language learning is becoming more important in education today. As this area grows, motivation is seen as a key factor that strongly affects how well learners learn a new language. Many scholars agree that motivation plays an important role in successfully learning a foreign language (Gardner, 1985; Herzberg, Mausner & Snydermann, 1959; Brown, 1988).

Motivation is a complex phenomenon shaped by the interaction of neurological activity, cognitive styles, emotional states and stable personality traits. These elements collectively influence how individuals respond to and engage with their environment (Fandino, Muñoz, & Velandia, 2019). This interplay not only shapes behaviour but also aids in predicting the probability of success in language learning (Henter, 2014). As Crookes and Schmidt (1991) highlight, motivation involves a learner's ability to remain focused and committed to the long-term goal of acquiring a second language. Overall, these insights affirm that motivation is a core element of language learning. It actively drives learner's perseverance, engagement and ultimate success in achieving language proficiency.

Motivation is commonly divided into two main categories: extrinsic and intrinsic motivation (Matsumoto & Obana, 2001; Lai, 2011). Extrinsic motivation refers to external factors that drive an individual to perform a task. This type of motivation is often linked to tangible rewards such as money or grades (Carreira, 2006) as well as intangible rewards like praise (Lai, 2011) which provide satisfaction that may not come directly from the task itself (Ramirez, 2014). Learners motivated extrinsically typically engage in activities to achieve practical objectives such as gaining rewards or avoiding negative outcomes (Gilakjani, Lai-Mei & Sabouri, 2012).

Intrinsic motivation, in contrast, reflects autonomous behaviour (Fandino et al., 2019). It refers to a person's internal drive to engage in an activity for the enjoyment or satisfaction that comes from doing or completing it

(Ramirez, 2014; Gilakjani et al., 2012). Deci, Koestner and Ryan (1999) suggest that intrinsic motivation promotes and maintains involvement through the natural pleasure experienced in intentional and self-directed actions. This type of motivation is shown in behaviours such as play, exploration and seeking challenges which individuals often pursue without depending on external rewards. However, intrinsic motivation does not rule out the desire for external rewards; rather, it means that these rewards are not the main reason for motivation (Ramirez, 2014).

In conclusion, motivation is widely acknowledged as a key factor in determining success in foreign language learning. It influences not only the amount of effort and persistence learners put into their studies but also their overall engagement and achievement. Various factors such as learners' attitudes, goals, learning strategies and environment, teaching methods and both intrinsic and extrinsic incentives have been found to play important roles in shaping and maintaining motivation. Due to its significant impact, understanding the learner's motivation should be a primary focus in language education and research as it directly supports more effective and meaningful language learning.

Fear of Learning a Foreign Language

Learning a foreign language often presents not only cognitive challenges but also significant emotional barriers. Among these, anxiety has been consistently recognised as a central factor influencing language performance and learner engagement. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) define this phenomenon as foreign language anxiety, a construct encompassing learners' self-perceptions, beliefs and behaviours that interfere with the language learning process. Subsequent studies have expanded on this definition, framing foreign language anxiety as a multifaceted psychological response that combines emotional discomfort, fear of negative judgment and diminished self-confidence (Clément, 1980; MacIntyre, 1999; Králová, 2016). Collectively, these works suggest that anxiety in language learning is not an isolated emotion but an interplay of affective and cognitive factors that shape how learners approach communication.

A common thread across these definitions is that foreign language anxiety tends to be most pronounced in speaking and listening tasks, as they require real-time processing and social interaction (Králová, 2016). This resonates with McCroskey's (1984) concept of oral communication apprehension, which later research confirmed to be especially acute in second language contexts (Jung & McCroskey, 2004). Learners who already experience high levels of communication apprehension in their first language are often more vulnerable when transitioning to a foreign language, which amplifies their fear of public speaking and spontaneous interaction.

To better understand the structure of foreign language anxiety, Horwitz et al. (1986) identified three interrelated domains: communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. Communication apprehension reflects difficulty in oral interaction, while test anxiety is linked to performance under evaluative conditions. Fear of negative evaluation, on the other hand refers to the learner's concern about being judged by peers or instructors. These dimensions have been operationalised through the widely used Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), which has provided empirical support for the role of affective variables in language acquisition.

