Motivation in Cross-Cultural Adaptation: The Experience of Non-Javanese EFL Students

Tirza Luan, Eliasanti Agustina, Rahmat Setiawan
Universitas PGRI Adi Buana Surabaya, Indonesia
tirzaluan@gmail.com, eliasanti@unipasby.ac.id,
rahmatsetiawan@unipasby.ac.id
*correspondence: eliasanti@unipasby.ac.id
https://doi.org/10.24071/ijels.v12i2.1916
received: 24 July 2026; accepted: 17 September 2026

Abstract
This study investigated the motivational factors and lived experiences of minority English learners studying in East Java, Indonesia. Specifically, the research aimed at identifying the factors that motivated students from outside Java to learn English. The research employed a mixed-methods approach using a combination of a survey and an interview. The research involved a sample of 32 students from outside Java studying in East Java. Purposive sampling was employed to select three students for interviews. The results indicated that there were intrinsic and extrinsic factors that motivated the students. These intrinsic factors included growth, interest in the English language, and the desire to develop as individuals. Extrinsic factors, on the other hand, included education, career, and exposure to a new academic environment. Linguistic and cultural differences were associated with difficulties that students encountered in daily and academic life. However, these difficulties were not seen as barriers since students were able to show adaptability, resilience, socialization, and personal growth. The study found that the motivation of English minority learners was determined through the interplay of individual ambitions and sociocultural context within which the learning process occurred. These findings emphasized the importance of inclusive and culturally responsive educational environments that recognize students' diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Keywords: East Java, English learning, higher education, minority English learners, motivation

INTRODUCTION

Motivation to learn English depends not only on the learner's individual interests and needs but also on the sociolinguistic context in which learning occurs. The significance of this connection can be observed in learners who are acquiring English while adjusting to an environment that differs from their own home region. Such learners can be found in Indonesia, especially those who travel from outside Java to obtain higher education in Java. These learners may face a learning environment that differs from their hometowns. Recent studies reveal that learners from outside Java face certain problems in adjusting culturally, linguistically, and socially to Java's environment (Mareza & Nugroho, 2016). These experiences are relevant to English language learning because students must negotiate not only the demands of learning but also the demands of adapting to a new sociocultural environment.

In this study, the term "minority English learners" refers specifically to students who come from outside Java and study in Java, particularly East Java, and who experience a minority position in their educational and social environment because of differences in linguistic, cultural, and regional backgrounds. The term does not imply that these students

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constitute an ethnic minority in Indonesia as a whole. The concept of minority here is relational and contextual in nature – students may be considered to be a minority in a specific institution or sociocultural environment wherein the language, culture, and region of these students are different from the prevailing ones in the said environment. This is vital since being a minority depends on context and interaction, not just numbers. Research on non-Javanese students in East Java shows that adaptation may involve learning local language practices, accents, customs, and social norms while simultaneously maintaining aspects of students' original identities (Ilmy & Hariyanto, 2024). Similarly, recent research on non-Javanese university students in East Java reports that language barriers, cultural differences, and separation from familiar social environments can contribute to culture shock and affect students' academic engagement during the adaptation process (Sari et al., 2025).

These contextual differences may become particularly significant for students learning English. English learners are expected to participate in classroom discussions, communicate with lecturers and peers, develop academic confidence, and use English for academic and professional purposes. However, students who are simultaneously adjusting to unfamiliar local linguistic practices may encounter additional communicative demands. For example, Wene and Vantaosen (2023) examined students from outside Java and found that their perceptions of English-speaking self-efficacy were related to their experiences as learners from different regional backgrounds. Difficulties in participating in spoken interaction can also affect students' confidence and willingness to communicate. Research on English-speaking classes has identified factors such as anxiety, limited confidence, and classroom interactional difficulties as potential barriers to student participation (Xuan Mai et al., 2024). Thus, for minority English learners, language learning cannot be completely separated from the sociolinguistic environment in which that learning occurs.

