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**| RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## **A Review of L2 Learning Motivation Research Using L2 Motivational Self System**

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**| ABSTRACT**

Since the initiation of Dörnyei's (2009) L2 Motivational Self System model (L2MSS) in 2009, research on the second language (L2) learning motivation has witnessed unprecedented achievements. This recent study offered a brief review of significant research findings on L2 motivation that drew on the L2MSS framework from 2009 to 2021. Studies included in this review were categorized by two universal research approaches: quantitative and qualitative. Besides main research results that contributed to the L2 learners' learning motivational profiles and the theoretical refinements of the L2MSS, brief descriptions of research instruments employed were included to provide insight into research methodologies currently used in L2 motivation and L2MSS studies. The reviewed research findings showed that while the quantitative paradigm remained dominant among studies that employed L2MSS, qualitative studies offered a deeper understanding of L2 motivation and emergent themes of the framework obtained by narrative data. The review provided theoretical and practical implications for future L2 motivation research drawn on the L2MSS.

**| KEYWORDS**

L2 Motivational Self System, L2MSS, L2 learning motivation, L2 Ideal self, ought-to L2 self, anti-ought-to L2 self

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### **1. Introduction**

Since Gardner and Lambert's (1972) study on the motivation of language learners from the perspective of social psychology, second language (L2) learning motivation has continued to be a predominant research field in the second language acquisition (SLA) discipline.

In the past five decades, the study of L2 motivation has roughly gone through four periods of development: "the social psychological period", "the cognitive-situated period", "The process-oriented period", and most currently "the social-dynamic period" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). The influence of the socio-cultural environment on motivation to learn a foreign language was the key element in early L2 motivation theories, such as the social context model (Clement & Kruidenier, 1983) and the socio-educational model (Gardner, 1985).

Among the early L2 motivation theories, the socio-educational model proposed by Gardner and his associates became one of the most influential theoretical frameworks in L2 motivation for nearly three decades. Gardner's social-educational model identified two distinct orientations in L2 learning motivation: integrativeness or "willingness to be like valued members of the language community" (Gardner & Lambert, 1959, p. 271) and instrumentality, which highlights "the practical value and advantages of learning a new language" (Gardner, 1985, p. 133).

However, in the context of rapid globalization, along with the universalization of immigration and cultural diversification that significantly affects the foreign language learning (EFL) teaching and learning environment, the socio-educational model has fallen out of favour of L2 motivation theories. Coetzee-Van Rooy (2006) argued that the notion of integrativeness, emphasizing the L1 or L2 ethnolinguistic communities to which it identifies, did not consider the dynamic, multidimensional identity construction in multilingual and multicultural communities.

As English has become the *lingua franca* of the 21st century, many studies (e.g. Kormos & Csizer, 2008; Ryan, 2005a) pointed out that the language was no longer associated with a particular ethnic or nation and should be identified with a dynamic imagined community of international English users, or with more educated and cosmopolitan members of one's own community. In addition, L2 learners were no longer motivated by the L2 cultural identity or the desire to engage in the L2 community but by the vision of using the target language to reach their personal ideals and goals. A typical case of L2 learners having trouble naming their own ethnic identity was reported in Lamb (2004). The study found that Indonesian children who grew up in various linguistic environments spoke the national language mixed with several regional languages, making it challenging to examine the link between their identification with any of these groups and their motivation to learn English.

In response to the limitations of prior L2 motivation theories, Dörnyei (2005) proposed the L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) framework, which was based on the Possible Selves Theory (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and Self-Discrepancy Theory (Higgins, 1987). Unlike early theories, the L2MSS focused on the L2 learners' selves with three motivational components: ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience.

In Dörnyei and Ushioda's (2009) volume, several contributing quantitative and qualitative studies reported the dynamic relationship between three components of the L2MSS framework with language learning motivation of different groups of learners in various linguistic and cultural contexts. The statistical evidence and interpretations reported in those studies strongly supported the claim that L2 learners' ideal L2 and ought-to L2 selves are a powerful motivational force, as the learners' desire to minimize the discrepancy between their actual self and their imagined future selves. In the same volume, MacIntyre et al. (2009) emphasized the possibility of using the L2 self formulation as a foundation to "map out new conceptual linkages." (p. 50).

Since Dörnyei and Ushioda's volume, there is a growing number of studies on L2 motivation drawn on the L2MSS framework, focusing on different groups of participants and language settings with significant findings that contribute to the understanding the language learner's learning motivation, as well as provide theoretical refinements to the L2MSS model. This paper reviews a number of significant studies on the L2MSS framework since Dörnyei and Ushioda's (2009) volume from two research approaches: the quantitative and qualitative. Besides the studies' major research findings, the research instruments used in each study are briefly described for deeper insight into research methodology.