Scholars have also distinguished between different forms of anxiety. Spielberger (1983) differentiates trait anxiety, a stable personality characteristic, from state anxiety, which arises in specific situations such as examinations or oral tasks. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) further advanced this framework with the concept of situation-specific anxiety, highlighting its recurrent nature in language-related contexts. This suggests that foreign language anxiety is not a generalised psychological problem, but one that consistently re-emerges in language learning environments, thereby impeding progress if not addressed.

Research also demonstrates that anxiety interacts with learners' self-perceptions and cultural background. For instance, Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) found that anxious learners tend to exaggerate their mistakes, heightening self-consciousness and reducing performance. Similarly, Young (1991) reported that fear of errors often stems from learners' belief that mistakes indicate incompetence. From a sociocultural angle, peer

comparisons and cultural unfamiliarity can intensify fear. Liu and Jackson (2008), for example, showed that Chinese learners often hesitated to use English due to concerns about peer judgment, illustrating how social context can exacerbate language anxiety.

Integrating these findings, it becomes clear that fear in foreign language learning is shaped by a complex interaction of psychological, cognitive and social dimensions. Rather than viewing it solely as an individual problem, researchers emphasise the need to understand how these dimensions intersect in the classroom. A comprehensive grasp of this phenomenon allows educators to design interventions that address both the emotional and social aspects of learning, thereby fostering a more supportive environment where learners feel encouraged to participate and take risks in communication.

Past Studies

Past Studies on Motivation to Learn a language

Many studies have been done to investigate the motivation in foreign language learning, examining both intrinsic and extrinsic factors that influence learner motivation. The study by Rathi et al. (2025) has examined the relationship between motivation and dissatisfaction in learners using Herzberg's two-factor theory among 103 students from Social Sciences and Science Technology. Using structured questionnaires as instruments, which are adapted from Campos et al. (2011) and Pintrich et al. (1990), they found that motivator factors such as achievement, recognition, and opportunities for growth were influencing the learners' satisfaction and engagement. The findings also emphasize that there were strong positive correlations between motivation and burnout components. This study urges all teachers to recognize the necessity of effective strategies in order to optimize the learners' performance and decrease the burnout elements.

Similarly, Ibrahim et al. (2023) examined the relationship between motivator (satisfier) factors and hygiene (dissatisfier) factors in the language learning classroom. This research involved 140 students at the tertiary level from a public university in Malaysia, using a questionnaire rooted in Pintrich and De Groot (1990). The findings show that motivation elements such as intrinsic and extrinsic goal orientation as well as value beliefs can contribute significantly to the learners' participation and learning satisfaction in the classroom. However, unlike Rathi et al. (2025), research reported a strong positive correlation between motivation and hygiene; this study showed that there is only a weak correlation between these two.

Another study by Zubbir et al. (2024) investigated the relationship between satisfiers and dissatisfiers in Japanese language learning among 138 undergraduate students in a public university in Malaysia. Applying the questionnaire as an instrument that is adapted from Herzberg's theory (1959), Gardner (2001), and Horwitz et al. (1986). This study has reported that behavioural engagement (such as persistence and effort) as well as affective and social engagement (such as enjoyment and collaboration) help in fostering the learners' enjoyment and active participation in the classroom. The researchers also found that there is no significant correlation between satisfiers and dissatisfiers, which suggests that, in this study, positive engagement behaviours can emerge regardless of the presence of dissatisfiers, which is anxiety.

Meanwhile, research by Tran-Anh-Vu (2025) examined the relationship between language learning motivation and academic performance among 163 first-year students from a public university in Vietnam. This research also aimed to identify motivational components that strongly contribute to success in language learning. Data were collected using a questionnaire rooted in Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) and students' exam scores. The finding indicates that integrative motivation, such as learners' interest in the culture of a foreign language and interest to engage with the target language communities, emerges as a stronger contributor than instrumental motivation, such as achieving high scores in examinations or in employment. Nevertheless, within the context of the relationship between motivational components and learners' performance, there were variations of results, indicating some students have high motivations but have low performance, while some learners show weak correlation or no correlation. These point to the possibility of interference from external factors in influencing the outcome.