The relationship between minority experiences and motivation is particularly important because motivation is not simply an internal willingness to learn. In Self-Determination Theory (SDT), motivation is understood in relation to the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In language learning contexts, learners are more likely to engage meaningfully when they experience a sense of competence, have some control over their learning, and feel socially connected to others. Research in EFL contexts has demonstrated the relevance of these psychological needs to language learning motivation, while relatedness, in particular, highlights the importance of social interaction in language learning (Akbari et al., 2015). From this perspective, the experiences of minority English learners can influence motivation through several interconnected pathways. Linguistic and cultural barriers may undermine learners' sense of competence or belonging, whereas supportive peers, encouraging lecturers, successful adaptation, and opportunities to interact with diverse people may strengthen relatedness and confidence. Consequently, adaptation, social support, resilience, and cultural identity should not be treated as separate issues from motivation; Rather, they can be understood as contextual conditions through which learners experience and negotiate their motivation.

The distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is also relevant to understanding why students from outside Java choose to study and learn English. Intrinsic motivation refers to engaging in an activity because it is interesting, enjoyable, or personally meaningful, whereas extrinsic motivation involves engaging in an activity because of outcomes that are separate from the activity itself (Ryan & Deci, 2000). For English learners, intrinsic motives may include interest in the language, enjoyment of communication, curiosity, and personal development. Extrinsic motives may include future employment, educational opportunities, academic achievement, social mobility, or expectations from family and society. Research on Indonesian students majoring in English Education has similarly found that career aspirations and future professional objectives can influence students' decisions to study English (Sinadia et al., 2024). These motives may become particularly salient for students who move

to Java because they may perceive studying in Java as a pathway toward broader educational and professional opportunities.

At the same time, the experience of being a minority does not necessarily produce only negative outcomes. Cultural and linguistic differences may create challenges, but they can also encourage learners to develop adaptive strategies, establish new social networks, and become more aware of their own identities. Studies of students from outside Java have shown that adaptation can involve seeking assistance from peers, developing social networks, learning local cultural practices, and negotiating differences between home and host environments (Mareza & Nugroho, 2016). Another study suggests that students from outside Java may adapt by engaging with local language and culture while retaining important elements of their original identity (Ilmy & Hariyanto, 2024). In this sense, minority experiences may function as both constraints and resources. A challenging environment may initially produce insecurity or communication difficulties, but successful navigation of those difficulties may subsequently strengthen students' confidence, adaptability, and aspirations.

However, existing research has largely examined the experiences of students from outside Java in terms of cultural adaptation, culture shock, social interaction, discrimination, and academic adjustment. Meanwhile, studies of English learning motivation have generally focused on broader motivational constructs rather than the specific experience of being a minority English learner in a different regional environment. Studies have examined the adjustment of students from outside Java and the sociocultural challenges they encounter in Java (Mareza & Nugroho, 2016; Sari et al., 2025), while other studies have investigated English learning motivation and its relationship with academic or career aspirations (Liu & Du, 2024; Sinadia et al., 2024). What remains less clearly understood is how these two areas intersect: how being positioned as a minority in the host environment shapes students' motivation to learn English and which experiences contribute to maintaining or changing that motivation. This gap is particularly relevant in East Java, where students from different regions encounter Javanese linguistic and cultural practices within a higher education environment.

Therefore, this study examines the motivational factors experienced by minority English learners from outside Java who study in Java, particularly East Java, and investigates how their experiences of being a minority affect their motivation to learn English. By combining quantitative data from students from outside Java with qualitative accounts from English Language Education students, the study seeks to identify both the broader motivational factors and the lived experiences underlying those factors. The study attempts to answer (1) what factors influence the motivation of minority English learners and (2) how the experience of being a minority affects these students' motivation to learn English.

Theoretical framework and literature review

Minority English learners in the Indonesian higher education context

In this study, minority English learners refer to students from outside Java who pursue higher education in Java, particularly East Java, and who experience linguistic, cultural, social, and academic differences from the dominant environment in which they study. The term minority is therefore used contextually rather than to indicate an absolute ethnic or demographic minority. Students from outside Java may encounter differences in language use, cultural practices, social interaction, and academic expectations when adapting to university life in Java. Previous research has shown that out-of-Java students may experience challenges related to language and cultural differences, while their ability to adapt and develop strategies for managing these differences can shape their experiences in higher education (Mareza & Nugroho, 2016; Wene & Vantaosen, 2023).

