Article

English Learning Goals and Actions for Goal Achievement among Japanese EFL Learners: An Exploratory Study

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the construct of English learning goals and actions for goal achievement among Japanese English as a foreign language (EFL) learners, as well as the correlations with learner motivation and willingness to communicate (WTC). Based on responses from 255 learners, this study developed original scales to categorize learner goals and actions for achieving those goals. From the exploratory factor analyses, English learning goals were categorized into three factors: *enhancing communicative competence*, *positive attitudes towards English use*, and *maintaining minimum required English skills*. Accordingly, this scale was named the *Goals for Learning English Scale (GLE Scale)*. Similarly, actions for goal achievement were categorized into *daily self-directed English practice*, *technology-based English training*, and *active engagement in communication activities*. This scale was named the *Actions for Goal Achievement Scale (AGA Scale)*. Pearson's correlation analysis revealed that all the *GLE Scale* and the *AGA Scale* factors positively correlated with learner WTC. Moreover, high-motivated learners exhibited higher scores in goal-setting and goal-oriented actions than their low-motivated counterparts. The two sets of scales developed in this study could be used by researchers and practitioners in various EFL contexts to assess learners' goal-setting and goal-achievement behaviors in future practice.

KEYWORDS: Learner goals, goal achievement, individual factors

Introduction

A significant portion of the literature since the 1990s has emphasized the impact of goal-setting on learner achievement across diverse fields of study, including foreign language learning (e.g.,

Al-Murtadha, 2019; Locke & Latham, 1990; Locke & Latham, 2006; Öztürk, 2019; Pintrich, 2000). Learners who set their goals and respond accordingly to those goals are likely to achieve the desired results (Živanović & Subotin, 2018). Locke and Latham (2006) indicate that the establishment of specific goals highly influences learner motivation and the sequential actions for goal achievement.

According to Öztürk (2019), goal setting is crucial for learner motivation, as the motivated behavioral process commences when the learner sets a goal. However, he emphasizes that without a definitive action plan, action schemata, and a time frame, the learner fails to initiate any actions toward goal achievement. In the classroom, students show a wide range of motivation, with some having clear and strong goals while others possess vague or less defined ones (Khoo, 2016). Motivated students seemingly perceive their learning as goal-oriented, exert effort to attain them, and are likely to possess self-efficacy due to positive past experiences of setting and achieving goals, which reinforce their belief in their capabilities (Živanović & Subotin, 2018).

Bandura (1994) discusses goal setting in the context of motivational processes, stating that explicit and challenging goals enhance and sustain motivation. Bandura posits that motivation based on goals or personal standards is shaped by three forms of self-influence: feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with one's performance, confidence in one's ability to achieve goals, and adjustments to personal goals based on progress. The goal-setting theory developed by Locke and Latham (1990, 2006) also proposes that high goals result in high performance and rewards, and more specifically, difficult goals enhance intrinsic motivation. The theory highlights that when goals are easy or vague, learners exert minimal effort because such goals are easily attainable; conversely, specific and hard goals require high commitment, resulting in enhanced performance. They assume that goal effects are reliable across diverse settings and populations; therefore, goal-setting theory may be effective across various domains and contexts.

A multitude of evidence indicates that goal setting may lead to positive learner outcomes. Investigating the structures of learner goals and actions for goal achievement provides a novel perspective on English as a foreign language (EFL) education in Japan. Moreover, clarifying the correlation between learner goals and their motivation and willingness to communicate (WTC) will enhance our understanding of EFL learners' attitudes toward their learning. Although the author previously examined the influence of goal-setting on learner WTC using qualitative methods (Fujii, 2023), there remains room for statistical investigation within the field. This study aims to uncover the factor structures of Japanese EFL learners' goals and actions for goal achievement through exploratory analyses.

Literature Review

Goal Setting and EFL Learning

Goals, attitudes, and self-related beliefs are regarded as central constructs in educational psychology and second language acquisition (SLA) research (Kormos et al., 2011). Numerous studies have highlighted the significance of establishing specific goals for language learning in the EFL contexts (e.g., Al-Murtadha, 2019; Fatemi et al., 2014; Mikami, 2017; Zhu et al., 2023).