In summary, these past studies highlight the role of intrinsic motivation (satisfier) in fostering successful

language learning with a consistent implication that educational practices should be designed such that they include intrinsic and extrinsic motivational strategies, for instance, achievement, recognition, and opportunities for growth, persistence, and effort, as well as affective and social engagement, lead to increased and sustained participation and learner engagement in the classroom setting. Furthermore, this literature has presented two distinct correlation analyses: the first is the relationship between motivations (satisfiers) and hygienes (dissatisfiers), and the second is the relationship between motivations and learners' performance. However, the inconsistencies in these two distinct relationships have emerged. These inconsistent findings indicate the necessity for further research within the varied learner profiles and contexts, particularly in Arabic language learners, giving better insight to understand the dynamics of motivation in language learning.

Past Studies on Fear for Learning a language

Numerous studies have examined learners' fear of learning language. The study by Zain et al. (2023) examined the influence of motivation and fear regarding the acquisition of foreign languages among Malaysian learners. Despite the increasing need for language instruction, several Malaysian graduates have difficulties in language acquisition owing to its intricacy. The study employs a quantitative survey tool, namely a 5-point Likert scale, to gather data. A survey encompassing demographic profiles, learning motivation, and apprehension about learning was conducted with 163 learners from UiTM Melaka. The majority of pupils demonstrated instrumental drive rather than integrative motivation in learning foreign languages. The results can assist language teachers in formulating effective teaching strategies to improve Malaysian students' understanding and competency in foreign languages.

Next is study by Krishnan et al. (2023). This study investigated the relationship between motivation and fear in foreign language learning among 212 undergraduate students from various disciplines in Malaysian public and private universities. Using a quantitative survey method, the research assessed motivation levels alongside communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. Results indicate that learners reported moderate to high levels of both motivation and fear-related factors. A low but significant positive correlation was found between motivation and fear of learning a foreign language, suggesting that while fear influences motivation, it does so to a limited extent.

Daud et al. (2022) also conducted a study to examine the factors contributing to fear in foreign language learning, particularly in English-speaking classes, among 340 learners. The study sought to identify the existence of communicative apprehension and anxiety of unfavourable judgement among English-speaking language learners. The FLACS survey was employed to gather data from 277 undergraduates from UiTM Segamat, Johor, and 63 from Hunan University, China. The data was analysed utilising SPSS version 26, with a mean range of 2.70 to 3.94. The data indicates that learners are marginally affected by fear in English-speaking lessons, resulting in subpar performance due to apprehension regarding communication, negative feedback, and exam anxiety. The results may assist future researchers in examining the influence of native languages on learners' success in language courses, particularly in English-speaking classes.

Another study by Fakhruddin et al. (2022) was conducted using the Social Learning Theory and the framework of Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope to explore the fear of foreign language learning among 202 students taking various language courses at a Malaysian public university. Findings indicate that learners experience fear and nervousness when they struggle to understand educators speaking in the target language, compare themselves negatively to peers, face unprepared questions, and worry about failing in their language class. It is suggested that a strong support system involving language educators can help prevent or alleviate the fear associated with learning a foreign language.

The next study by Böttger and Költzsch (2020) explores the often-overlooked issue of xenoglossophobia—the fear of speaking foreign languages—particularly in the context of English language learning. It investigates why children develop avoidance strategies and language-related anxieties, especially during productive language tasks. The research draws on psychological, pedagogical, didactic, linguistic, and neuroscientific

insights to address this issue. A pilot study involving 108 foreign language learners supports the theoretical findings through reflective and prospective analysis of their productive language use. It reveals that language learning in academics should be approached considering Xeno glossophobia, which can be alleviated by positive exposure such as non-restrictive speaking opportunities, ample time, and consistent practice.