This would be especially applicable to English language learners, considering that learning English is associated with communication, interaction, and self-confidence in the use of the language. For instance, in their study, Wene and Vantaosen (2023) discovered that there

was a difference between the educational background and perceptions of self-efficacy in English speaking skills for out-of-Java students and that the students devised strategies to overcome challenges when speaking English.

Motivation in English language learning

Motivation is an important factor in determining students' engagement and persistence in language learning. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) explains motivation in relation to three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). When these needs are supported, learners are more likely to develop self-directed and sustained motivation. In contrast, experiences that undermine students' sense of competence, autonomy, or social connection may weaken their motivation.

SDT also distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to engaging in learning because the activity itself is interesting or satisfying, whereas extrinsic motivation involves external or instrumental reasons for learning. However, extrinsic motivation can vary in the degree to which it is personally accepted and self-directed (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In the context of English learning, students may therefore be motivated by personal interest and enjoyment as well as by academic achievement, future educational opportunities, or career aspirations.

Minority experience and English learning motivation

The experience of being a minority learner does not automatically result in either higher or lower motivation. Rather, its influence may depend on how students experience and respond to the social, cultural, linguistic, and academic conditions of the host environment. Language barriers, unfamiliar cultural practices, or difficulties in social interaction may create challenges that affect students' confidence and sense of belonging. Conversely, supportive relationships, successful adaptation, exposure to cultural diversity, and opportunities to overcome challenges may strengthen students' perceived competence and encourage continued engagement in learning.

According to the SDT approach, the experiences of the above students could be explained based on their need satisfactions or frustrations. Inability to communicate in an unfamiliar environment might pose a threat to the feeling of competence of the students, while being socially accepted and having positive relations might enhance relatedness. On the other hand, successfully adjusting to the new environment might foster students' feeling of competence and motivate them to participate in academic activities. In this study, minority experience is seen as a contextual factor influencing students' motivation.

Research gap and conceptual framework

Previous studies have examined the adaptation of students from outside Java and their experiences with language and cultural differences (Mareza & Nugroho, 2016; Wene & Vantaosen, 2023). Other research has established the importance of motivation and psychological needs in language learning (Ryan & Deci, 2000). However, fewer studies have specifically examined how the experience of being a minority student in Java relates to motivation to learn English. This study addresses this gap by examining both the factors that influence minority English learners' motivation and the ways in which their minority experiences shape that motivation.

This study conceptualizes English learning motivation as being influenced by the interplay between students' personal aspirations and their experiences within their environments. These experiences encompass linguistic and cultural differences, social interactions, academic competition, adaptation, and resilience, as well as opportunities for personal, educational, and career development. Thus, this framework views minority status as

a contextual position that shapes students' learning experiences, which in turn can either reinforce or challenge their motivation to learn English.

METHOD

Research design and participants

This study employed a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative data to examine the motivational factors and experiences of minority English learners studying in Java, particularly East Java. The quantitative phase used a questionnaire to identify patterns in students' motivation and experiences, while the qualitative phase used in-depth interviews to explore these experiences in greater depth. The quantitative phase involved 32 students from outside Java who were studying in Java, particularly East Java, at Universitas PGRI Adi Buana Surabaya. The students are from East Nusa Tenggara, Kalimantan, Sumatra, Madura, Sulawesi, and North Maluku. They were students in semesters 1–7 with a minimum GPA of 3.0. Following the questionnaire phase, the qualitative phase was designed to complement and contextualize the quantitative findings through in-depth accounts of cross-cultural adaptation, rather than to achieve statistical representativeness or comprehensive ethnic coverage. Accordingly, three interview participants from distinct regions of origin were considered adequate for the qualitative phase as they provided culturally diverse and information-rich perspectives as minority students studying English in Java.

