

## The Interaction of L2 Motivation Constructs and Learner Variables in Korean Middle School Learners of English\*

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Motivation is a learner construct that is positively correlated with foreign language learning (Dörnyei, 2009). In this light, the present study investigates the nature of Korean middle school students' motivation to learn English by analyzing motivated behavior and two L2 motivation measurements (i.e., L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) and international posture (IP)) through a comprehensive questionnaire. In addition, the effects of gender, school type, and L2 achievement on the L2 motivation constructs are also examined. The questionnaire was administered to 95 participants and results were analyzed using Pearson correlation and an independent-samples t-test. Results show that motivated behavior correlated with L2MSS and partially with IP and that L2MSS positively correlated with IP. In terms of gender and school type, no significant differences were found with motivated behavior and L2MSS but differences were partially found for IP. Additionally, the most significant differences were found in L2 achievement. This study suggests that Korean middle school learners of English whose motivated behavior is influenced by L2MSS and IP which in turn show differences according to learner variables.

[L2 motivation/L2 Motivational Self System/international posture/  
제2언어 동기/제2언어 동기적 자아체계/국제적인 자세]

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Learning a target language where it is not the means for wider communication has always been a challenge. It is generally acknowledged that L2 learners in the context of an English as a foreign language (EFL) setting have less opportunities to engage in authentic exchanges in English and to directly interact with native speakers of the target language. However, with the rise of English as a global language, learners are more than ever exposed to English through various media channels and have limitless access to English through the Internet. Due to this massive volume of exposure to English, both Korean middle school learners of English and Koreans at large have become familiar with English and its culture to some extent. In Korea, English is commonly used in the media, is a mainstay in pop songs, and found on street sign boards. The exposure is not limited to American English—the variety primarily used in English textbooks—but also British, Australian, Hong Kong, Singaporean, etc. In this sense, this exposure may not be considered “pure” English, but rather one of a mixed global culture (Dörnyei, Csizer, & Nemeth, 2006).

In tandem with or rather as a backlash to the elevation of English as the foremost foreign language in Korea, many people in South Korea are suffering from “English fever” (J. K. Park, 2009). This refers to the increasing pressure on people to learn English as a means for advancement whether to enter a prestigious university or to land a job at a leading conglomerate. Learning English as a foreign language has been supported and advanced by the Korean government through consecutive revised National English Curriculums and particularly since 1997 when English became a compulsory subject starting from the third grade of primary school (T. Y. Kim, 2011). Superficially, it may seem that Koreans have a clear motive to learn English. From a young age, Koreans are forced to start studying English by schools and parents. Those with the economic means spend on private English education such as sending children to ‘hakwons’ (English institutes) or even abroad to learn English to gain an early advantage. In the case of Korean high school students, they face the College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT) which includes an English reading and listening section. The washback effect of this section is clearly seen in students and in schools (J. K. Park, 2009). In contrast to Korean primary and high school students, Korean middle school students are literally caught in the “middle.” However, in the typical trajectory of English learning for Koreans, this in-between stage is important in that learners’ attitudes and motivation are still malleable and do not have a firm grounding in terms of English use.

Learners of a target language wish to become native-like in that language, but many fail to achieve this goal (Cook, 1999). In terms of motivation, according to Gardner (1985), language learners will achieve their goals when they are willing to become members of the

target language community. Gardner referred to this as 'integrative motivation' which is defined as the desire to communicate with the target community by using the target language and has been found to potentially have a powerful effect on second language acquisition (SLA). However, recently, Gardner's (1985) integrative motivation construct has been challenged for not being sufficiently encompassing as noted by Yashima (2002) who proposed the construct of 'international posture (IP)' as an alternative. According to Yashima (2000), Gardner's target community should be replaced by the concept of an international community. This implies that L2 learners should be willing to participate in various communities that use the target language rather than in a single community. IP is reflective of the learner's ideas regarding their future use of the target language which will most likely be related to what was referred to earlier as a globalized culture. Related to this, Dörnyei's (2005) 'L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS)' is a theory that deals with the future image of target language use (Dörnyei, 2009). In Dörnyei's system, Gardner's (1985) integrative motivation and Yashima's (2002) IP are viewed as either part of L2MSS or as influencing factors. Thus, in order to produce a holistic picture of the L2 motivation of English learners, the relationship between general L2 motivation, L2MSS, and IP and differences according to learner variables warrant examination. Additionally, in the case of Korea, middle school students are a population that has not been thoroughly investigated. In this light, the present study attempts to address the nature of motivation of this comparatively under-researched population of EFL learners.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. Motivation, L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS), and International Posture (IP)

Motivation is considered to be strongly connected to second or foreign language (L2) learning achievement (Dörnyei, 1994; Kikuchi, 2009). According to Dörnyei (2001), arguments exist regarding the definition of motivation in the field of SLA. Although scholars have previously defined motivation from various perspectives, most would agree that the following basic notions should be included in any working definition: choice, persistence, and effort (Dörnyei, 2001). In other words L2 learners who are highly motivated show positive attitudes and put more effort into learning the target language in general (Dörnyei, 2005). These two L2 motivational features are considered to be part of what can be referred to as motivated behavior (Al-Shehri, 2009). Accordingly, motivation has always been one of the most influential factors in language learning, explaining why there are different levels of language achievement (Gardner, 1985; Ortega, 2009).