This review selected published work employed the L2MSS since Dörnyei & Ushioda's (2009) volume to the recent time. In order to provide diverse theoretical perspectives of L2 motivation drawn on the L2MSS, the review focused on recent quantitative and qualitative studies on L2 motivation of different groups of participants (in terms of ages, genders, English proficiency, etc.) in various cultural contexts, from Europe to Southeast Asia. Due to the limited scope of this review, studies with important contributions to theoretical refinement of the L2MSS and L2 learners' motivational profiles were prioritized.

The literature searches were conducted online using commonly used search engines, with prestigious online international and local research journals as main sources. The results were narrowed down manually according to the aforementioned criteria, then divided into two groups of quantitative data (including a mixed-method study) and qualitative data for further analysis and report. Thus, this review identified 15 studies published between 2009 and 2021, as Table 1 shows.

Table 1. Studies reviewed in this paper		
Category		Number of studies
Research Approach	Quantitative	10
	Qualitative	05

## 2. The L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS)

The L2MSS framework by Dörnyei (2005, 2009) is a theoretical paradigm in L2 motivation that is directly influenced by Markus and Nurius's (1986) Possible Selves Theory and Higgins' (1987) Self-Discrepancy Theory. The L2MSS framework is considered to be a more sustainable reconceptualization of language learning motivation, which offers understandings of previous socio-educational models in a more closely relevant manner to the context of English as the 21st century's global language. What makes L2MSS different from other motivational theoretical frameworks is probably that "the motivationally important identifications are not with others but with future versions of the self." (Lamb, 2012, p. 4)

The L2MSS proposed three components in the motivation construct: the *ideal L2 self*, the *ought-to L2 self*, and the *learning experience* (see Table 1). Dörnyei (2005, 2009) also suggested three primary sources of the L2 learning motivation in the model: the learners' intrinsic desire to master the L2, social pressures to become a competent L2 user, and the actual experience learner gained during the L2 learning process.

Dörnyei (2005, 2006) considers the *ideal L2 self* as a dynamic combination of integrative and instrumental aspirations. This future L2 self may reflect L2 learners' desire to be engaged in the L2 community (integrativeness) or to work in an organization using the L2 (instrumentality), or in some cases, it is the combination of both dispositions. In the scope of the L2MSS framework, The *ideal L2 self* is identified as the imagined self a learner would like to become regarding language ability. In the era of globalization, it does not seem easy to maintain a clear distinction between integrative and instrumental orientations. The concept of an ideal L2 self offers a more meaningful way of capturing this complexity.

Recent studies on the L2MSS indicated that the ideal L2 self remains arguably the most significant motivating factor of learners in language learning (e.g. Csizér & Lukács, 2010; Taguchi et al., 2009; Teimouri, 2017; You & Dörnyei, 2016; Lamb, 2007). In other words, learners with developed ideal L2 self are the most likely to succeed in learning the target language. Dörnyei (2009) emphasizes that the availability of a vivid visualization of the future self is essential for the ideal L2 self and the ought-to self to be recognized. Without a strong, elaborate image of who they want to be in terms of language ability, learners' motivation will be deficient. This idea is aligned with the Self-Discrepancy Theory (Higgins, 1987), stating that it has been "traditionally assumed that people need high 'ideal' goals or aspiration levels in order to motivate performance" (Higgins, 1987, 321).

The *ought-to L2 self*, the self the learner believes he or she is obliged or expected to be due to external pressures, can also be a significant motivating factor, even though it is arguably not as strong as the ideal L2 self. While the ideal L2 self has a promotion focus (Higgins, 1987, 1998), which means L2 learners will use their best efforts to make their ideal L2 self a reality, the focus of ought-to L2 self is prevention as L2 learners try to avoid negative outcomes in their language learning pursuit, which are strongly associated with societal expectations.

Regarding the relation between the ideal L2 self and the ought-to L2 self, Dörnyei (2009) acknowledged that "there can be a clash between a learner's personal and social identity" (p. 20); therefore, a harmony between the ideal L2 self and the ought-to self, as well as an activation/priming stage to maintain the language learners' strong imagine of future selves are strongly desired. In addition, even with an active imagination of the future self, learners may not approximate their ideal selves without procedural learning strategies, which is fundamental to their language learning success. The procedural strategies can be conceptualized with the help of role models and other external influences.