Table 1. Interview participants' biographies

No	Name	Gender	Origin
1	D. D	Male	Kalimantan Barat
2	S.A.	Male	Madura
3	E.E.	Female	Manggarai (East Nusa Tenggara)

Instruments and data collection

The study used a questionnaire and an interview guide as its main research instruments. The questionnaire was administered through Google Forms and consisted of 30 items divided into three sections: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and challenges and impacts. The first section contained 10 statements addressing personal growth, academic achievement, confidence, self-development, and experiences of studying outside students' home regions. The second section contained 10 statements addressing external factors, including educational quality, scholarship opportunities, family influence, career opportunities, university facilities, and academic competition. The third section contained 10 items addressing linguistic and cultural challenges, financial difficulties, social interaction, academic pressure, problem-solving, confidence, and appreciation of cultural differences. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

The interview guide consisted of 10 questions concerning students' reasons for studying in Java, academic experiences, family influence, advantages and challenges of studying outside their home regions, cultural adaptation, minority experiences, academic and social support, and future aspirations. The questionnaire was administered before the interviews, and the interview participants were selected after the questionnaire phase. The questionnaire and interview guide were reviewed by two language education experts to ensure that the instruments were relevant and aligned with the research objectives.

Data analysis

Questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented in frequencies, percentages, and tables to identify patterns in students' intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and challenges and impacts. All quantitative results were calculated based on the 32 questionnaire respondents. Meanwhile, data from the interviews were analyzed

thematically by repeatedly reading the responses, identifying recurring ideas, grouping them into themes, and interpreting the themes in relation to the research questions. The qualitative findings provide contextual explanations of the patterns identified in the questionnaire data. The credibility of the qualitative findings was supported by comparing interview responses with the questionnaire results and field notes, as well as by member checking with the interview participants.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Quantitative findings

The quantitative phase involved 32 students from outside Java who were studying at Universitas PGRI Adi Buana Surabaya in East Java. The respondents represented several regions outside Java, with the largest proportion coming from East Nusa Tenggara (59.4%), followed by Kalimantan (15.6%) and Sumatra (15.6%). Smaller proportions came from Madura, Sulawesi, and North Maluku. In terms of gender, 71.9% of the respondents were female and 28.1% were male. Regarding their current study programs, 21.9% were students of English Language Education, while 78.1% were enrolled in non-English Language Education programs. The questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive statistics based on 32 valid responses.

Table 2. Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Gender	Female	23	71.9
	Male	9	28.1
Region of origin	East Nusa Tenggara	19	59.4
	Kalimantan	5	15.6
	Sumatra	5	15.6
	Madura	1	3.1
	Sulawesi	1	3.1
	North Maluku	1	3.1
Current major	English Language Education	7	21.9
	Non-English Language Education	25	78.1

The demographic distribution indicates that the quantitative sample consisted predominantly of students from East Nusa Tenggara and students enrolled in non-English Language Education programs. This distribution is important when interpreting the findings because the quantitative results describe the experiences of this particular group rather than representing all minority students in Indonesia.

Intrinsic motivation

The first section of the questionnaire examined students' intrinsic motivation in relation to studying outside their home regions. The items focused on personal growth, expanding social relationships and experiences, academic achievement, self-development, confidence, and engagement with a diverse academic environment.

Table 3. Intrinsic Motivation Responses (N = 32)

No.	Item	Strongly Agree n (%)	Agree n (%)	Neutral n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Strongly Disagree n (%)
1	Being challenged to leave one's comfort zone by studying outside one's home region	15 (46.9)	12 (37.5)	3 (9.4)	1 (3.1)	1 (3.1)
2	Expanding relationships and life experiences by living in Java	18 (56.3)	13 (40.6)	1 (3.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
3	A competitive academic environment in Java encourages harder study	13 (40.6)	14 (43.8)	5 (15.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
4	Personal motivation to improve quality of life by studying in Java	17 (53.1)	12 (37.5)	2 (6.3)	1 (3.1)	0 (0.0)
5	Challenges experienced in Java make students stronger and more confident	15 (46.9)	14 (43.8)	3 (9.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
6	Hope of achieving academic success in Java	12 (37.5)	16 (50.0)	4 (12.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
7	Education in Java helps students reach their full potential	11 (34.4)	15 (46.9)	6 (18.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
8	Satisfaction with personal development after studying in Java	15 (46.9)	13 (40.6)	4 (12.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
9	Studying in Java helps students recognize their strengths and weaknesses	15 (46.9)	11 (34.4)	6 (18.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
10	Enjoyment of learning in a diverse academic environment in Java	15 (46.9)	16 (50.0)	1 (3.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