Hung (2023) examined students' goal-setting behavior among Vietnamese EFL students, as such behavior is believed to enhance their engagement and ability to formulate action plans for goal achievement. His study identified several common goal-setting patterns among students by analyzing students categorized by their GPA scores, clarifying that a high GPA pattern is driven by strong self-confidence, whereas a low GPA is driven by an approach orientation and a temporal uncertainty tolerance. Hung (2023) focused on learner behavior, whereas Zhu et al. (2023) concentrated on the influence of goal setting on learner achievement. They investigated the impact of goal setting, informed by China's Standard of English Proficiency Scales (CSE), on students' reading achievement. They discovered that CSE-based goals significantly enhance Chinese ESL students' reading achievement and engagement. However, both studies share common limitations: a limited scope and small sample sizes, so the generalization of the findings should be approached with caution. Macayan et al. (2018) examined L2 learning goals among Filipino students and compared performance and mastery orientation results in language learning. In his research, performance-oriented students (i.e., those with goals focused on competing with others) demonstrated better performances in L2 speaking and writing tasks than mastery-oriented students (i.e., those with goals focused on mastering their skills). One limitation is that the study relied on local, institutionally-implemented tasks and scoring systems rather than globally standardized proficiency measures (e.g., TOEIC, IELTS, and TOEFL). Despite such limitations, the findings demonstrated that performance goal orientation facilitates English language learning.

Goal setting is essential for addressing learner factors, such as learner motivation, self-efficacy, attitudes, and WTC in the context of EFL learning. Fatemi et al. (2014) examined the impact of goal-setting theory on Iranian EFL learners' motivation and self-efficacy. Students who preferred more challenging goals exhibited significantly higher general self-efficacy and exerted greater effort with increased persistence than those who selected moderate or less difficult goals. The authors note a weakness of their study, as it did not include gender or educational level as analytical variables, so these potential influences still need to be investigated. Kormos et al. (2011) examined the interplay of motivation, language learning objectives, attitudes, and self-related beliefs among 518 learners in Chile. Their models revealed that students' primary learning goal was associated with English as a lingua franca, demonstrating a robust direct correlation between their aspiration to use English for international communication and their future self-guides. Al-Murtadha (2019) conducted a 6-week intervention of visualization activities aimed at enhancing WTC of Yemeni EFL learners. Results showed the positive influence of goal-setting on learner WTC. Despite the limitations of using self-reported data instead of actual observation, these studies still provide evidence for the importance of goal-setting for EFL learners.

A growing body of literature examines the relationships between goal setting and various learner factors. Establishing specific goals for language learning enhances student motivation, influencing their learning strategies, interaction modes, and learning input among learners (Zhu et al., 2023). Possessing specific goals positively influences learners' Ideal L2 self (Prasangani, 2014). Overall, these studies indicate that learners must establish clear and specific goals and take positive actions for goal achievement.

Prior Studies of Measurement Scales for Learner Goals

To date, certain researchers have developed instruments to measure learner goals from various

perspectives. Perhaps Midgley and her colleagues' Goal Orientation Scale is one of the well-known scales in the relevant field (Midgley et al., 1998). The scale assesses students' achievement goal orientations, distinguishing between task goal orientation, ability-approach goal orientation, and ability-avoid goal orientation. They confirmed the scale's discriminant validity through confirmatory factor analysis. They revealed how different goal orientations influence students' motivation and learning strategies. Dowson and McInerney (2004) conducted a study to evaluate the reliability and validity of their original instrument, the Goal Orientation and Learning Strategies Survey (GOALS-S). This survey questionnaire measures student goals and strategies, specifically targeting middle and senior school students. However, their study's main limitation resides in the fact that the participants were middle and senior school students from specific backgrounds, rendering it difficult to generalize the findings to other populations or educational contexts. Mikami (2017) conducted a study in the Japanese EFL context, developing a Goal Scale comprising three subscales (i.e., goal specificity, difficulty, and commitment) and investigated the relationship between intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy in extensive reading. This scale, however, contains items that specifically target learner goals for extensive reading, making it difficult to apply the items to general English classrooms.