The third component of the L2MSS framework, the *L2 learning experience*, also plays an important role in language learning motivation, as shown in recent studies (e.g. Lamb, 2012; Liu & Thompson, 2018; Thompson & Vásquez, 2015; Thompson, 2017a, 2017b; You et al., 2016). L2 learners' learning experiences in various L2 settings greatly impact the learners' emotions and their intended effort in language learning (Lamb, 2012; Teimouri, 2017). Under the influence of these L2 learning experiences, the learner's initial motivation to learn the language may undergo significant changes, therefore affecting their L2 proficiency development. The L2 learning experience can go beyond experiences gained in the classroom context to include structured and naturalistic language learning experiences, such as language self-study, interactions with other individuals within and out of language classrooms, and interactions with artefacts and objects. These experiences, subsumed under the construct of the language learning experience, is a distinctive factor in terms of the 'other' dimension described in Higgins's self-discrepancy theory.

### **3. The Development of Research on L2 Motivation Using L2MSS**

Since Dörnyei's L2MSS framework was proposed (2005, 2009), a growing body of theoretical and empirical studies of L2 learning motivation is drawn on the framework. The quantitative approach continues to be the predominant research paradigm in studies on L2 motivation and the L2MSS, mostly focusing on the validity of the L2MSS' main components in different linguistic and cultural contexts and the relationship between these components with L2 learners' motivation to learn English.

Among the reviewed studies, six-point Likert scale questionnaires are widely used to collect quantitative data in terms of research instruments. Despite minor differences in design for the adaptability in the research context (see Table 2), most questionnaire items in these studies were based on the L2MSS questionnaire developed by Taguchi et al. (2009).

### 3.1. Quantitative research on L2 motivation using L2MSS

Table 2. Quantitative Research on Motivation using L2MSS reviewed in this paper			
Source	Method of Investigation	Research Aims	Context and Participant
Csizér & Kormos (2009)	A questionnaire with 65 five-point Likert items and 10 multiple choice and short answer items	Comparing the motivational and attitudinal dispositions between two age groups of language learners	432 Hungarian L2 secondary school, college and university learners in Budapest, Hungary
Taguchi, Magid & Papi (2009)	Three versions of a questionnaire were adapted for use in Japan, China, and Iran.	Validating L2MSS in the contexts of three Asian countries	roughly 5000 EFL middle school students, university students, and adult learners from Japan, China, and Iran
Lamb (2012)	An Indonesian language questionnaire with 50 six-point Likert scale items, a C-test for measuring participants' English proficiency	Examining the motivation to learn English of Indonesian junior high school EFL students	527 Indonesian EFL high school learners in three different contexts in Indonesia
You & Dörnyei (2016)	A customized questionnaire with 73 six-point Likert scale items	Offering an overview of general trends and interesting contrasts of EFL Chinese students' learning motivation	10,413 ELL secondary and university students in three main geographical regions of China
You, Dörnyei, & Csizér (2016)	A customized questionnaire with 73 six-point Likert scale items	Examining the role of vision and imagery in the Chinese ELL learners' language learning motivation	10,413 ELL secondary and university students in three main geographical regions of China
Teimouri (2017)	A questionnaire in Farsi with 56 six-point Likert scale items	Investigating language learners' emotional experiences through the lens of L2 future self-guides	524 secondary and high school EFL learners in Iran
Liu & Thompson (2018)	A bilingual (English and Chinese) questionnaire	Exploring Chinese EFL learners' motivation profiles,	468 EFL students in three tertiary level institutions in

	with 31 six-point Likert scale items	investigating the relationships among independent factors and L2 motivation, and building a model predicting L2 proficiency through the L2MSS' self constructs.	two cities in Northern China
Martinović (2018)	A questionnaire with 52 six-point Likert scale items (Taguchi et al., 2009)	Examining the influence of different factors (genders, fields of study, years of studying English, proficiency levels) on Croatian learners' language learning motivation	543 first-year non-English majors from the University of Zadar, Croatia
By (2019) (Mixed-method)	Quantitative data collection phase: - A three-part questionnaire with 30 five-point Likert scale items and 01 open-ended question  - Paper and pen version of The Quick Placement Test (QPT) by Oxford University Press and Cambridge ESOL)  Qualitative data collection phase: - Semi-structured interviews	Exploring the relationship between L2MSS' three components and Cambodian EFL students' language proficiency, their motivation levels and reasons to learn English	120 EFL students from 9 to 21 years old with different levels of proficiency studying at two private English schools in Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Irgatoğlu (2021)	Two questionnaires - The L2MSS Questionnaire (Taguchi et al., 2009)  - The Student Process Questionnaire (Biggs et al., 2001)	Exploring the level of L2MSS's components and the application of two modes of learning strategies (deep and surface) on high school students regarding gender and grades	202 EFL high school students age 14-18 in Turkey

Csizér and Kormos (2009) aimed to provide empirical support for the L2MSS with the research on the effects of the framework's three components (*the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self, L2 learning experience*) in the motivational and attitudinal dispositions of secondary and non-language majored university English language learners in Budapest, Hungary.