Overall, the responses indicate a strong positive orientation toward personal and academic development. The strongest agreement was found for expanding relationships and life experiences through living in Java, with 96.9% of respondents selecting either strongly agree or agree. A similar pattern appeared in students' enjoyment of a diverse academic environment (96.9%), their perception that studying in Java helped them become stronger and more confident (90.7%), and their personal motivation to improve their quality of life (90.6%). These results suggest that students generally perceived studying outside their home regions as an opportunity for personal development rather than solely as an academic obligation.

Extrinsic motivation

The second section examined extrinsic factors associated with students' decisions to study in Java. These factors included perceived educational quality, scholarship opportunities, family influence, social influence, future employment opportunities, university prestige, facilities, extracurricular activities, and academic competition.

Table 4. Extrinsic Motivation Responses (N = 32)

No.	Item	Strongly Agree n (%)	Agree n (%)	Neutral n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Strongly Disagree n (%)
1	Choosing Java because of better educational quality	15 (46.9)	10 (31.3)	7 (21.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
2	Choosing Java because of scholarship opportunities	11 (34.4)	11 (34.4)	6 (18.8)	4 (12.5)	0 (0.0)
3	Choosing Java because of parental or family encouragement	8 (25.0)	15 (46.9)	6 (18.8)	3 (9.4)	0 (0.0)
4	Choosing Java because of friends' or seniors' influence	8 (25.0)	12 (37.5)	10 (31.3)	2 (6.3)	0 (0.0)
5	Feeling strong family expectations to succeed in Java	11 (34.4)	18 (56.3)	3 (9.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
6	Increasing future employment opportunities by studying in Java	12 (37.5)	16 (50.0)	4 (12.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

7	Believing that a degree from a university in Java will be more highly valued	7 (21.9)	12 (37.5)	12 (37.5)	0 (0.0)	1 (3.1)
8	Choosing Java because of better learning facilities	10 (31.3)	16 (50.0)	5 (15.6)	0 (0.0)	1 (3.1)
9	Greater access to extracurricular activities in Java	8 (25.0)	17 (53.1)	7 (21.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
10	A competitive atmosphere in Java helps students perform better	8 (25.0)	17 (53.1)	7 (21.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

The extrinsic motivation results show that future-oriented and family-related considerations were particularly prominent. A total of 87.5% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that studying in Java could increase their future employment opportunities. Similarly, 90.7% reported strong or moderate agreement that they felt substantial family expectations to succeed in Java. Better learning facilities and access to extracurricular activities were also positively perceived. In contrast, perceptions of the greater value of a degree from a university in Java were more divided, with 59.4% agreeing or strongly agreeing and 37.5% remaining neutral.

Challenges and impacts

The third section addressed challenges experienced by students outside their home regions and the perceived effects of those experiences. The items covered language and dialect differences, cultural adaptation, financial difficulties, loneliness, academic pressure, motivation, social interaction, problem-solving, confidence, and appreciation of cultural differences.

Table 5. Challenges and Impacts Responses (N = 32)

No.	Item	Strongly Agree n (%)	Agree n (%)	Neutral n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Strongly Disagree n (%)
1	Experiencing language or dialect difficulties in everyday life in Java	9 (28.1)	14 (43.8)	6 (18.8)	2 (6.3)	1 (3.1)
2	Difficulty adapting to East Javanese culture	4 (12.5)	9 (28.1)	13 (40.6)	4 (12.5)	2 (6.3)
3	Experiencing financial difficulties while studying in Java	9 (28.1)	7 (21.9)	12 (37.5)	3 (9.4)	1 (3.1)
4	Feeling lonely or losing one's support system in Java	4 (12.5)	8 (25.0)	5 (15.6)	9 (28.1)	6 (18.8)
5	Experiencing a heavier academic burden than previously expected	3 (9.4)	7 (21.9)	13 (40.6)	8 (25.0)	1 (3.1)
6	Studying in Java increases motivation to study harder	8 (25.0)	18 (56.3)	6 (18.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
7	Cultural differences in Java create challenges in social interaction	5 (15.6)	11 (34.4)	11 (34.4)	4 (12.5)	1 (3.1)
8	Challenges experienced in Java improve problem-solving ability	7 (21.9)	10 (31.3)	15 (46.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
9	Becoming more confident in dealing with problems after studying in Java	7 (21.9)	16 (50.0)	8 (25.0)	1 (3.1)	0 (0.0)
10	Developing greater appreciation for cultural and background differences	14 (43.8)	15 (46.9)	3 (9.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