Since its introduction, Gardner's (1985) integrative motivation has been the dominant theory in the field of L2 motivation (e.g., Brown, 2007; Dörnyei, 2001, 2009; Kormos & Csizer, 2008; Ortega, 2009). Unlike intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which simply measure learner motivation in terms of orientation, Gardner's integrative motivation not only measures a learner's motivation but also explains the traits of the motivation itself (Ortega, 2009). The concept of integrativeness was described by Gardner and MacIntyre as follows (as cited in Dörnyei, 2005, p. 68):

Integrativeness, which subsumes integrative orientation, interest in foreign languages, and attitudes towards the L2 community, reflecting the individual's willingness and interest in social interaction with members of other groups.

An ESL student wanting to learn English because they plan to enroll in graduate school in the UK is an example of integrative motivation. Learners who are highly motivated under Gardner's concept are likely to be successful since the learner is willing to be a member of the target community, resulting in greater learning effort for the pursuit of a goal. So as seen in the above example, the ESL student would not only use English in graduate school but will become a member of the graduate school community and moreover the UK community. According to Ortega (2009), however, Gardner's (1985) theory has been criticized by scholars such as Yashima (2002) and Dörnyei (2005). Yashima (2000, 2002) has pointed out that the concept of Gardner's (1985) target community needs to be reconsidered since for learners in an Asian or EFL setting, just what the target community is unclear. Instead, learners in an EFL context tend to participate in an imagined international community in which they will use English.

Yashima's (2002) concept of international posture (IP), which focuses on L2 learners' attitudes towards the international community, stems from Gardner's integrativeness (1985). The four sub-components of IP are approach towards the international world, interest in international vocations, interest in international news, and willingness to communicate with international people (Yashima, 2009). Yashima (2002) argued that because English has become a lingua franca in many regions of the world, finding a suitable target community for L2 learning (i.e., integrativeness) is difficult and unclear. For instance, in an EFL context, Japanese and Korean students taking English as a mandatory academic subject without clear goals may be the result of the lack of contact with a particular target community (Yashima, 2000). One of the most important components of IP is the "imagined international community" (Yashima, 2009, p. 148). An imagined international community is the society in which L2 learners are willing to participate by using the target language. It has also been argued that by utilizing the idea of an imagined international community in an EFL context, the L2 self would be able to be developed

(Yashima, 2009). In other words, the imagined international community is viewed as a key factor in IP.

Along similar lines, Dörnyei (2005) proposed the L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS), which includes three sub-frames: ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience. In the concept of ideal L2 self, L2 learners who have a clear positive future image of themselves tend to be highly motivated because they recognize the benefits coming from the future. For ought-to L2 self, L2 learners who recognize the disadvantages of not learning the language tend to be motivated as well. Of the three subcomponents, ideal L2 self, which includes the ideas of instrumental motives and integrativeness is considered the most important (Csizer & Kormos, 2009). This implies that possible selves are a suitable explanation for L2 learner motivation. As Noels (2003) and Ushioda (2001) note, L2MSS incorporates previous categories of motivation such as learning experiences, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and language learning goals (as cited in Dörnyei, 2009). It has been argued that this new concept of L2 motivation has arisen because there is no clear L2 community to interact with for EFL learners and the world has become a more global society (Kormos & Csizer, 2008; Ushioda, 2009). Thus, Gardner's (1985) integrative motivation needed to be modified, reconstructed or reinterpreted for an EFL context because the original model was developed based on the Canadian ESL environment where the target community is clear and accessible. Indeed, the role of learning context is considered a crucial factor which is closely connected to individual learners (Ushioda, 2009).

Unsurprisingly, several studies have endeavored to combine Gardner's (1985) integrative motivation and Dörnyei's (2005) L2MSS, the two representative approaches in the field of L2 motivation (MacIntyre, Mackinnon & Clement, 2009b). MacIntyre, Mackinnon, and Clement (2009a) found that Dörnyei's L2 self frame shared similarities with Gardner's theory. Consequently, a number of studies have attempted to empirically demonstrate the relationship between the ideal L2 self and integrative motivation. One of the empirical studies is Taguchi, Magid, and Papi (2009) in which a cross-country survey was conducted in Japan, China, and Iran to examine differences between the ideal L2 self and integrativeness and to determine whether L2MSS is country specific or not. They found that Dörnyei's L2 self model was "not country specific" and that "integrativeness can be relabeled as the ideal L2 self" (Taguchi, Magid, & Papi, 2009, p. 88). In short, it was concluded that Dörnyei's L2 self can be adopted in various contexts, including ESL and EFL.

Many scholars in the field of L2 motivation consider L2MSS to embody both IP and Gardner's integrativeness (Kormos & Csizer, 2008; Ortega, 2009). According to Dörnyei (2005), for instance, ideal L2 self encompasses Gardner's integrativeness. Yashima (2009) stated that international posture has some links to ideal L2 self, that is, someone who has

international posture may be highly likely to acquire L2 self. Basically, Dörnyei's (2005) L2 self is closely related to L2 identification. Under Gardner's integrative motivation construct, L2 learners pursue the target community's identity. However in Dörnyei's (2005) L2 self construct, L2 learners are willing to adopt a globalized identity or an imagined community identity as proposed by Yashima (2002). L2MSS argues that L2 learners study the target language with either an ideal L2 self or an ought-to L2 self, two selves which are the future image imagined by L2 learners. Accordingly it can be said that IP and L2MSS have the notion of integrativeness in common since both constructs deal with imagination. IP, thus, complements L2MSS, as it focuses more on an international community, which in turn can better explain the motivation found in an EFL context.