In summary, fear in learning a foreign language is a natural and often underestimated challenge that can significantly affect a learner's progress and confidence. Based on the studies above, it's clear that while fear, such as anxiety, fear of negative evaluation and communication apprehension is commonly experienced, its impact on motivation is not always strong. However, even a low level of persistent fear can hinder learners from fully engaging, especially in speaking tasks where pressure and self-consciousness are high. Therefore, this study highlights the importance of addressing fear not just as a personal issue, but as an educational concern. Educators play a crucial role in minimizing this fear by providing supportive, low-pressure environments, giving students time and space to practice without judgment and encouraging a growth mindset. With the right strategies, fear can be transformed from a barrier into a motivator for growth and improvement in language learning.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

Gardner (2001) posits that motivation is a positive beginning to start a learning process. This motivation becomes a pushing factor for the learning to start the learning process. Positive experiences gives the learners satisfaction for the learning. On the other hand, fear for learning a foreign language can be negative if the fear influences the learners' motivation to learn further. Fear can create a snowball effect that causes the learner to be dissatisfied with the learning journey (Rahmat, 2019). This study (refer to figure 1 below) is anchored from Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory on job satisfaction. In the context of this study, Herberg's (1959) theory is used to explain satisfaction(motivation) and dissatisfaction (fear of learning a foreign language) factors for learning a foreign language. How are they related? Learners continued the learning journey because they are satisfied with what they belief the outcome of the learning can give them. Nevertheless, when they begin to feel fear due to factors like communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety, that fear can make them dissatisfied with the learning. This study replicates the factors for fear of learning a foreign language by Horwitz, et.al. (1986). This study also explores if there is a relationship between satisfaction and dissatisfaction factors for learning a foreign language.

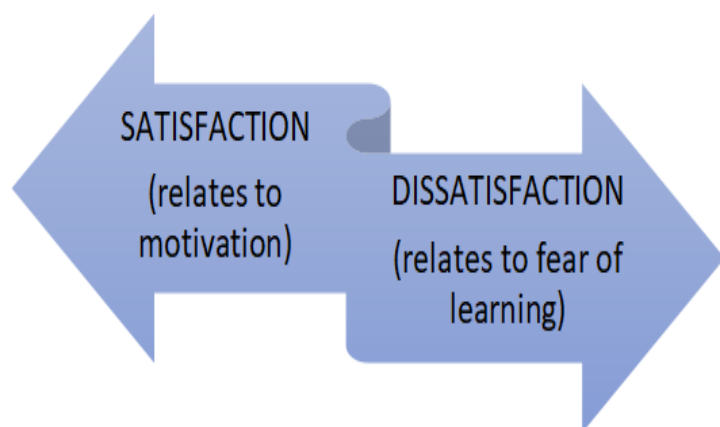


Figure 1- Conceptual Framework of the Study

Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction for Learning a Foreign Language

METHODOLOGY

This quantitative study is done to explore satisfaction and dissatisfaction in learning. A convenient sample of 351 participants responded to the survey. The instrument used is a 5 Likert-scale survey. 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 below the distribution of items in the survey. This study is anchored from Herzberg's (1959) classic two-factor theory of motivation. The instrument is adapted from Gardner's (2001) motivation constructs and replicated form the instrument Horwitz, et.al. (1986) to reveal the variables in table below. Section B has 8 items on Satisfaction and section C has 24 items on dissatisfaction.

Table 2- Distribution of Items in the Survey

SECTION	Herzberg (1959)	VARIABLE	SUB-CATEGORY	NO ITEMS	TOT ITEMS	Cronbach Alpha
B	SATISFACTION	MOTIVATION TO LEARN			8	.888
C	DISSATISFACTION	FEAR OF LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE	COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION	10	24	.831
			FEAR OF NEGATIVE EVALUATION	6		
			TEST ANXIETY	8		
					32	.854