The findings show that minority students experienced linguistic and cultural challenges, but these experiences were not uniformly negative. Language or dialect difficulties were reported by 71.9% of respondents who selected strongly agree or agree. Cultural adaptation was less uniformly experienced, with 40.6% selecting neutral and 40.6% selecting strongly agree or agree. Similarly, responses concerning loneliness and academic burden were more varied.

At the same time, several items indicate positive consequences associated with studying outside the students' home regions. A total of 81.3% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed

that studying in Java increased their motivation to study harder. Likewise, 71.9% reported increased confidence in dealing with problems, while 90.7% indicated that studying in Java helped them appreciate cultural and background differences. These findings suggest that the minority experience should not be interpreted simply as a source of disadvantage. Rather, the challenges encountered in a new linguistic, cultural, and academic environment were accompanied by perceptions of personal development and increased motivation.

Overall, the quantitative findings indicate that students' motivation was associated with both internal aspirations and external conditions. Intrinsic motivation was particularly visible in students' desire for personal development, new experiences, and engagement with a diverse environment. Extrinsic motivation was strongly related to future employment, family expectations, educational opportunities, and facilities. Meanwhile, the challenges section shows that linguistic and cultural differences remained significant aspects of students' experiences, although many respondents also perceived studying outside their home regions as contributing to confidence, motivation, and appreciation of cultural diversity.

Qualitative findings

The qualitative findings provide a more detailed account of how three English Language Education students from outside Java experienced studying in East Java. Three themes emerged from the interviews are (1) reasons and support for studying in Java, (2) challenges and adaptation, and (3) the impact of the experience on motivation and future aspirations.

Reasons and supports for studying in Java

The participants described educational opportunities and personal development as important reasons for studying in Java. Java was perceived as offering broader educational opportunities, greater academic exposure, and a more diverse learning environment than their home regions. D.D. explained that studying in Java would help him obtain “better education,” become more competent, and gain new experiences. Similarly, E.E. emphasized the diversity of the academic environment, noting that the presence of students from different regions provided opportunities to meet people with different backgrounds.

For S.A., the decision to study English was also connected to a longstanding personal interest in the language. S.A. reported having an interest in English since elementary school and viewed English primarily as a means of communication among people from different backgrounds. This suggests that the decision to study English was not based solely on external educational opportunities but was also connected to an established personal interest in the language.

Family support also played an important role in the participants’ decisions to study outside their home regions. E.E. explained that her family initially expressed concern about the distance between East Nusa Tenggara and Java but eventually supported her decision and encouraged her to continue. D.D. similarly described his parents as supportive of his decision-making. Thus, family influence appeared not only as an expectation but also as a source of emotional support that enabled participants to pursue their educational goals.

Challenges and adaptation

Although the participants viewed Java as providing important educational opportunities, they also experienced linguistic and cultural challenges. One of the most frequently described difficulties was communicating with local students who used Javanese in informal interactions, including on campus. D.D. explained, “Most of the students here use Javanese even on campus,” which sometimes makes communication difficult.

Cultural adaptation was another significant challenge. The participants described homesickness and difficulty adjusting to local customs and language. S.A., for example, identified missing home and adapting to Javanese culture as among the initial challenges. At

the same time, the process of adaptation encouraged participants to become more open to cultural differences and to learn about local customs while also sharing aspects of their own cultures.

Social and academic support helped participants manage these difficulties. Friends and fellow students were described as important sources of assistance, particularly when participants experienced difficulties with English or communication. E.E. stated that although her English was still at a beginner level, her friends helped her considerably. S.A. similarly described the academic community as cooperative and supportive. These experiences indicate that interpersonal support was an important part of participants' adjustment to the new academic and social environment.