There have been few studies which have examined the effect of variables on L2MSS with Korean speakers of English (T. Y. Kim, 2009; T. Y. Kim & M. S. Kim, 2013; Y. K. Kim & T. Y. Kim, 2011). T. Y. Kim (2009) investigated the relationship between the ideal L2 self and integrative motivation through interviews with Korean college students studying in Canada, an ESL context. In this study, ideal L2 self was viewed as a construct that involves both integrative motivation and instrumentality. Y. K. Kim and T. Y. Kim (2011) investigated Korean secondary school students' L2MSS and its impact on English proficiency and motivated L2 behavior through a questionnaire. This research revealed that ideal L2 self, which is one component of L2MSS, had an impact on motivated L2 behavior. This research provided meaningful insight into the relation between ideal L2 self and the L2 motivated behavior of Korean secondary school students which included both middle and high school students. However, middle and high school students are disparate as high school students are pressured to learn English for the CSAT as mentioned earlier. Thus, there appears to be a gap in the existing literature regarding research of motivation in Korean middle school students who are not in the initial stages of English learning and are neither burdened by the CSAT.

## 2. Motivation and Learner Variables

Motivation is multi-faceted and manifested in different ways according to particular circumstances as can be seen by previous studies which have attempted to examine the influence of an array of variables such as achievement. Some studies which examined the relationship between L2 motivation and achievement have shown that in general, a strong connection exists between these two (Cummins, 1980; Takahashi, 2005 among others). For instance, Takahashi (2005) argued that highly motivated learners tend to pay closer attention to target language tasks and therefore show higher levels of achievement. On the other hand, students with low motivation might display low levels of L2 language achievement (Cummins, 1980). However, other research has found that the relationship

between achievement and motivation may not be so clear. Vandergrift (2005) conducted a survey on listening proficiency and found that motivation had little influence on this skill. Similarly, in Shaaban and Ghaith's (2000) study, it was revealed that instrumental motivation and achievement have a weak association.

In terms of gender, research has focused on the connection between gender and variables dealing with motivation (Green & Oxford, 1995; Mori & Gobel, 2006; Shaaban & Ghaith, 2000). According to MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, and Donovan (2002), females showed positive attitudes toward speaking in English than males. Similarly, Shaaban and Ghaith (2000) revealed that there is a significant gender difference in motivation to learn English. Mori and Gobel (2006) also argued that there is a gender gap when it comes to motivation and attitudes regarding learning the target language. Especially, females showed higher motivation and a more positive attitude toward L2 learning. In contrast, MacIntyre et al. (2002) revealed that gender shows insignificant differences towards motivation. These contrasting results show that gender is a variable that needs to be examined more in depth as an influential factor that could affect motivation to learn English (e.g., Mori & Gobel, 2006; Shaaban & Ghaith, 2000).

Another learner variable that has been taken into consideration along with gender and especially with the particular subject population of students is school type which is considered an influential factor in forming motivation (Lee & Lockheed, 1990). Here, school type refers to whether the school is composed of a single-sex or is coeducational. As the term denotes, a single-sex school consists of only one gender so it could be either an all male or all female school. On the other hand, a coeducational school consists of mixed genders. A few studies have shown that school type has an effect on academic achievement (Lee & Lockheed, 1990; Marsh, 1989). For example, Lee and Lockheed (1990) revealed that Nigerian ninth grade female students in a single-sex school showed better academic achievement in their math scores. Unlike Lee and Lockheed (1990), Blue, Mills, and Yeziarski (2013) examined college students' school type differences in motivation and attitude. Their results revealed that college students in a single-sex—in this case all female—school had more positive motivation and attitude. This implies that there could be significant school type differences regarding motivation and attitudes regarding language learning.

### 3. Research Questions

One of the primary goals of language teachers is to provide momentum to enhance their learners' motivation so they can maximize their language learning experience. Motivation is not only a driving force in the classroom but also is essential for continued learning. As can be surmised from the above, the landscape of the motivation of learners learning in an

EFL context under current globalized circumstances warrants investigation. Thus, the current study attempts to address the following research questions.

- 1) What are the relationships between motivated behavior, L2MSS, and IP in Korean middle school learners of English?
- 2) Are there any gender, school type, and L2 achievement differences concerning motivated behavior, L2MSS, and IP in the Korean middle school learners of English?

The present study endeavors to answer the two questions stated above utilizing a questionnaire that investigates Korean learners of English in an EFL middle school context and their motivation towards the target language, English.

### III. METHOD

#### 1. Participants

In this study, 95 middle school learners of English were sampled as participants. One group, consisting of third graders in middle school (N=36) was solicited from the Incheon region. The other group consisting of second graders (N=59) comes from the GyeongGi-Do region. These two areas in Korea were chosen for convenience and because they are considered to be typical and representative. The first group from Incheon consisted of only female students to reflect a single-sex type school and the second group from GyeongGi-Do was a co-educational school to show mixed genders (M=21, F=38). The participants have spent between 5 and 14 years (based on participant responses) studying English at public schools at the time of the questionnaire, with a mean of 6.04 years. It can be inferred that most of the participants started learning English when they entered either kindergarten or elementary school. A total of 71 out of the 95 participants had attended classes provided by a native English teacher at either school or a private institute; this number is relatively high because most middle schools are required to employ native speakers as English teachers (J. S. Yang, 2013). Only four participants had experience living overseas. It can thus be concluded that the participants are relatively uniform in terms of their L2 learning experience so it is speculated that this category will not show significant results. Thus L2 learning experience, which is one sub-category of L2MSS, was excluded in this study.

