

# The Connection Between Faith-Based Values and Learning Motivation in English Language Education

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**Abstract:** This article examines the dynamic relationship between values derived from religious beliefs and learning motivation in the field of English Language Education. Unlike research that relies on primary data, this study adopts a qualitative literature research methodology to examine and synthesize various previous theories and empirical findings in the fields of religious psychology and foreign language learning motivation. The core of this discussion argues that religious beliefs can serve as a profound psychological foundation and drive students' intrinsic motivation in learning a foreign language. Through thematic analysis, three main mechanisms were identified that mediate this relationship: instrumental piety, where English is viewed as a tool for religious purposes such as proselytizing; religious learning ethics, which apply religiously-taught values such as perseverance and discipline into the learning process; and the formation of a contributive identity, which motivates students to master English in order to contribute to their religious community globally. The implications of this study emphasize the need for pedagogical approaches that acknowledge spiritual dimensions as an integral part of learning motivation. Thus, this article not only enriches the theoretical discourse on foreign language motivation but also offers a conceptual basis for developing more meaningful and contextual learning environments in educational institutions based on religious values.

**Keywords:** Faith-Based Values; Learning Motivation; English Language Education.

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## Introduction

The global prominence of English as an international language has positioned English Language Education (ELE) as a crucial academic discipline worldwide (Mirhosseini, 2018; Novawan, 2014). In diverse educational contexts, understanding the driving forces behind successful language acquisition remains a central concern for educators and researchers alike. Among various influencing factors, learning motivation consistently emerges as a fundamental determinant that significantly impacts students' engagement, persistence, and ultimate success in mastering English as a second language (Anjomshoa, 2015). This understanding has sparked continuous scholarly interest in exploring the complex nature of motivation and its various manifestations across different cultural and educational settings (Luisa & Renau, 2016; Sudartini, 2012).

Traditional frameworks in second language acquisition have predominantly approached motivation through secular lenses, particularly Gardner's integrative and instrumental orientations (Sudartini, 2012). These established paradigms have effectively explained motivation in terms of cultural assimilation or practical benefits such as career advancement and educational opportunities. However, in many educational contexts, particularly in religious societies like Indonesia, these theoretical models demonstrate limitations in capturing the full spectrum of motivational drivers. The profound influence of faith-based values on students' learning experiences suggests the existence of motivational dimensions that extend beyond conventional theoretical boundaries, a gap that becomes increasingly evident when considering the persistent motivational challenges educators face in conventional language teaching approaches.

Recent research in related fields provides compelling evidence for exploring this connection. The seminal study by (Sokolovskaya et al., 2020) on "Educational and Professional Motivation of Students with Various Religious Orientations" offers crucial insights, demonstrating that religious students exhibited significantly higher professional motivation compared to their non-religious counterparts. Their research involving 718 university students revealed that religious orientation contributed to more structured value hierarchies, reduced existential anxiety, and enhanced adaptive abilities toward goal achievement. These findings align with emerging perspectives in L2 motivation research, particularly Dörnyei's (Ghanizadeh & Rostami, 2015) L2 Motivational Self System, which emphasizes the importance of future self-guides in driving language learning motivation, yet these frameworks have not fully incorporated spiritual dimensions as central motivational components.

This study addresses this research void by examining the dynamic relationship between faith-based values and learning motivation in English Language Education through qualitative literature review methodology (Fadiah et al., 2025). The investigation proceeds from the premise that religious belief serves not merely as a cultural backdrop but as an active, powerful source of intrinsic motivation that provides unique psychological foundations for language learning (Jufri et al., 2024). Building on existing empirical work, this research identifies three primary mediating mechanisms: instrumental piety, where English proficiency is viewed as a tool for religious purposes such as proselytizing and accessing sacred texts (Firdaus et al., 2025); religious learning ethics, which transform spiritual virtues like perseverance and discipline into learning practices (Hibatulloh, 2022); and contributive identity formation, where language mastery becomes a means for global religious contribution and community service (Ulum, 2025).

By elucidating these mechanisms, this study aims to enrich theoretical discourse in L2 motivation while providing practical implications for developing more meaningful and contextually appropriate pedagogical approaches in faith-based

educational institutions. The synthesis of these conceptual frameworks offers a comprehensive understanding of how spiritual dimensions influence educational processes and outcomes, potentially leading to more effective and culturally responsive English language teaching methodologies in religious learning environments.

## Method

This study employs a qualitative approach using a systematic literature review method to investigate the relationship between faith-based values and learning motivation in English Language Education. The research process began with the identification and collection of relevant literature from various academic databases using keywords such as "*faith-based values*," "*religious motivation*," "*L2 motivation*," and "*English language education*." The inclusion criteria consisted of articles relevant to the research topic, both empirical and theoretical studies, as well as publications focused on language education contexts.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis techniques, which included the stages of coding, theme searching, and theme reviewing to identify emerging patterns within the literature. The validity of the findings was maintained through source triangulation by comparing results across various studies and research contexts. The entire analytical process focused on synthesizing previous findings to develop a coherent conceptual framework regarding the mechanisms linking religious values with motivation for learning English.

## Results and Discussion

### Result

Through a systematic thematic analysis of literature in religious psychology and L2 motivation, this study identified three core mechanisms that illustrate how faith-based values shape motivation in English Language Education.