Table 2 also shows the reliability of the survey. The analysis shows a Cronbach alpha of .888 for Satisfaction and .831 for Dissatisfaction. The overall Cronbach alpha for all 32 items is .854. Finally, the overall Cronbach Alpha for all 32 items is .854. This shows a good reliability of the instrument chosen (Jackson, 2015). Further analysis using SPSS is done to present findings to answer the research questions for this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Analysis

Table 3 -Percentage for Demographic profile

Question	Demographic Profile	Categories	Percentage (%)
1	Gender	Male	35%
		Female	35%
2	Class code	TAC 401	25%
		TAC 451	22%
		TAC 501	53%
3	Like Arabic	Yes	92%
		No	8%

Table 3 presents the percentage for demographic profile. For gender, the results indicated that both male and female students each comprised 35% of the total respondents. In terms of level of class code, more than half of the respondents were TAC501 students (53%), followed by students of TAC401 (25%) and TAC451 (22%). Regarding the tendency of learning Arabic, most respondents (92%) have a positive preference toward Arabic language acquisition. Conversely, only a small number (8%) possessed the opposite pattern.

Descriptive Statistics

Findings for Satisfaction Factors

This section presents data to answer research question 1- How do learners perceive their satisfaction for learning a foreign language? In the context of this study, this is measured by motivation factors.

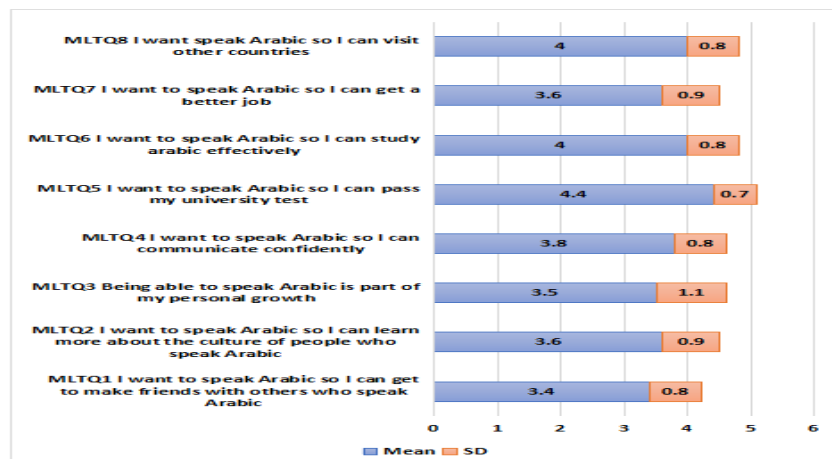


Figure 2- Mean for Satisfaction Factors

Based on the data presented in Figure 2, the three highest mean scores reflecting learners' satisfaction in learning Arabic are: "I want to speak Arabic so I can pass my university test" ($M = 4.4$, $SD = 0.7$), "I want to speak Arabic so I can study Arabic effectively" ($M = 4.0$, $SD = 0.8$), and "I want to speak Arabic so I can visit other countries" ($M = 4.0$, $SD = 0.8$). These responses suggest that learners are primarily motivated by academic achievement and practical purposes related to their studies and travel aspirations. In contrast, the lowest mean score is recorded for the item "I want to speak Arabic so I can get to make friends with others who speak Arabic" ($M = 3.4$, $SD = 0.8$), indicating that social interaction is a less influential factor for learners' satisfaction compared to academic and practical motivations.

FINDINGS FOR DISSATISFACTION FACTORS

This section presents data to answer research question 2- How do learners perceive their dissatisfaction for learning a foreign language? In the context of this study, this is measured by factors for fear of learning a foreign language by Horwitz, et.al. (1986) and they are (i) communication apprehension, (ii) fear of negative evaluation, and (iii) test anxiety.