## 2. Data Collection

In this study, a questionnaire, which was compiled in its present form in C. Y. Kim (2011), (see Appendix<sup>1</sup>) was employed to measure motivated behavior (i.e., attitudes to learning English and intended learning effort), L2MSS (i.e., ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self), and IP (i.e., intergroup approach-avoidance tendency, interest in international vocation or activities, interest in international news, and having things to communicate to the world) in the participants. These three measurements of motivation were then correlated with gender, school type, and L2 achievement to examine interaction. The questionnaire consisted of 61 five-point Likert scale items ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” and six items regarding personal information. Seven distractors were randomly placed in the questionnaire (see items no. 4, 13, 22, 33, 35, 42, and 59 in Appendix) to ensure respondents were focusing on the questions. The questionnaire was divided into three sections in order to examine motivated behavior, L2MSS, and IP, respectively, of Korean middle school learners of English: 1) attitudes to learning English (hereafter ‘attitudes’) and intended learning (hereafter ‘intended’) effort (14 items); 2) ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self (20 items); and 3) intergroup approach-avoidance tendency (hereafter ‘avoidance’), interest in international vocation (hereafter ‘vocation’) or activities, interest in international news (hereafter ‘news’), and having things to communicate (hereafter ‘communication’) to the world (20 items).

As this research was inspired by Dörnyei (2005) and Yashima (2002), the questionnaire items were adopted from previous empirical research dealing with L2MSS and IP. The items in the first section were adopted from Ryan (2009) since these items were tested with Japanese participants which are similar to the population of this case study. The second section comes from Taguchi, Magid and Papi (2009) and the third section from Yashima (2009). None of the questionnaire items were modified or omitted and no additional items other than the distractors and those eliciting personal information were included. The questionnaire items were translated into Korean so respondents would have no problem understanding the items. Data collection was carried out in June, 2014 at ‘S’ Girl’s Middle School and ‘C’ Middle School, respectively. The time provided to complete the questionnaire was between ten and fifteen minutes. The questionnaire was administered by teachers who were provided with explicit instructions of the procedures involved<sup>2</sup>.

The quantitative data obtained from the participants’ responses to the questionnaire were analyzed with SPSS version 21.0 and Excel 2013. Frequencies, means, and standard

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<sup>1</sup> The English version of the questionnaire is provided in the Appendix.

<sup>2</sup> Teachers were chosen to supervise rather than the researcher as teachers have the authority to encourage students to take part in the questionnaire.

deviations were calculated for each item to present central tendency and dispersion along the Likert scale. After the descriptive analysis, Pearson correlations were calculated to establish the relationships between the measured variables.

Table 1 shows the Cronbach-alpha coefficient for the reliability of the questionnaire used in the study.

**TABLE 1**  
Reliability of the Questionnaire Items

Category	Measurement	Item No.	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Motivated Behavior	attitudes	1, 15, 26, 39, 51, 56	0.88
	intended	2, 6, 12, 21, 23, 43, 55, 60	0.88
L2MSS	ideal L2 self	7, 8, 9, 11, 14, 16, 28, 45, 57, 61	0.87
	ought-to L2 self	3, 17, 20, 27, 29, 44, 46, 49, 53, 58	0.9
IP	avoidance	18, 25, 30, 38, 40, 48	0.88
	vocation	19, 24, 31, 32, 37, 47	0.9
	news	34, 36, 50, 52	0.88
	communication	5, 10, 41, 54	0.88

Table 1 shows that all the items were above 0.80 so the items were considered as suitable to use for the participants without any changes.

As for the participants' achievement data, their midterm exam scores for the subject of English were utilized. The scores were obtained from teachers who were currently teaching the participants. The total score of the midterm was 100 points at both schools. For C school, the scores ranged from a minimum of 5 to a maximum of 100 and the average was 62.76. In the case of S school the maximum score was 95, minimum was 2, and the mean was 58.41. Based on the mean scores, the participants were placed into two L2 achievement groups (i.e., high and low). Both midterm exams (English tests of C and S school) consisted of grammar items and reading comprehension without a listening test. The exams of both schools were obtained and closely examined to see if they were parallel. Both school's exams consisted of mainly multiple choice items and short answer questions and were typical of the middle school level. So, it was deemed appropriate for the purpose of this study to utilize midterm scores as they are the most objective method which measures students' English achievement. L2 achievement level was divided into two categories based on the mean scores: low and high.

## IV. RESULTS

### 1. Motivational Variables

The results of the inferential statistical analyses on the questionnaire responses are presented in this section. Descriptive statistics are provided when deemed necessary.

**TABLE 2**  
Means of the Motivational Variables

Category		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Motivated Behavior	attitudes	95	3.15	0.78
	intended	95	3.02	0.74
L2MSS	ideal L2 self	95	3.11	0.94
	ought-to L2 self	95	2.73	0.73
IP	avoidance	95	2.90	0.61
	vocation	95	3.09	0.65
	news	95	2.78	0.80
	communication	95	2.81	0.60

As can be seen in Table 2, the factors with the largest means were attitudes ( $M = 3.153$ ,  $SD = .78$ ), intended ( $M = 3.019$ ,  $SD = .74$ ) and ideal L2 self ( $M = 3.107$ ,  $SD = .94$ ), indicating that the sample group placed much effort into learning English, have good attitudes, and tend to have a positive future image of using or learning English. In order to examine the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the motivational variables, a correlation analysis was conducted. The level of significance was set as  $p < .05$ . According to Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010), correlations of 0.3 to 0.5 can be interpreted as meaningful and that, when two variables show correlations of 0.6 and above, they measure more or less the same thing. Table 3 shows the correlation coefficients for motivated L2 behavior compared to ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self.