Overall, research on the development of scales for learner goals in English learning reveal a multifaceted structure. This study aims to develop a novel scale for English learning goals applicable to wider contexts in EFL learning based on the qualitative data obtained from the author's preliminary study (Fujii, 2023). This study's significance and originality lies in its exploration of the detailed structures of English learning goals and learner actions for goal achievement as a combination of effects. Moreover, the relationships between English learning goals, learner WTC, and motivation will be considered. The study aims to provide empirical evidence for developing pedagogical interventions that promote goal-oriented learning behavior in EFL contexts. Accordingly, this study's research questions are as follows:

RQ1: What are the factor structures of learner goals for English learning?

RQ2: What are the factor structures of learner actions for goal achievement?

RQ3: What is the correlation between learner goals and WTC?

RQ4: What differences exist in learner goals between highly and less motivated learners?

Method

Participants

The study involved 255 Japanese EFL students (male= 178, female= 77) from one national university and one private university in Japan. A convenience sampling method was employed because the participants were students enrolled in the researcher's own English language classes. All participants were non-English major undergraduates with overall English proficiency ranging from beginner to upper intermediate, enrolled in mandatory EFL classes. The ages of the participants ranged from 18 to 25 years old. A questionnaire item assessing their motivation towards EFL learning, using a six-point Likert scale, revealed that 117 students

classified themselves as low-motivated, while 138 classified themselves as highly motivated in learning English. The study's purpose and ethical considerations were explained to the participants in advance, and those who consented to complete the questionnaire participated.

Instruments

Two types of scales were originally developed, inquiring about learners' goals for English learning (e.g., "I want to be able to express my opinions in English") and learners' actions for goal achievement (e.g., "I endeavor to actively speak English in class"). The scale items were organized according to the qualitative data derived from the author's preliminary analysis (Fujii, 2023) and were initially reviewed by two individual researchers (other than the author) to ensure content validity. In addition, a pilot study with different groups of EFL students who participated in this research (*N*= 20; male= 15, female= 5) was conducted to check the scale's psychometric quality as a step toward establishing face validity. Both questionnaires were to be completed using a five-point Likert Scale. To assess students' WTC in English, items asking their willingness to use the four skills in English were used (a six-point Likert scale). The current survey was administered online using Google Forms during the 2023 academic year. The questionnaire items were composed in Japanese and later translated into English by the author.

Data Analysis

This study conducted an exploratory factor analysis employing the principal factor method with Promax rotation to explore the factor structures of the questionnaire items. The internal consistency of the factor items was examined by calculating Cronbach's alpha. In addition, Pearson's correlation analysis and an individual *t*-test were performed as additional analyses to examine the data's constructional validity. The entire analysis of the study was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 28.

Results

Factor Structures of Learner Goals for Learning English

Table 1 shows the results of exploratory factor analysis regarding learner goals for learning English. There are a total of ten items, categorized into three factors based on the scree plot. Factor 1 comprises items such as "I want to speak English fluently" or "I want to be able to communicate with many foreigners in the future." Given that items in this factor represent learner goals aimed at enhancing communication abilities, factor 1 was designated as e*nhancing communicative competence*. Factor 2 comprises items such as "I want to visit an English-speaking country to enhance my English skills" or "I want to be able to read and understand English books." Factor 2 encompassed goal items associated with learners' positive attitudes toward learning English; thus, this factor was labelled *positive attitudes towards English use*. Factor 3 comprises items such as "Having just the basic necessary English skills is enough for me" and "As long as I can comprehend the English utilized in class, that will suffice for me." This factor was called *maintaining minimum required English skills* because it specifically focused on learners' lowest possible goals. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient yielded an overall result of α = .87, indicating considerable reliability. Finally, this scale was named the *Goals for Learning English Scale (GLE Scale)*.