Communication Apprehension

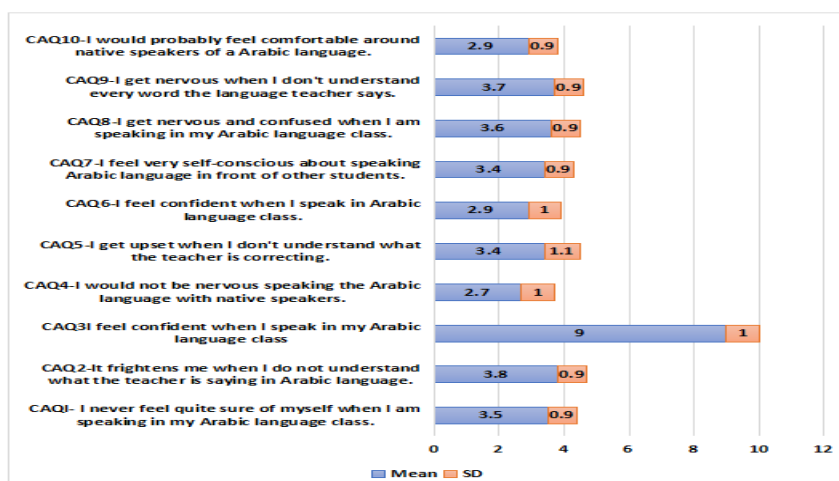


Figure 3- Mean for Communication Apprehension

Figure 3 illustrates the mean scores for communication apprehension. The highest mean, ($M=9$, $SD=1$), corresponds to item 3 that reflects learners' confidence when speaking in Arabic language class. This is closely followed by item 2 ($M=3.8$, $SD=0.9$), indicating learners' frightful feeling when they fail to understand what the teacher says in the Arabic language. In contrast, the lowest mean, 2.7 was recorded for item 4 ($M= 2.7$, $SD=1$), which states, "I would not be nervous speaking the Arabic language with native speakers".

Fear Of Negative Evaluation

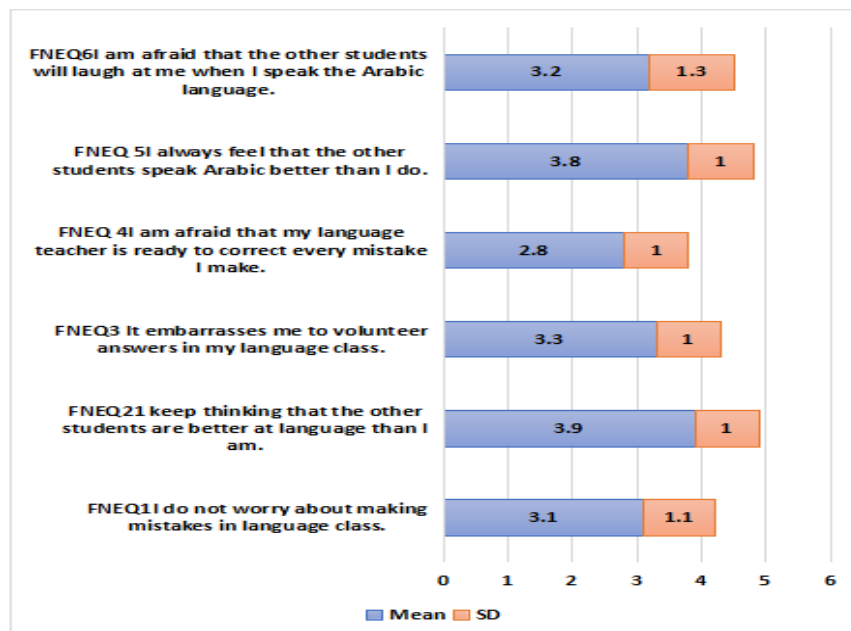


Figure 4- Mean for Fear of Negative Evaluation

Figure 4 presents the mean for fear of negative evaluation. The highest mean is 3.9 for item 2 ($SD=1$) which states that the students would keep thinking that other students were better than them. Item 5 (mean=3.8, $SD= 1.0$) states that the students always felt that other students spoke better Arabic. The lowest mean is 3.1 ($SD=1.1$) and it states that the students were not worried about making mistakes in the language class.