To examine and compare the language learning motivation and attitudes between two studied groups of participants, the research applied a multiple-group structural equation model that illustrated the interplay of students' motivated behaviour, language learning experiences, and self-concept. *Motivated learning behaviour*, defined as efforts expended to achieve a goal, the desire to learn the language, and persistence in learning the language (Dörnyei, 2005), was the criterion measure of the study. The 65 Five-point Likert scale sample items were adapted from those used in Ryan (2005b) and Dörnyei, Csizér, and Németh (2006), measuring seven motivational concepts: (1) *Ideal L2 self*, (2) *Ought-to L2 self*, (3) *L2 learning experience*, (4) *Parental encouragement*, (5) *Knowledge orientation* (Students' views on how learning English help them to stay updated), (6) *International posture* (Students'

attitudes to English as an international language), and (7) *motivated learning behaviour*.

The study's findings emphasized the important role of the ideal L2 self and L2 learning experiences in motivating language learning behaviour in both secondary and university students. The research supported Dörnyei's (2001) view on the importance of motivational teaching practise by pointing out the determinant effect of motivational factors in language classrooms on the level of students' efforts invested in language learning. In addition, the ought-to L2 self was found socially constructed, and its role in self in learner's language learning motivation was considered to be generally insignificant for both studied participant groups.

Regarding Asian educational contexts, Taguchi, Magid & Papi (2009) surveyed nearly 5000 EFL learners, focusing on university students from China, Japan, and Iran, to examine the validity of the L2MSS framework on EFL students' language learning motivation in the three observed major Asian educational contexts.

The research instrument included three versions of a questionnaire for the three Asian countries, consisting of items to measure the learners' language attitudes and language learning motivation (67 items in Chinese and Japanese and 76 in the Iranian version) and background information questions. The questionnaire, adapting Dörnyei's (2003) procedures, became a widely used research instrument in following studies on L2MSS and language learner motivation.

The findings showed that compared to the integrativeness concept proposed by Robert Garner and his associates (e.g. Garner, 1985; Garner & Lambert, 1959), the *ideal L2 self* of Dörnyei's L2MSS obtained a more significant explanatory power to the learners' intended efforts in language learning. In terms of instrumentality, the study found that from a self-perspective, the concept was possible to be grouped into two distinct types, with one associating closely with the ideal L2 self and the other with the ought-to L2 self. Additionally, whether a phenomenon or an event was perceived as promotional or preventional towards the learners' language learning motivation would depend heavily on other contextual factors.

Lamb (2012) conducted a large-scale survey with 527 EFL junior school students around 13-14 years old in three different geographical contexts (a metropolitan city, a provincial town, and a rural district) to explore their motivation to learn English. The Indonesian language 50-item questionnaire was designed to suit the participants' age group. The items were mainly drawn on Ryan's (2009) questionnaire, which adopted the instrument used by Dörnyei et al. (2006). Three categories of constructs targeted in the questionnaire included *Criterion measure* (Motivated learning behaviour), *The future self-guides* (ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self), and *Other well-established motivational factors*.

The study indicated that the experience of learning English was the strongest predictor of both motivated learning behaviour and L2 proficiency. Young EFL students living in urban settings were observed to have a significant advantage in learning English; therefore, they were more motivated to learn English than their rural counterparts. The findings were in line with previous research highlighting the limited role of the ought-to L2 self in the participants' motivation to learn English. However, in contrast to previous studies, the ideal L2 self was observed to be the dominant motivational factor only to the metropolitan groups of students, and several learners built their future self-guides on fantasy rather than the driving ambition that could promote self-regulated learning. To help promote the language learning motivation in rural young EFL students, it was suggested that investments should be made in English teacher training in rural areas, as there was evidence for the significant impact of teachers on the attitude towards English among students of this age group.

Drawn on the L2 future self-guides proposed in the L2MSS, Teimouri (2017) examined the language learning motivation of EFL adolescent learners in Iran. A 56-items questionnaire in Farsi was developed and could be accessed by readers in the IRIS digital repository (<http://www.iris-database.org>). There were eleven motivational and emotional variables measured in the questionnaire, including ideal L2 self/own, ideal L2 self/others, ought-to L2 self/own, ought-to L2 self/others, promotional orientation, preventional orientation, shame, anxiety, joy, willingness to communicate in the second language (L2 WTC), and intended effort.