**TABLE 3**  
Correlations of the Motivational Variables

Category		Attitudes	Intended	Ideal l2 self	Ought-to l2 self	Avoidan ce	Vocation	News	Communication
Motivated Behavior	attitudes	1							
	intended	.853**	1						
L2MSS	ideal L2 self	.756**	.761**	1					
	ought-to L2 self	.400**	.411**	.535**	1				
IP	avoidance	.554**	.477**	.559**	0.162	1			
	vocation	.530**	.500**	.593**	.224*	.560**	1		
	news	.584**	.582**	.589**	.266**	.465**	.549**	1	
	communication	.573**	.535**	.667**	.433**	.497**	.437**	.652**	1

\*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$

As can be seen in Table 3, attitudes to learning English was positively correlated with ideal L2 self ( $r = .76, p < .01$ ). These results demonstrate that the two variables are tapping into the same construct domain and can therefore be equated. This is a large effect size<sup>3</sup> and shows there is a strong relationship between attitudes and ideal L2 self. In addition, attitudes to learning English was positively correlated to ought-to L2 self ( $r = .40, p < .01$ ) and all the four subcomponents of IP, i.e., avoidance ( $r = .55, p < .01$ ), vocation ( $r = .53, p < .01$ ), news ( $r = .58, p < .01$ ), and communication ( $r = .57, p < .01$ ). Intended learning effort was positively correlated with ideal L2 self ( $r = .76, p < .01$ ), with ought-to L2 self ( $r = .41, p < .01$ ), and all the four subcomponents of IP, i.e., avoidance ( $r = .48, p < .01$ ), vocation ( $r = .50, p < .01$ ), news ( $r = .58, p < .01$ ), and communication ( $r = .54, p < .01$ ). In general, it can be said that L2MSS and IP are positively correlated with motivated behavior. While ideal L2 self positively correlated with the four subcomponents of IP, ought-to L2 self positively correlated with vocation, news, and communication. In other words, ought-to L2 self showed an insignificant correlation with avoidance ( $r = .162, p < .01$ ).

## 2. Differences According to Learner Variables

The interaction of gender, school type, and L2 achievement and motivation are presented in this section. Motivated behavior, L2MSS, and IP are speculated to exhibit gender, school type, and L2 achievement differences as aforementioned. Table 4 shows the results of an independent-samples t-test carried out to compare the motivational variables according to gender.

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<sup>3</sup>  $r = 0.10$  (small effect size),  $r = 0.30$  (medium effect size),  $r = 0.50$  (large effect size)

**TABLE 4**  
Gender Differences in Motivated Behavior, L2MSS, IP, and L2 Achievement

Gender		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i> (2-tailed)	
Motivated Behavior	attitudes	Male	21	3.16	0.80	0.04	93	0.97
		Female	74	3.15	0.78			
	intended	Male	21	3.08	0.58	0.42	93	0.67
		Female	74	3.00	0.78			
L2MSS	ideal L2 self	Male	21	3.04	0.76	-0.38	93	0.70
		Female	74	3.13	0.99			
	ought-to L2 self	Male	21	2.82	0.72	0.68	93	0.50
		Female	74	2.70	0.73			
IP	avoidance	Male	21	2.57	0.55	-3.00**	93	0.00
		Female	74	3.00	0.59			
	vocation	Male	21	2.92	0.67	-1.34	93	0.18
		Female	74	3.14	0.64			
	news	Male	21	2.74	0.82	-0.28	93	0.78
		Female	74	2.79	0.80			
	communication	Male	21	2.57	0.53	-2.13*	93	0.04
		Female	74	2.88	0.60			
L2 achievement	midterm scores	Male	21	56.62	30.00	-0.64	93	0.52
		Female	74	61.03	27.00			

\*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$

As table 4 shows, there was a significant difference in avoidance, an IP component, for males ( $M = 2.57$ ,  $SD = .55$ ) and females ( $M = 3.00$ ,  $SD = .59$ ),  $t(93) = -3.00$ ,  $p < .05$ . Additionally, there was a significant difference in the scores for communication in IP for males ( $M = 2.57$ ,  $SD = .53$ ) and females ( $M = 2.88$ ,  $SD = .60$ ),  $t(93) = -2.13$ ,  $p < .05$ .

**TABLE 5**  
School Type Differences in Motivated Behavior, L2MSS, IP, and L2 Achievement

School		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i> (2-tailed)	
Motivated Behavior	attitudes	C	36	3.22	0.76	0.63	93	0.53
		S	59	3.11	0.80			
	intended	C	36	3.11	0.60	0.97	93	0.33
		S	59	2.96	0.81			
L2MSS	ideal L2 self	C	36	3.07	0.78	-0.31	93	0.76
		S	59	3.13	1.03			
	ought-to l2 self	C	36	2.79	0.63	0.70	93	0.49
		S	59	2.69	0.78			
IP	avoidance	C	36	2.70	0.56	-2.61*	93	0.01
		S	59	3.02	0.60			
	vocation	C	36	2.99	0.67	-1.20	93	0.24
		S	59	3.15	0.63			
	news	C	36	2.83	0.78	0.49	93	0.62
		S	59	2.75	0.82			
	communication	C	36	2.73	0.56	-1.07	93	0.29
		S	59	2.86	0.62			
L2 achievement scores	C	36	57.04	30.32	-0.83	93	0.41	
	S	59	61.90	25.99				

\*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$

For school type, as can be seen in Table 5, an independent-samples t-test was also carried out to compare the motivational variables for C and S schools. There was a significant difference in avoidance in IP for C ( $M = 2.70$ ,  $SD = .56$ ) and S ( $M = 3.02$ ,  $SD = .60$ ),  $t(93) = -2.611$ ,  $p < .05$ .