Impact on motivation and future aspirations

The experience of studying in Java also influenced the participants' perceptions of their goals and future opportunities. Exposure to a more diverse academic environment encouraged them to reflect on their personal development and professional aspirations. D.D. described how leaving his home region prompted him to think more seriously about his goals and what he needed to do in the future. S.A. similarly reported that observing other students and receiving a scholarship contributed to aspirations for further study or employment abroad.

Importantly, the participants did not describe their minority position only as a limitation. Instead, being different from the majority could also become a source of motivation. S.A. explained that being a minority made him "more enthusiastic" because seeing other students who were more advanced encouraged him to improve. The participants also viewed their experiences as valuable beyond academic achievement. D.D. encouraged students from outside Java to take opportunities to study outside their home regions, while E.E. emphasized that leaving one's comfort zone could provide not only academic knowledge but also broader life experiences. Their reflections suggest that studying in Java contributed to a broader understanding of learning as an experience involving academic, social, cultural, and personal development.

Discussion

The findings from the questionnaire and interviews indicate that motivation was shaped by an interaction between personal aspirations, external opportunities, social support, and experiences of linguistic and cultural adaptation. Rather than functioning as a fixed condition, minority status appears to interact with the students' academic and social environments in ways that could either create difficulties or encourage personal development.

Factors influencing the motivation of minority English learners

The findings indicate that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors contributed to the participants' motivation. The quantitative results showed strong agreement with statements related to personal development, expanding relationships and life experiences, confidence, and engagement with a diverse academic environment. The qualitative interviews support these findings, as participants described studying in Java as an opportunity to gain new experiences, become more competent, meet people from different regions, and develop their perspectives. These findings suggest that learning and studying outside one's home region was associated not only with academic achievement but also with personal growth.

This pattern is consistent with the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation proposed by Ryan and Deci (2000). Intrinsic motivation concerns engagement in an activity because it is interesting or personally meaningful, whereas extrinsic motivation involves engagement that is connected to outcomes or external conditions. In the present study, participants' motivation reflected both dimensions. Personal interest in English and the desire for self-development represented intrinsic orientations, while future employment, family

expectations, scholarships, educational opportunities, and access to better facilities represented extrinsic influences.

The quantitative findings particularly highlight the importance of future-oriented and social factors. A large proportion of respondents agreed that future employment opportunities and family expectations influence their educational motivation. The qualitative interviews similarly showed that participants associated studying in Java with broader academic and professional possibilities. S.A., for example, described developing aspirations to study or work abroad after gaining new experiences and receiving scholarship support. These findings indicate that English learning was connected to students' perceptions of their future mobility and opportunities rather than being viewed only as an academic requirement.

The findings also suggest that the academic and social environment in Java functions as a motivational context. Respondents generally viewed exposure to diverse people and academic environments positively, while interview participants described the opportunity to interact with students from different regions as an important benefit of studying in Java. This supports the view that motivation in language learning is influenced by the social environment in which learning takes place. In this context, exposure to linguistic and cultural diversity could broaden students' aspirations and encourage them to participate more actively in their learning.

From the perspective of SDT, these findings can be understood in relation to autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Participants demonstrated autonomy through decisions to pursue education outside their home region and, in some cases, through family support for those decisions. Experiences that strengthened their confidence and competence, such as overcoming unfamiliar situations and communicating with people from different backgrounds, could also support motivation. Relatedness was evident in the importance of friends, lecturers, and family members who provided academic, emotional, and social support. Thus, the motivational experiences of these students cannot be separated from the relationships and environments surrounding their learning.

The effects of minority experience on motivation to learn English

The findings show that being a minority in the East Java context involved both challenges and opportunities. The quantitative results indicate that language and dialect differences were experienced as a significant difficulty by many respondents. Cultural adaptation and loneliness or the need for social support were also reported as challenges. These findings are consistent with previous research describing the difficulties experienced by students from outside Java when adapting to linguistic, cultural, and academic environments in Java (Mareza & Nugroho, 2016).