The first mechanism, instrumental piety, shows that religious learners frequently approach English

proficiency as a form of worship-driven intentionality, in which language learning serves transcendent purposes beyond conventional academic or professional goals. The analysis revealed that learners often perceive English as essential for performing *dakwah* to global audiences, accessing international religious texts and scholarly works, facilitating communication within global religious communities, and enhancing their understanding of religious teachings through primary sources. This indicates that English proficiency is framed not merely as a practical skill but as a means of fulfilling spiritual responsibilities (Firdaus et al., 2025; Syakbi, Raiyan, Nelly Mursyidah, 2024).

The second mechanism concerns religious learning ethics, which illustrates how spiritual values translate into concrete learning behaviors. The findings show that perseverance (*istiqomah*) manifests in consistent study routines, discipline derived from religious teachings becomes embedded in learners' academic habits, and the pursuit of knowledge (*thalabul 'ilmi*) is understood as a religious obligation. Moreover, learners tend to reinterpret academic challenges as spiritual tests, which strengthens their resilience and commitment to the learning process (Hibatulloh, 2022).

The third mechanism identified is contributive identity formation, where learners develop motivation through envisioning themselves as individuals who will contribute to their religious communities in the future. This identity is shaped by aspirations to become global representatives of their faith, a desire to serve religious communities in international contexts, and a commitment to accessing and contributing to global religious discourse. Learners perceive English language competence as a vital tool for community development and religious engagement at the global level (Ulum, 2025).

## Discussion

### 1. Theoretical Implications for L2 Motivation

The findings of this study challenge and expand the scope of existing L2 motivation theories. While Gardner's integrative instrumental dichotomy and Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System provide valuable foundations, they do not fully capture the

spiritual dimensions revealed here. The concept of instrumental piety introduces a form of "trans-instrumental" motivation, in which language learning is directed toward transcendent and religious purposes rather than purely worldly gains (Fuad, 2015). Likewise, the mechanism of contributive identity formation suggests a "communo-integrative" motivation that differs from traditional integrative motivation, as learners aim not to integrate into target language cultures but to strengthen and represent their own religious communities (Pelu & Nur, 2022). Furthermore, the mechanism of religious learning ethics demonstrates how process-oriented motivation can be sustained through spiritual frameworks, echoing recent educational psychology research on meaning-making in learning persistence while adding the unique dimension of religious sanctification of the learning process.

### 2. Empirical Convergence with Existing Research

The findings show strong convergence with (Sokolovskaya et al., 2020), who highlight that religious orientation correlates with enhanced goal-directed behavior and value-driven learning approaches. However, while their study spans various academic disciplines, the present research specifically illuminates mechanisms that are distinctive to language learning, particularly regarding linguistic and intercultural dimensions (Syahputra, 2025). The mechanisms identified in this study also reinforce Dörnyei's (Ghanizadeh & Rostami, 2015) L2 Motivational Self System by offering concrete spiritual content embedded within the "ideal L2 self" of religious learners. In this context, the idealized future self is not solely achievement-oriented but also intertwined with religious duty, spiritual aspiration, and communal responsibility.

### 3. Pedagogical Implications

These findings hold several important implications for English language teaching in faith-based educational settings. Curriculum design can benefit from incorporating religious texts and contexts into learning materials, allowing students to engage with English through content that aligns with their spiritual motivations. Learning activities that

involve producing dakwah content, translating religious materials, or participating in interfaith dialogues may enhance engagement by supporting students' contributive identity formation (Akbar & Rangkuti, 2024; Hapsari et al., 2021; Marwiji et al., 2024). Additionally, educators may help students connect religious virtues such as perseverance, sincerity, and discipline with effective learning behaviors, enabling them to interpret academic challenges as opportunities for spiritual growth and thereby sustaining long-term motivation.

#### 4. Contextual Considerations and Limitations

The mechanisms identified in this study are shaped by specific cultural and religious contexts, primarily within Muslim educational environments. Their applicability may vary across different religious traditions, age groups, and educational levels. As a literature-based qualitative study, the findings provide conceptual depth but require empirical validation through classroom research, observations, and longitudinal studies to confirm how these mechanisms operate in real learning environments (Ihsan HL, 2022; Permatasari et al., 2023).

#### 5. Future Research Directions

Future research could investigate the relative influence of each mechanism across different age groups, proficiency levels, and institutional types. Studies may also explore interactions between faith-based motivation and other motivational constructs, such as anxiety, self-efficacy, or autonomy (Adzima & Hisaaniah, 2024; Rahmi, 2019). Another important direction is the development and validation of instruments specifically designed to measure faith-based L2 motivation. Additionally, further research could examine how teachers can effectively nurture these motivational sources in classroom practice without compromising academic objectivity or pedagogical balance. Overall, the framework proposed in this study offers a nuanced understanding of how spiritual dimensions shape language learning motivation and provides both theoretical advancement and practical guidance for educators working within faith-based institutions.

#### Conclusion

Based on a comprehensive analysis of the literature, this study concludes that faith-based values play a significant role in shaping motivation for learning English. Three main mechanisms were identified as mediators of this relationship: instrumental piety, which views English proficiency as a tool for fulfilling religious purposes; religious learning ethics, which apply religious values to the learning process; and contributive identity formation, which encourages language mastery as a means of contributing globally to the religious community. These findings not only enrich theoretical discourse in the field of foreign language motivation by introducing spirituality as an integral component, but also offer practical implications for developing more meaningful and contextual learning environments in value-based educational institutions. This study recommends the importance of pedagogical approaches that accommodate spiritual aspects in curriculum design and English language teaching practices.

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