**TABLE 6**  
L2 Achievement Differences in Motivated Behavior, L2MSS, and IP

L2 achievement		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i> (2-tailed)	
Motivated Behavior	attitudes	low	42	2.85	0.72	-3.61**	93	0.00
		high	53	3.40	0.76			
	intended	low	42	2.740	0.68	-3.48**	93	0.00
		high	53	3.24	0.71			
L2MSS	ideal L2 self	low	42	2.72	0.79	-3.86**	93	0.00
		high	53	3.42	0.94			
	ought-to L2 self	low	42	2.71	0.75	-0.22	93	0.83
		high	53	2.74	0.71			
IP	avoidance	low	42	2.71	0.56	-2.86**	93	0.00
		high	53	3.05	0.60			
	vocation	low	42	2.94	0.66	-2.00*	93	0.05
		high	53	3.21	0.62			
	news	low	42	2.64	0.75	-1.59	93	0.12
		high	53	2.90	0.82			
communication	low	42	2.60	0.60	-3.21**	93	0.00	
	high	53	2.98	0.55				

\*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$

As for L2 achievement, an independent-samples t-test was also carried out to compare the motivational variables for the High and Low groups. As Table 6 presents, there was a significant difference in the mean scores for attitudes for High ( $M = 3.40$ ,  $SD = .76$ ) and Low ( $M = 2.85$ ,  $SD = .72$ ),  $t(93) = -3.611$ ,  $p < .05$ ., and for intended for High ( $M = 3.24$ ,  $SD = .71$ ) and Low ( $M = 2.74$ ,  $SD = .68$ ),  $t(93) = -3.477$ ,  $p < .05$ ., regarding motivated behavior. Second, there was a significant difference in the scores for ideal L2 self for High ( $M = 3.42$ ,  $SD = .94$ ) and Low ( $M = 2.72$ ,  $SD = .78$ ),  $t(93) = -3.864$ ,  $p < .05$ . Third, there was a significant difference in IP except for the news category. That is, there were insignificant differences in the scores for news for High ( $M = 2.90$ ,  $SD = .83$ ) and Low ( $M = 2.64$ ,  $SD = .75$ ),  $t(93) = -1.585$ ,  $p > .05$ .

In this section, the results of the inferential statistical analyses were presented. To summarize, gender differences were found regarding avoidance and communication in IP. Second, school type differences were detected only in avoidance. Lastly L2 achievement differences were exhibited regarding motivated behavior, ideal L2 self in L2MSS, and two subcomponents of IP (i.e., avoidance and communication).

## V. DISCUSSION

Concerning the first research question, the following relationships were observed based on the correlation analyses. First, motivated behavior was positively correlated with

L2MSS and IP. As Dörnyei (2009) mentioned, learners who have ideal L2 self are likely to put more effort into learning and have a good attitude since they have long-term goals and a future image of themselves using the target language. This implies that both L2MSS and IP influence motivated behavior of the Korean middle school learners of English. Consequently, in order to increase motivated behavior of the Korean middle school learners of English, educators or teachers should be aware of the concept of L2 self and international community regarding learners. Then they should utilize pedagogical methods that can enhance L2MSS and IP. Such resources such as YouTube, movies, pop songs, to name a few can be used to expose learners to different English varieties and uses by both native and non-native speakers. This in turn can enable learners to conceptualize their role and place as a non-native speaker of English. Second, generally IP also positively correlated with L2MSS. However, avoidance in IP was not correlated with ought-to L2 self. This is consistent with Csizer and Kormos's (2009) argument which stipulates that students who have a strong ideal L2 self also have positive views toward the international community. Building Korean middle school learners' IP could be the first step to build L2 self as seen in the correlation results between L2MSS and IP. Thus, educators should incorporate activities which could stimulate the desire in learners to talk to international people, provide exposure to international current issues, and introduce international career paths. By doing so, Korean middle school learners of English could become more aware of the globalized world so they can build L2 self whether it is ideal or ought-to.

For the second research question, gender differences were found in communication and avoidance in IP. That is, females showed a higher degree of willingness to talk to and contact international people. Thus it can be speculated that females expect to encounter international people more face-to-face than males. Conversely, it can also be inferred that males are reluctant to communicate with international people. This confirms the findings of MacIntyre et al. (2002), according to which females showed positive attitudes to speak English than males. In addition, previous studies have also highlighted a gender gap when it comes to motivation and attitudes regarding learning English as the target language (Mori & Gobel, 2006; Shaaban & Ghaith, 2000). The results of the present study support the existing evidence that shows that females are more willing than males to communicate with and contact people who belong to the target language community.

In addition, a gap between single-sex and coeducational school settings was found only in avoidance so that Korean middle school students attending the female single-sex school were found to prefer to interact with international people. In other words, L2 learners who are in a single-sex school like to meet international people more than those in a coeducational school. The result of this study is consistent with Lee and Lockheed's (1990) finding that students attending a single-sex school are more proactive. This result also confirms the findings of Blue, Mills, and Yeziarski (2013), that is, students in a single-

sex—in this case all female—school had more positive motivation and attitude. This reinforces the notion that female L2 learners in a single-sex school setting have a higher willingness to meet international friends than those in a coeducational school setting. Thus, teachers should provide frequent opportunities to engage in authentic communication with international people to females to enhance their proficiency level. For example, maximizing communicative interaction with native English speaking teachers in the school could be one way to do this. Based on the gender and school type gaps, it can be inferred that females, whether in a mixed-sex school setting or in a single-sex school setting, are more likely to have positive attitudes towards L2 learning and more willingness to communicate with international people. Thus, practitioners should consider how to encourage male L2 learners of English to build up better motivation to meet and communicate with international people.