Table 1. Factor Analysis Results of Learner Goals for Learning English

No.	Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
8.	I want to speak English fluently.	**.784**	-.056	.099
7.	I want to understand the lyrics of English songs.	**.651**	-.032	-.129
6.	I want to have sufficient English conversation skills to avoid inconvenience when I travel abroad.	**.585**	.246	-.009
9.	I want to be able to communicate with many foreigners in the future.	**.558**	.241	.109
1.	I want to visit an English-speaking country to enhance my English skills.	.021	**.759**	.018
2.	I want to be able to express my opinions in English.	.232	**.683**	-.095
3.	I want to be able to read and understand English books.	.389	**.389**	-.023
10.	Having just the basic necessary English skills is enough for me. *	-.217	.275	**.684**
4.	As long as I can comprehend the English utilized in class, that will suffice for me. *	.217	-.119	**.667**
5.	Even if I cannot speak English, I am content as long as I can convey my message using gestures. *	-.039	-.110	**.586**

Notes. *Reverse Items.
Factor 1 = Enhancing Communicative Competence (α=.82); Factor 2= Positive Attitudes Towards English Use (α=.81); Factor 3= Maintaining Minimum Required English Skills (α=.67); Overall Results (α= .87).

Factor Structures of Learner Actions for Goal Achievement

Table 2 illustrates the results of exploratory factor analysis on learner actions for goal achievement. Twelve items were categorized into three factors based on the scree plot. Factor 1 comprises items such as "I practice writing English sentences correctly" or "I rehearse expressions beneficial for English conversations." Factor 1 items included learners' spontaneous daily practices, hence this factor was named *daily self-directed English practice.* Factor 2 includes items such as "I watch English videos to enhance my language skills" and "I engage in daily listening practice." Factor 2 is related to technology-driven English learning activities. Accordingly, this factor was called *technology-based English training*. Factor 3 comprises items such as "I endeavor to actively speak English in class" or "I try to practice English speaking." These items are all associated with engaging in English-speaking and communication activities; thus, factor 3 was coined as *active engagement in communication activities.* The internal consistency of the entire scale was fairly high, with α=.90. This scale was ultimately named the *Actions for Goal Achievement Scale (AGA Scale).*

Table 2. Factor Analysis Results of Learner Actions for Goal Achievement

No.	Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
7.	I work on expanding my English vocabulary.	**.804**	.026	-.032
9.	I practice writing English sentences correctly.	**.565**	.043	.118
4.	I actively take English exams such as TOEIC and TOEFL.	**.565**	-.217	.153
8.	I rehearse expressions beneficial for English conversations.	**.565**	.061	.250
5.	I try to expose myself to English texts as much as possible daily.	**.535**	.382	-.142
11.	I strive to read English books.	**.448**	.290	-.092
2.	I watch English videos to enhance my language skills.	-.164	**.991**	-.003
10.	I engage in daily listening practice.	.287	**.445**	.076
1.	I endeavor to actively speak English in class.	-.027	-.026	**.672**
3.	I try to practice English speaking.	-.045	.336	**.575**
12.	I take classes that aid in improving my English skills.	.243	-.128	**.469**
6.	I pursue opportunities to communicate in English.	.238	.144	**.411**

Note. Factor 1 = Daily Self-Directed English Practice (α=.84); Factor 2= Technology-Based English Training (α=.74); Factor 3= Active Engagement in Communication Activities (α=.76);
Overall Results (α=.90).

Correlations Between WTC, Goals for Learning English, and Actions for Goal Achievement

Table 3 exemplifies the correlations between WTC, goals for learning English, and actions for goal achievement. The results showed that all three factors of learner goals for learning English exhibited moderate positive correlations with learner WTC (Factor 1: r (255) = .46, p < .01; Factor 2: r (255) = .48, p < .01; Factor 3: r (255) = .34, p < .01). Having specific goals, such as improving communicative competence or maintaining a positive attitude toward using English, is closely related to learners' WTC levels. In addition, all three factors of learner actions for goal achievement exhibited moderate positive correlations with learner WTC (Factor 1: r (255) = .55, p <.01; Factor 2: r (255) = .53, p < .01; Factor 3: r (255) = .59, p < .01). The results show that learners with higher WTC scores tend to take positive actions toward their goals, for example, through self-directed learning and daily English conversation practice. Consequently, it is evident that learners exhibiting high WTC tend to possess specific goals and are more inclined to act towards those goals.

Moderate to low but positive correlations were observed between factors of the two scales, *Goals for Learning English Scale: GLE Scale* and *Actions for Goal Achievement Scale: AGA Scale* (e.g., Factor 1 (Goals) and Factor 1 (Actions): r (255) =.35, p < .01; Factor 3 (Goals) and Factor 1 (Actions): r (255) =.29, p < .01). These results elucidate the positive correlations between the two scales of learner goals and their corresponding actions for goal achievement.