The interview data provides greater detail about how these challenges were experienced. Participants described difficulties communicating when Javanese was used in informal interactions and reported homesickness and the need to adjust to local cultural practices. These experiences demonstrate that minority status in this study was primarily contextual: students were positioned as minorities because their linguistic and cultural backgrounds differed from those of the majority in their new environment. The experience was therefore not simply a matter of numerical differences but involved everyday processes of communication, adaptation, and social participation.

However, the findings do not indicate that these difficulties necessarily reduced motivation. Instead, participants described several ways in which challenges encouraged adaptation and personal development. The quantitative results showed that many respondents believed that studying in a new environment strengthened their confidence, problem-solving abilities, and motivation. Similarly, the interview participants described learning to become more open-minded, understand local customs, communicate across differences, and seek assistance from friends and lecturers.

This finding is particularly important because it prevents minority experiences from being understood in a purely deficit-oriented way. Linguistic and cultural differences can create barriers to participation, but students may also develop strategies for responding to those barriers. In the present study, support from peers, lecturers, family members, and scholarship programs appeared to help students manage difficulties and maintain their educational goals. The interview findings therefore complement the quantitative results by showing how motivational responses were formed through everyday interactions and adaptation.

The role of social support is also relevant to Self-Determination Theory. When students experience supportive relationships, their sense of relatedness can be strengthened, while successful adaptation to unfamiliar academic and social situations may contribute to competence. The participants' accounts of friends helping them communicate, lecturers providing support, and families encouraging their educational decisions illustrate how these social relationships contributed to their ability to remain engaged. In this sense, motivation was not produced solely by individual determination but was also supported by the social conditions surrounding the learners.

At the same time, the findings should not be interpreted as evidence that minority experiences are inherently beneficial. Some participants clearly experienced communication difficulties, homesickness, and cultural adjustment problems. The motivational value of these experiences appears to depend partly on the students' ability to adapt and on the availability of social and academic support. Therefore, minority status should be understood as a contextual condition that can produce different motivational consequences rather than as a direct cause of either high or low motivation.

Overall, the findings suggest that the experience of being a minority reshaped the students' motivation by connecting English learning with broader processes of adaptation, self-development, and future aspiration. For these students, learning English was situated within a larger experience of moving across geographical, linguistic, and cultural boundaries. Their motivation was therefore not static; it developed through encounters with new academic expectations, social relationships, linguistic differences, and perceptions of future opportunities.

Theoretical and pedagogical implications

The findings contribute to an understanding of language-learning motivation by emphasizing the importance of context. While intrinsic and extrinsic motivation remain useful for explaining students' reasons for learning, the experiences of these students demonstrate that motivation is also shaped by their social and cultural positioning. In particular, autonomy, competence, and relatedness provide useful dimensions for understanding how students respond to unfamiliar academic and cultural environments.

Pedagogically, the findings suggest that institutions should recognize the linguistic and cultural diversity of students from outside Java. Language support, peer mentoring, inclusive classroom practices, and opportunities for intercultural interaction may help students develop stronger academic and social connections. Such support is particularly relevant when students encounter communication difficulties or feel socially isolated.

For English language educators, culturally responsive practices can also create opportunities for students to use their diverse backgrounds as learning resources rather than treating cultural differences as a problem. Providing space for students to share their experiences and perspectives may strengthen participation, confidence, and a sense of belonging. However, these implications should be understood within the scope of the present study, which involved 32 questionnaire respondents and three interview participants from one university. The findings therefore provide contextual insight into minority English learners in this setting rather than representing all students from outside Java.

CONCLUSION

This study found that the motivation of minority English learners was influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, particularly personal development, new experiences, future employment opportunities, family expectations, and educational opportunities. The findings also show that minority experiences affected motivation through linguistic and cultural challenges, social relationships, and adaptation to a new academic environment. Although participants experienced difficulties such as language differences, homesickness, and cultural adjustment, these experiences did not necessarily reduce their motivation. With support from peers, lecturers, and family, some students develop greater confidence, adaptability, and future aspirations. Thus, minority status should be understood as a contextual experience that may create challenges while also providing opportunities for personal development. The findings are limited to 32 questionnaire respondents and three interview participants from one university. Further research involving larger samples and multiple universities is needed to develop a broader understanding of minority English learners in Indonesian higher education.

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