The research results indicated that EFL learners with strong ideal L2 selves developed vivid imagery of their desired goals which motivated them to achieve their goals in language learning, whereas the reverse was true for EFL learners with strong ought-to L2 self/others. The study also highlighted the relation between three different L2 selves of learners (ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self/other, and ought-to L2 self/own) and shame, and that these three types of selves led to the increase of the learners' intended effort in language learning. Additionally, the findings lend support to Higgin's (1987) prediction that although L2 learners with different self discrepancies types are all susceptible to shame, those with stronger preventional concerns seem to be more vulnerable and have more intense reactions to the emotion when compared to L2 learners who developed a predominant promotional focus. From these findings, Lamb (2012) proposed including learners' emotions as mediating factors into the L2MSS framework and emphasized these factors' potential to offer insights into L2 learners' motivational behaviours throughout their L2 language learning process.

Focusing on the Chinese educational context, You, Dörnyei, and Scizér's (2016) two-phase cross-sectional survey provided an overview of the Chinese ELL learners' motivational profiles, including their learning interests, general trends, the role of vision and imaginary in motivation to learn English from the perspective of the L2MSS.

In the first phase of the survey, You and Dörnyei (2016) designed a stratified sampling scheme with an elaborate system of strata of 36 clusters. The sampling frame considered various contextual categories, including two genders, three geographical regions (central, eastern, western), two secondary school types (urban, rural), two universities types (key, ordinary), and two university strands (English major, non-English major). The questionnaire with 73 six-point Likert scale items and 07 background questions drawn on Dörnyei's (2010) principles targeted to measure three motivational components: (1) aspects of the L2MSS, (2) Intended Effort, and (3) Language Learning Vision. The *ideal L2 self*, *ought-to L2 self*, and *Intended Effort* items were drawn on Taguchi et al.'s (2009) questionnaire.

The findings indicated that the L2MSS - a motivation theoretical framework mainly developed in Western educational contexts - can illustrate Chinese L2 learners' motivational profiles. The study highlighted the prominent influence of the ideal L2 self on language learning motivation also emphasized the moderate impact of the ought-to L2 self on Chinese L2 learners' learning motivation which has been indicated in previous studies (e.g. Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Dörnyei & Chan, 2013). Despite the generally prominent endorsement of English learning motivation across the observed geographical regions, there was a notably salient East-West variation, with the motivation levels of Chinese learners in the East typically being higher than those in the West. The study also found that while Chinese female learners generally have a stronger ideal L2 self than their male encounters, the reverse was seen in terms of the ought-to L2 self. However, there was no gender division among English majors for both the ideal L2 and ought-to selves.

In the second phase of the large-scale survey, You, Dörnyei, and Csizér (2016) used the stratified sampling scheme and questionnaire in You and Dörnyei (2016) to examine the role of vision and imagery in Chinese EFL learners' motivation to learn English. Questionnaire Items that targeted to measure learners' imagery and visualization were developed based on imagery-related variables measurement scales (Dörnyei & Chan, 2013); Kim, 2009; Kim & Kim, 2011), as well as several newly designed items by You, Dörnyei and Csizér (2016) based on their initial interviews with 10 Chinese L2 learners.

The study confirmed the ability of the majority of surveyed Chinese L2 learners to engage in mental imagery through visualizing their L2 future selves in their language learning, which was in line with You and Chan (2015). From here, You et al. (2016) proposed the incorporation of imagery-related variables into the L2MSS framework. In addition, the significant contribution of imaginary capacity on Chinese L2 learners' motivational disposition was highlighted. The study provided evidence to the claim that language learners visualized and internalized their ideal language selves more often than they did to their ought-to language selves.

Liu and Thompson (2018) explored the Chinese EFL learners' motivational profiles and L2 proficiency, as well as the relation between contextual variables, gender, major, and English proficiency, and language learning motivation using the L2MSS and the anti-ought-to concept proposed in Thompson and Vásquez (2015). The study used a bilingual (English and Chinese) 31-item questionnaire, including 20 items for the ideal L2 and ought-to selves and 11 items for anti-ought-to self. The ideal L2 and ought-to selves items were from Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010), whereas items regarding the anti-ought-to self were drawn from Thompson and Vásquez's (2015) narrative data.

One of the research results was in alignment with Taguchi et al.'s (2009) research findings in that the L2MSS can effectively represent Chinese L2 learners' motivational profiles. The study also provided evidence for the prominent role of the anti-ought-to self, a concept proposed by Thompson and Vásquez (2015) and developed by Thompson (2017a, 2017b). It was argued that the anti-ought-to self was relevant in a variety of cultural contexts also remained stable across majors (e.g. English and non-English majors) and genders. Findings also indicated that while ideal and anti-ought-to selves positively contributed to L2 proficiency, the ought-to self had a negative impact on the proficiency of language learners.