Learners with higher goals tend to take positive actions towards achieving their goals. Moreover, the correlation between the factors of the two scales was both high and positive (e.g., Factor 1 and 2 (Goals): r (255) = .89, p < .01; Factor 1 and 2 (Actions): r (255) = .77, p < .01). The data exhibited statistical consistency across the factors of both scales.

Table 3. Correlations Between WTC, Goals for Learning English, and Actions for Goal Achievement

	WTC	Goals: Factor 1	Goals: Factor 2	Goals: Factor 3	Actions: Factor 1	Actions: Factor 2	Actions: Factor 3
WTC	—	.458**	.483**	.340**	.548**	.534**	.585**
Goals: Factor 1		—	.888**	.679**	.354**	.367**	.369**
Goals: Factor 2			—	.694**	.382**	.395**	.400**
Goals: Factor 3				—	.292**	.274**	.265**
Actions: Factor 1					—	.770**	.836**
Actions: Factor 2						—	.761**
Actions: Factor 3							—

Note. Goals= Learner Goals for Learning English, Actions= Learner Actions for Goal Achievement.

** *p* <. 01

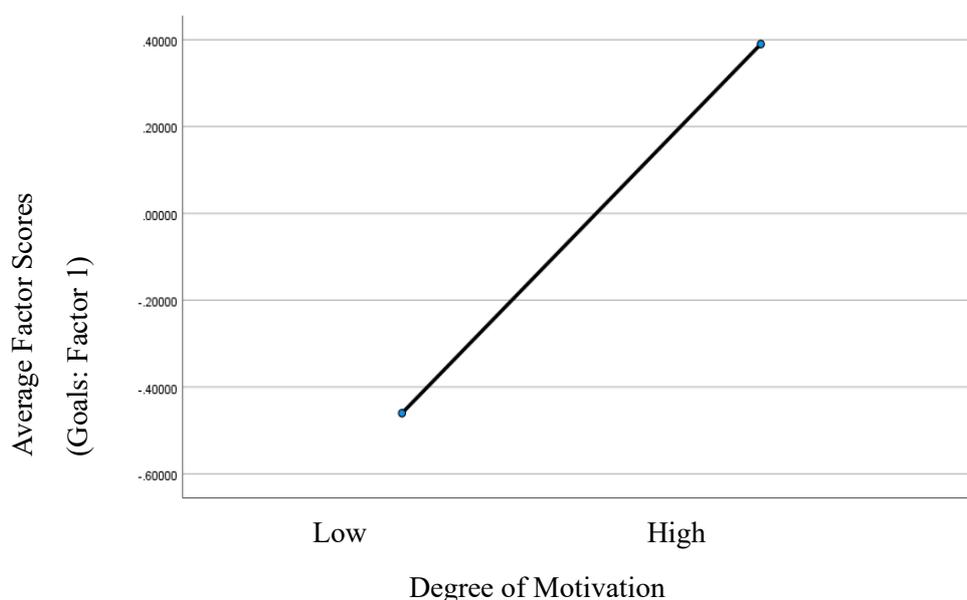*Relationships Between Learner Goals for Learning English and Motivation Levels*

Table 4 displays the independent *t*-test results between learner goals for learning English and motivation levels. The factor scores of learner goals were compared between low-motivated (*N*= 117) and high-motivated students (*N*= 138). The findings indicated significant differences across all three factors of learner goals for learning English, contingent upon motivation levels (Factor 1: t (253) = -8.163, p = .000; Factor 2: t (253) = -9.795, p = .000; Factor 3: t (253) = -6.946, p = .000).

Table 4. T-test Results of Learner Goals for Learning English and Motivation Levels

Variable (Factor Scores)	Motivation	N	Mean	SD	t (253)	p
Goals: Factor 1	Low	117	-0.460177	0.917211	-8.163	.000
	High	138	0.39015	0.745963		
Goals: Factor 2	Low	117	-0.521718	0.921952	-9.795	.000
	High	138	0.442326	0.642639		
Goals: Factor 3	Low	117	-0.377111	0.802588	-6.946	.000
	High	138	0.319724	0.794592		

Note. Goals= Learner Goals for Learning English.