Lastly, achievement level—in this case, midterm exam scores—showed significant differences concerning motivated behavior, ideal L2 self, and IP in general. These findings show that L2 learners who have high L2 achievement show motivated behavior, ideal L2 self, and a clear idea about international people or community. Thus, the result suggests that successful Korean middle school learners of English have an open mind toward the international community, a positive future image of using English, a positive attitude toward English classes, and put more effort into learning English. Students who are highly motivated have a strong positive future L2 self and have a willingness to interact and talk with international people tend to show more successful outcomes in L2 learning. In other words, ideal L2 self and IP which lead to motivated behavior could be crucial aspects in L2 achievement.

It can be argued that ideal L2 self could be a key factor which impacts L2 achievement or that ideal L2 self is the core factor which enhances L2 learners' positive attitudes and intended effort towards L2 learning. This implies that in order to enhance L2 learners' achievement, practitioners should consider how to improve L2 learners' ideal L2 self. That is, building up L2 learners' positive future images of using the target language could be an ideal solution for improving L2 learners' achievement. However, enhancing L2 self is a difficult task. As T. Y. Kim (2012) stated, ideal L2 self is changeable by various factors. The factors could be parents, goals, teachers, and other circumstances surrounding L2 learners. So teachers should consider L2 learners' motivation, since many teachers frequently neglect or ignore L2 learners' current motivational state (Oxford & Shearin, 1994). Constructing an ideal L2 self may be possible with the help of intervention in the form of sharing stories of successful L2 learners, use of authentic materials, and various communicative activities.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This study attempted to investigate the nature of L2 motivation among Korean middle school learners of English in terms of the relationships between motivated behavior, L2MSS, and IP. Initially, it was speculated that these learners, who were taking English classes at the time of this study, would have a future image of using English and would therefore exhibit clear L2 selves and a high degree of motivation. In order to identify relations of L2 motivational variables among Korean middle school learners of English, data were elicited from middle school student participants through a questionnaire. Results revealed that the participants' motivated behavior was correlated with ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and IP. IP correlated with ideal L2 self, but moderately correlated with ought-to L2 self. Gender differences were found in the case of communication and avoidance. However, for school type, avoidance showed the only difference. L2 achievement differences were also found in motivated behavior, ideal L2 self, and partially IP.

Based on the results discussed above, this study concludes that Korean middle school learners' motivated behavior which has an effect on L2 achievement, is closely related to the L2 Motivational Self System (especially ideal L2 self) and moderately to international posture. So educators should consider how to build ideal L2 self that is considered as key factor which could enhance learners' L2 achievement. As Y. K. Kim and T. Y. Kim (2011) have suggested, there are some activities which could help build ideal L2 self for secondary school level students. Activities related to group discussions and journal writing are considered to build ideal L2 self in an incremental way. In particular, journal writing enables the learners to reflect upon their language learning experiences on a regular basis. In addition, if teachers focus more on communicative language teaching pedagogy or task-based language teaching students will be able to develop a more positive image of using English.

Although the present study was an attempt to explore the motivation of Korean middle school learners of English, there were several limitations. The main limitation was that the sample size was unbalanced. That is the number of single-sex middle school students exceeded that of the coeducational middle school student group. In addition, the single-sex school was all female and an all male school was not included. Therefore, the conclusions of this study need to be verified by conducting similar studies with a more balanced sample. In addition, although it is assumed that the midterm score is accurate in representing proficiency level, another limitation was that instead of using a standardized test to assess the participants' English proficiency level, their midterm scores were used. This should be rectified in any type of follow-up study as midterms show variation across each individual school. Finally, as the subcomponents of the motivation constructs were examined in a macro nature, a more fine-tuned analysis may reveal aspects that were not touched upon in

the present study and may limit its generalizability to a wider population.

Despite such limitations, the present study did look at an under-researched group. For further study, the same questionnaire can be administered to primary school and high school students as comparison groups for the middle school students in this study. As aforementioned, primary school students and high school students are influenced more by external factors than middle school students and would thus, subsequently be affected by different variables. In addition, a longitudinal study of Korean middle school learners of English, which could observe how students form and change their motivation according to age and language learning circumstances would also help further clarify the important relationships among motivational factors.

In conclusion, this study has attempted to show that middle school students in the EFL context of Korea are a distinctive population that warrants more attention. These students are in a formative stage where deliberate pedagogical intervention could enable them to build up their motivation to learn English which would go beyond the instrumental purpose of preparing for high school and the foreboding CSAT. Although motivation is a construct affected by an array of factors, it can still be molded and is susceptible to change throughout the learning trajectory of a foreign language.

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## APPENDIX

### Questionnaire on Learning English and L2 Motivation

Hello. This questionnaire is designed to better understand Korean middle school students' thoughts of their English class and English itself. This questionnaire will be completely anonymous and confidential so your personal information will not be used in any way other than for this research. This is not a test so there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. So please answer sincerely. The questionnaire should take less than 20 minutes to complete. Thank you for your help.