Test Anxiety

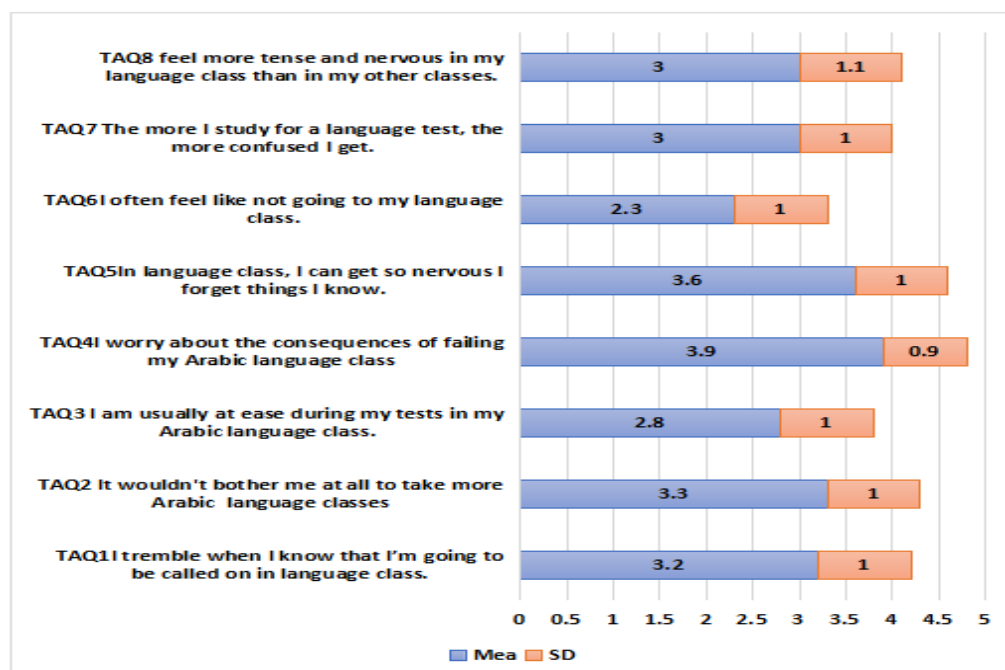


Figure 5- Mean for Test Anxiety

Figure 5 shows the mean score for Test Anxiety. The highest mean score, with 3.9 is TAQ4; the students claim to worry about the consequence of failing in Arabic language class. The second highest item, TAQ5 with 3.6, is that students can get so nervous they forget things they know in language class, followed by item TAQ2 with a score of 3.3, which shows that it wouldn't bother the students at all to take more Arabic language classes. While the second lowest, with a 2.8 score, item TAQ3 shows students are usually at ease during tests in the Arabic language class. However, despite the anxiety that students face, the feeling of not going to Arabic class scores the lowest, which is 2.3.

Exploratory Statistics

Findings for Relationship between satisfaction and dissatisfaction

This section presents data to answer research question 3- Is there a relationship between satisfaction and dissatisfaction for learning a foreign language?

To determine if there is a significant association in the mean scores between satisfaction and dissatisfaction for learning a foreign language, data is analysed using SPSS for correlations. Results are presented separately in table 5 below.

Table 4- Correlation between Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction

		SATISFACTION	DISSATISFACTION
SATISFACTION	Pearson (Correlation)	1	.257**
	Sig (2-tailed)		.000
	N	351	351
DISSATISFACTION	Pearson (Correlation)	.257**	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	351	351

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

Table 4 shows there is an association between satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Correlation analysis shows that there is a weak significant association between satisfaction and dissatisfaction ($r=.257^{**}$) and ($p=.000$). According to Jackson (2015), 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. This means that there is also a weak positive relationship between satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

CONCLUSION

Summary of Findings and Discussions

The current study examined the weak relationship between satisfaction and dissatisfaction through the lens of language learning anxiety, focusing on three key areas: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety. Findings reveal that communication apprehension among learners ranged from medium to high levels, suggesting a notable level of discomfort in using the foreign language.