With a focus on different learners factors that possible influence their language learning motivation, Martinović's (2018) study investigated differences in L2 motivation among Croatian first-year non-language majors. 52 questionnaire items in the questionnaire were adapted from the L2MSS questionnaire by Taguchi et al. (2009). The number of items is generally evenly distributed among five categories: *Ideal L2 self*, *Ought-to L2 self*, *Intended effort*, *Instrumentality-promotion*, and *Instrumentality-prevention*.

The study revealed that the impact of years of studying English on students' motivational disposition was insignificant. Aligning with previous research results, the study's findings indicated that higher-level students had a stronger ideal L2 self and higher levels of L2 motivation and career-related pragmatic motives for success compared to their lower-graded peers. Regarding L2 motivation among students of different fields of study, biotechnical students were reported to have the lowest second language learning motivation levels. Furthermore, in terms of differences in L2 motivation between the two genders, the findings showed higher levels of the ideal L2 self in male students, while the females had more significant intended effort and pragmatic motives related to avoiding negative outcomes.

In a Southeast Asian educational context, By and Laohawiriyanon (2019) used a mixed-method approach to explore the dynamic between the three components of the L2MSS framework and language proficiency of Cambodian EFL students, as well as

discovered their levels of motivation and motivating factors in their language learning.

120 EFL students from 9 to 21 years old were divided into low and high achievers groups. In the quantitative data phase of the study, the paper and pen (P&P) version of The Quick Placement Test (QPT) version 2 (<https://www.international.rmit.edu.au/agent/document/forms/pdf/QPTPaper-and-pen.pdf>), designed and developed by Oxford University Press and Cambridge ESOL, was used to test the participants' proficiency. The participants' motivation levels of L2MSS' three components were measured by a three-part questionnaire. 30 five-point Likert scale questionnaire items were adopted and adapted from previous studies (Dörnyei et al., 2006; Taguchi et al., 2009), and some were designed by the researchers. In the last part of the questionnaire, there was also one open-ended question for the participants' overall views on learning English. In the qualitative data collection phase, semi-structured interviews were carried out with 20 students (10 individuals from each participant group) to discover students' sources of motivation and reasons for the success of high achievers.

The findings found that among the successful students, there was a significant correlation between their Ideal L2 self and their language proficiency, whereas it was the case for low achievers' ought-to L2 Self and their L2 learning experience. It was worth noticing that the higher the level of the low achievers' ought-to L2 self was, the lower their English proficiency test scores were. These results lend support to previous studies in which high achievers tended to have vivid imagery of future selves compared to their less successful counterparts. Additionally, the study revealed that personal aspiration, the need for communication and the environment were among the reasons to explain the high level of motivation among successful students. While the high achievers' motivation was mainly from their image of selves, dreams, or satisfaction, the motivation for the low achievers to study English was linked to their concern of future unemployment and the desire to avoid possible negative outcomes in learning the language.

In a recent descriptive study, Irgatoğlu (2021) investigated the level of three components of the L2MSS framework and how deep, and surface learning strategies (Tragant et al. 2013) were applied to EFL high school students of different genders and language proficiency levels, indicated by grades. The study employed two questionnaires: The L2MSS Questionnaire developed by Taguchi et al. (2009) and The Student Process Questionnaire proposed by Biggs et al. (2001).

The study results found that female students generally have stronger future self-guides than those of their male counterparts. The findings were in line with those of previous studies in which successful students' ideal L2 self was stronger than that of students with lower grades. Additionally, surface learning strategies are more widely used than deep learning strategies among the participants. It was also observed that lower-level students preferred surface learning strategies more than their successful peers, whereas deep learning strategies were more widely used among successful students with a high level of ideal L2 self.

### 3.2. Qualitative Research on L2 Motivation using L2MSS

In the last decade, despite the limited number in comparison with that of quantitative studies, the reviewed qualitative works drawn on the L2MSS offered deeper understandings of the dynamic relationship between the three components of L2MSS and L2 learners' motivational profiles. Furthermore, qualitative data allowed the exploration of emergent dimensions that complement our understanding of the L2MSS's components and contribute to the significant theoretical refinements of the framework, such as the *anti-ought-to self*, an emergent self dimension proposed by Thompson and Vásquez, which has shown a potential to add great explanatory value to the L2MSS.