#### Directions:

You can answer the following questions with the scale of strongly-disagree, disagree, agree, neither disagree nor agree, agree, and strongly-agree. There is no 'correct' or 'right' answer, so please read them carefully and answer them honestly. Mark the box with a check mark ( V ) for your answer .

Item	strongly-disagree	disagree	neither disagree nor agree	agree	strongly-agree
	1	2	3	4	5
(e.g.) I like music very much.	1	2	3	4√	5

1	I like English.	1	2	3	4	5
2	When I hear an English song on the radio, I listen carefully and try to understand all the words.	1	2	3	4	5
3	If I fail to learn English, I'll be letting other people down.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I like to learn English by listening to the teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I have thoughts that I want to share with people from other parts of the world.	1	2	3	4	5

6	It is extremely important for me to learn English.	1	2	3	4	5
7	I can imagine myself living abroad and having a discussion in English.	1	2	3	4	5
8	I can imagine a situation where I am speaking English with foreigners.	1	2	3	4	5
9	I can imagine myself as someone who is able to speak English.	1	2	3	4	5
10	I have ideas about international issues, such as environmental issues.	1	2	3	4	5
11	Whenever I think of my future career, I imagine myself using English.	1	2	3	4	5
12	If I could have access to English-speaking TV stations, I would try to watch them often.	1	2	3	4	5
13	Listening is more important than speaking when learning a second language.	1	2	3	4	5
14	I can imagine myself writing English e-mails fluently.	1	2	3	4	5
15	Learning English is really great.	1	2	3	4	5
16	I can imagine myself speaking English as if I were a native speaker of English.	1	2	3	4	5
17	Studying English is important to me because an educated person is supposed to be able to speak English.	1	2	3	4	5
18	I want to make friends with international students studying in Korea.	1	2	3	4	5
19	I want to work in an international organization such as the United Nations.	1	2	3	4	5
20	Studying English is important to me because other people will respect me more if I have knowledge of English.	1	2	3	4	5
21	If English were not taught in school, I would try to go to English classes somewhere else.	1	2	3	4	5
22	I get nervous when I am speaking in English.	1	2	3	4	5
23	I can honestly say that I am really doing my best to learn English.	1	2	3	4	5
24	I'm interested in an international career.	1	2	3	4	5
25	I wouldn't mind sharing an apartment or room with an international student.	1	2	3	4	5
26	I really enjoy learning English.	1	2	3	4	5
27	I often read and watch news about foreign countries.	1	2	3	4	5
28	I can imagine myself studying in a university where all my courses are taught in English.	1	2	3	4	5
29	I consider learning English important because the people I respect think that I should do it.	1	2	3	4	5
30	I would talk to an international student if there was one at school.	1	2	3	4	5
31	I want to work in a foreign country.	1	2	3	4	5
32	I'd rather avoid the kind of work that sends me overseas frequently.	1	2	3	4	5
33	I have a special ability to learn English.	1	2	3	4	5
34	I often talk about situations and events in foreign countries with my family and/or friends.	1	2	3	4	5
35	I have a creative imagination.	1	2	3	4	5
36	I study English because close friends of mine think it is important.	1	2	3	4	5
37	I don't think what's happening overseas has much to do with my daily life.	1	2	3	4	5
38	I want to participate in a volunteer activity to help foreigners living in the surrounding community.	1	2	3	4	5
39	I'm always looking forward to my English classes.	1	2	3	4	5
40	I would feel somewhat uncomfortable if a foreigner moved in next door.	1	2	3	4	5
41	I have no clear opinions about international issues.	1	2	3	4	5
42	Developing grammar knowledge is important for second language learning.	1	2	3	4	5
43	I am working hard at learning English.	1	2	3	4	5
44	Learning English is necessary because people surrounding me expect me to do so.	1	2	3	4	5
45	I can imagine myself speaking English with international friends or colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5
46	Studying English is important to me in order to gain the approval of my peers/teachers/family.	1	2	3	4	5
47	I would rather stay in my hometown.	1	2	3	4	5
48	I try to avoid talking with foreigners if I can.	1	2	3	4	5

49	I have to study English because if I don't I think my parents will be disappointed with me.	1	2	3	4	5
50	I have a strong interest in international affairs.	1	2	3	4	5
51	I find learning English really interesting.	1	2	3	4	5
52	I'm not much interested in overseas news.	1	2	3	4	5
53	It will have a negative impact on my life if I don't learn English.	1	2	3	4	5
54	I have issues to address with people in the world.	1	2	3	4	5
55	I am the kind of person who makes great efforts to learn English.	1	2	3	4	5
56	Learning English is one of the most important aspects in my life.	1	2	3	4	5
57	The things I want to do in the future require me to use English.	1	2	3	4	5
58	My parents believe that I must study English to be an educated person.	1	2	3	4	5
59	It bothers me when I don't understand everything the teacher says in English.	1	2	3	4	5
60	If an English course was offered in the future, I would like to take it.	1	2	3	4	5
61	I can imagine myself living abroad and using English effectively for communicating with locals.	1	2	3	4	5

NOTE: Shaded numbers indicate distractors.

Please provide the following information.

Gender	male	female			
Age	13	14	15	16	17
Years of study of English	( ) years				
English teacher	Have you ever had or do you have English-speaking teacher?				
	Yes	No			
Overseas experience (English speaking countries)	Yes No				
	If so, how many years or months? ( ) years ( ) months				
English ability	advanced	intermediate	lower intermediate	post-beginner	beginner
	1	2	3	4	5

★ Thank you for your time! ★

**Examples in: English**

**Applicable Language: English**

**Applicable Levels: secondary**

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