Interestingly, consistent with Molnar and Crnjak(2018), the year of study did not significantly influence this apprehension, indicating that such anxiety persists regardless of academic progression. In terms of fear of negative evaluation, results showed a medium average across items, reflecting that while learners were not overly concerned about making mistakes in class, many still perceived their peers as more proficient in the language, particularly Arabic. This supports Aydin's (2008) assertion that fear of negative evaluation remains a

strong contributor to language anxiety. Similarly, test anxiety was reported at a moderate level, aligning with Aydin (2020), who emphasized that both psychological and physical factors contribute to learners' anxiety during assessments.

Overall, the findings suggest that these anxiety-related variables influence learners in complex ways and do not directly align with levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. This reinforces the theoretical position that satisfaction and dissatisfaction are influenced by distinct factors and do not exist on the single continuum.

Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

Theoretical and Conceptual Implications

The findings of this study extend Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory into the field of foreign language learning, focusing on Arabic as a third language in a multilingual Malaysian context. The results confirm that motivators (satisfaction) and hygiene factors (dissatisfaction) are two distinct constructs with only a weak positive correlation ($r = .257$, $p < .001$). This shows that learners can be motivated to achieve academic or instrumental goals, such as passing examinations or studying effectively, while still experiencing fear such as communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety.

This outcome demonstrates the adaptability of Herzberg's framework beyond its traditional use in the workplace. It provides theoretical support for understanding how motivation and fear can coexist in the learning of foreign languages. Importantly, it also reveals that reducing fear does not immediately increase motivation, but rather creates a neutral environment that allows intrinsic and extrinsic motivators to work more effectively. In the context of Arabic acquisition, this means that addressing fear-related barriers is a necessary step before motivational strategies can be optimised.

Pedagogical Implications

The results suggest several practical implications for educators teaching Arabic as a foreign language. Since academic achievement and instrumental goals emerged as the strongest motivators, lessons should be designed with clear and achievable outcomes. For instance, instructors can use short-term task-based assessments, project presentations or communication activities that mirror real-life situations. These activities not only make learning more meaningful but also provide immediate feedback to learners on their progress.

At the same time, teaching strategies must also address sources of fear. For communication apprehension, gradual exposure to speaking practice is important. Teachers can begin with pair work and small group discussions before moving to larger class presentations. Structured peer interaction and guided dialogues can also help students feel safer and more confident. To reduce fear of negative evaluation, educators can emphasise formative assessment and provide constructive feedback rather than focusing only on summative outcomes. Allowing anonymous participation through online tools or written submissions may further reduce anxiety. To minimise test anxiety, clear rubrics, frequent practice tests and mock examinations conducted in a supportive atmosphere are recommended.

Based on Herzberg's theory, the role of educators is first to reduce barriers that generate dissatisfaction, such as anxiety and fear and only then introduce strategies that enhance satisfaction. Once the classroom environment feels safe, teachers can enrich lessons with culturally engaging content, gamification and motivational techniques that nurture students' intrinsic interest in Arabic.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future studies can broaden the scope by comparing learners of Arabic with learners of other foreign languages, such as Mandarin, Japanese or French. Such cross-linguistic and cross-cultural comparisons would allow researchers to test the consistency of Herzberg's model in different contexts and determine whether the relationship between motivation and fear is universal or language-specific.

Another direction for future research is to examine how satisfaction and dissatisfaction interact across different proficiency levels. It would be useful to investigate whether beginner learners experience stronger fear factors compared to advanced learners or whether motivational patterns shift as learners gain mastery of the language. In addition, longitudinal studies could provide insight into how these dynamics change over time.

Methodologically, mixed-method approaches that combine quantitative surveys with interviews, focus groups or classroom observations can provide deeper insights into the lived experiences of learners. The role of technology-enhanced learning also deserves attention, particularly the extent to which online and blended learning environments reduce or increase fear compared to traditional classroom settings. For example, digital platforms that allow private rehearsal or gamified participation may lower communication apprehension, while online assessments may influence test anxiety differently than face-to-face examinations.

By expanding to comparative contexts, longitudinal designs and technology-based interventions, future research will provide stronger evidence of how Herzberg's theory can guide pedagogical strategies for reducing fear and strengthening motivation in foreign language learning.

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