Table 3. Qualitative Research on Motivation using L2MSS reviewed in this paper			
Source	Instruments	Focus	Context
Kim (2009)	Interviews, ESL classroom observations, picture-cued recall tasks, and language learning autobiographies	Exploring the nature and the interrelationship between ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self from the perspective of Sociocultural Theory (SCT) and Activity Theory (AT) framework	02 adult Korean ESL students studying abroad in Canada
Zheng (2013)	Semi-structured interviews	Exploring the relevance of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) to English Language Teaching (ELT) practices in	Chinese university students' situated



		Chinese learners	experiences of learning and using English in their life context
Thompson & Vásquez (2015)	In-depth, semi-structured interviews with no prompt questions directly refer to motivation	Investigating motivational profiles of learners of languages other than English	03 L1-English-speaking instructors who are non-native speakers of the languages they teach
Thompson (2017)	In-depth, semi-structured interviews	Examining the addition of anti-ought-to self as a third self component of the L2MSS framework	02 advanced-level native-English learners, 01 of Chinese language and 01 of Arabic language
Doiz & Lasagabaster (2018)	Structured interviews (in Spanish)	Discovering how the teachers' and students' future self-guides were manifested and reflections of their learning and teaching experience in English-medium instruction (EMI) settings	13 experienced teachers and 15 non-English majored students working in EMI settings at a Spanish university

From the lens of Sociocultural Theory (SCT) (Vygotsky, 1978, 1979a, 1979b) and Activity Theory (AT) (Engeström, 1987, 1999a, 1999b), Kim (2009) explored the nature and the interrelationship between the ideal L2 and ought-to L2 selves of Dörnyei's L2MSS. This qualitative study collected narrative data of two male Korean ESL university students from four complementary sources: interviews (conducted monthly), ESL classroom observations, picture-cued recall tasks, and language learning autobiographies.

The major findings lend empirical support to the concept of instrumentality, one of the immediate antecedents of the ideal L2 self, proposed by Dörnyei et al. (2006). The instrumentality in L2 learning, according to the research results, can have a close link to either the ideal L2 self or the ought-to L2 self depending on the internalization degree in the learners. In addition, the study highlighted the importance of learners' life experience to the imagery of future self-guides in L2 learners. It was emphasized that it was impossible for L2 learners to develop a competent and promotion-based image of future L2 selves without contextual support.

Thompson and Vásquez's (2015) qualitative study investigated the motivational profiles of three English instructors/learners of Italian, Chinese, and German who are not native speakers of the language they teach, focusing on the participants' context and language learning experiences.

By analyzing the narrative data collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews, the study discovered the salient anti-ought-to self relating to psychological reactance (Bremn, 1966) as a new self-guide in second language motivation. The anti-ought-to self was identified as the motivational force opposite to the ought-to L2 self-proposed in Dörnyei's L2MSS, as some learners are motivated not by the urge to comply with external suggestions or expectations but to perform actions contrary to what they were expected to do.

Thompson and Vasquez's (2015) study was the first to point out the gap between the "I" versus "other" dimension, one of the key components in the self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987), in the L2MSS model. It was argued that the *ideal L2 self* was primarily attributed from the "I" standpoint (i.e. actual/own versus ideal/own) but not from the "other" standpoint (i.e. actual/own versus ought/other), while the exact reverse was true for the ought-to L2 self. Further investigation into the potential explanatory value of the anti-ought-to self to the L2MSS framework had been carried out in Thompson (2017), which was also reviewed in this article.

Zheng (2013)'s qualitative research on the English learning of Chinese learners (04 first-year and 04 third-year English-majored students) aimed to explore the influence of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) on English Language Teaching (ELT) practices.

The one-academic-year-long case study collected narrative data from the participants using three face-to-face, semi-structured interviews at approximately three-month intervals. Major findings indicated the Chinese ELL learners' inconsistent tendency to construct their future self-guides (ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self) based on the native-speaker (NS) norms deeply ingrained in the ELT classroom and the native English cultural products. The significant contradiction between the learners' NS-based future self-guides and their English language experiences resulted in failure to build strong imagery of future self as a competent ELF user, therefore negatively impacting the learners' motivation to learn English. From the findings, Zhang (2013) emphasized the importance of promoting a salient self-image as a competent ELF user to ensure the sustainability of non-native learners' language learning motivation.

In an attempt to further examine the validity of anti-ought-to self (Thompson & Vásquez, 2015) as a new component of the L2MSS, Thompson (2017) examined the relationship between the L2MSS and the Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST) framework. Specifically, the study explored the dynamicity of the potentially synergistic relationships between the ought-to self and anti-ought-to selves with the context.

Retrospective narrative data of two participants (01 L1-English-speaking advanced language learner of Chinese and 01 of Arabic) were collected from approximately one-hour online and offline semi-structured interviews. The participants were encouraged to tell stories about their language learning experiences without motivation-related initial prompt questions.

The study's main findings indicated that the *anti-ought-to self* could be added as a third dimension of the L2MSS framework. While this addition would not alternate the model's two-part (the selves and learning experience) integrity and its operation regarding the influence of learning experiences on psychological aspects of selves, the anti-ought-to would add explanatory value to fully understand the "rebellious" aspects (Lanvers, 2016, 2017) of language learners, who played a dominant role in the individual-context relationship.

Being one of the few studies using L2MSS to investigate teacher motivation, Doiz and Lasagabaster (2018) employed a qualitative approach to analyze the impact of English-medium instruction (EMI) settings on Spanish non-English majored university students and teachers' motivational profiles.

This study conducted structured interviews with six focused groups of participants to collect narrative data. The data analysis revealed that while the ideal L2 self of the interviewed teachers and students were equally strong, the teachers were met with more challenges and needed to put more substantial investment into attaining such vivid ideal self. Meanwhile, students' ought-to L2 self was more prevalent than the teachers, as their decision to learn English was heavily influenced by parental expectation.

#### 4. Future Research Directions

The current study provides an overview of the dynamic relationship between three components of the framework and the language learning motivation in various educational and cultural contexts and the emergent *anti-ought-to self*-dimension (Thompson & Vásquez, 2015) its potential to become an additional component of the L2MSS. However, there are some gaps identified in the reviewed studies, indicating the possible directions for future research.

From the literature, it is evident that the quantitative approach remained widely used to examine the three components of the L2MSS and its dynamic relationship with L2 learners' motivational profiles. However, several reviewed quantitative studies depended on survey methodology, and the fact that the questionnaires employed were mostly adapted from the L2MSS questionnaire by Taguchi et al. (2009) suggested limitations in research design and instrument quality. For instance, the prominent role of a strong ideal L2 self on L2 learners' learning motivation has been repeatedly confirmed by studies conducted in several different countries, even though it has been considered in correlation with contextual factors (Lamb, 2012; You & Dörnyei, 2016; You et al. 2016), learners' emotions (Teimouri, 2017), learners' individual differences (Martinović, 2018; By & Laohawiryanon, 2019), and learning strategies (Irgatoğlu (2021).

Regarding qualitative research, although recent studies have provided more profound understandings of L2 motivation, as all as discovered new concepts that could add to the theoretical refinements of the L2MSS (e.g. Thompson & Vásquez, 2015; Thompson, 2017), the majority of research results heavily relied on self-reported data. Alexander (2008) questioned the consistency between beliefs, perceptions, and knowledge reported in participants' narratives with experiences in authentic settings, as there was no strong evidence found to support the positive relationship between self-reported ratings and demonstrated knowledge. Furthermore, while findings from qualitative data allowed new themes of L2 motivation to emerge, such as the anti-ought-to self-dimension, there has been limited following studies to lens empirical evidence to the theoretical values of such emergent elements to the L2MSS framework.

From the identified gaps in the literature, future studies are suggested to extend beyond numerical data to employ qualitative data from interviews and observation and interviews in exploring L2 motivation in general and research drawn on the L2MSS

framework in particular. Moreover, since most of the recent studies on L2 motivation from the perspective of L2MSS have put the highlight on EFL learners' motivations, future research should start to shift focus to get more insight into other motivational dimensions such as teacher motivation or learning motivation of language learners other than English.

This study also offers practical implications for enhancing the levels of language learning motivation among L2 learners. As ideal L2 self and L2 learning experience have been identified as predominant factors for L2 learners' learning motivation and success in language learning, it is highly recommended for language teachers and educational decision-makers to formulate practical strategies to stimulate students' language learning motivation, as well as to improve learners' language experiences in the classroom.

## **5. Conclusion**

The current review facilitates the theoretical reconceptualization of L2 motivation by posing a comprehensive review of more current studies on language learning motivation in relation to diverse contextual factors from the perspective of Dörnyei's L2MSS framework.

It contributes to the current knowledge of L2 motivation research and theoretical refinements of the L2MSS by focusing on significant findings from two types of research paradigms: quantitative approach and qualitative approach. The identification of the gaps in existing literature in L2 motivation research drawn on the L2MSS framework offers insight into current understandings of L2 learners' motivation to learn and sheds light on the directions of future studies.

The enriched research interests from the validity of three motivational components of the L2MSS in a wide range of linguistic and contextual contexts, the dynamics of these components on motivational profiles of language learners of different communities, to the growing body of literature of the anti-ought-to self as an emergent third self dimension of the L2MSS, provide the impetus for the expansion of the existing theoretical perspectives on the L2MSS, research scope, methodology and instruments in future research on both L2 motivation and the L2MSS framework.

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