These findings indicate that the factor scores of student goals for learning English significantly fluctuate based on motivation levels. Figures 1, 2, and 3 demonstrate the differences in results when analyzed through line graphs. The line graphs show the *t*-test results of learner goals for learning English and motivation levels. Because there were significant differences, the line graphs for the two groups of learners differ substantially. These figures show that highly motivated students consistently achieve higher scores across all three factors. Therefore, learners who exhibit higher motivation tend to achieve higher factor scores in English learning goals across all three factors (see Figures 1-3). In other words, highly motivated learners are more goal-oriented than low-motivated learners. These results are consistent with those of Fatemi et al. (2014), which indicate that students with higher intrinsic motivation are more likely to select challenging goals.

Figure 1: Factor Scores of Learner Goals for Learning English (Factor 1) Based on Students' Motivation Levels

Figure 2: Factor Scores of Learner Goals for Learning English (Factor 2) Based on Students' Motivation Levels
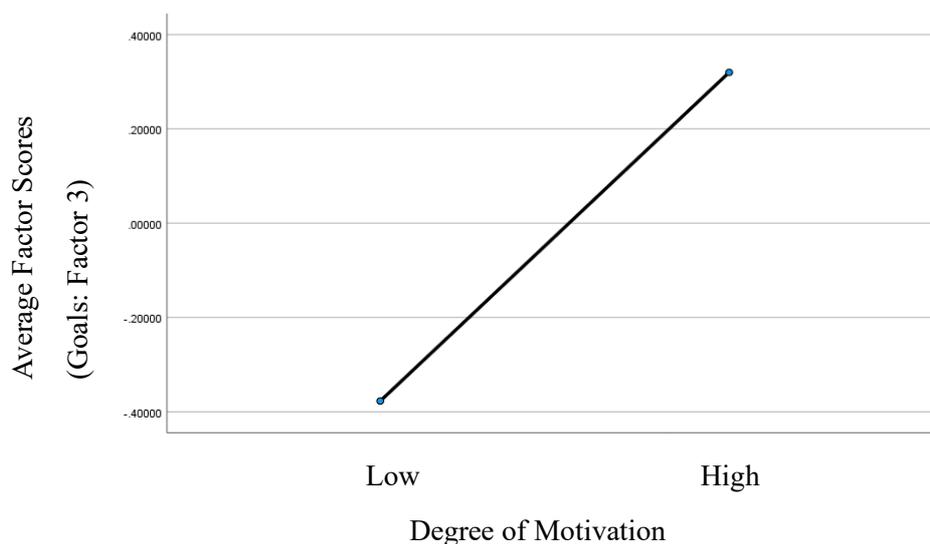

Figure 3: Factor Scores of Learner Goals for Learning English (Factor 3) Based on Students' Motivation Levels

Relationships Between Learner Actions for Goal Achievement and Motivation Levels

Table 5 illustrates the *t*-test results between learner actions for goal achievement and motivation levels. The factor scores of learner actions were compared between high- and low-motivated students based on their self-perceptions. Consequently, all three factors influencing learner actions toward goal achievement exhibited significant differences between the two groups of learners (Factor 1: t (253) = -7.340, p = .000; Factor 2: t (253) = -6.451, p = .000; Factor 3: t (253) = -7.276, p = .000). These results show that the high-motivated learners exhibit significantly higher factor scores for specific actions aimed at achieving their goals than those exhibited by low-motivated learners.

Table 5. T-Test Results of Learner Actions for Goal Achievement and Motivation Levels

Variable (Factor Scores)	Motivation	*N*	Mean	*SD*	*t* (253)	*p*
Actions: Factor 1	Low	117	-0.423171	0.787276	-7.340	.000
	High	138	0.358775	0.895749		
Actions: Factor 2	Low	117	-0.380551	0.785245	-6.451	.000
	High	138	0.322641	0.93125		
Actions: Factor 3	Low	117	-0.40112	0.699455	-7.276	.000
	High	138	0.34008	0.893984		

Note. Actions= Learner Actions for Goal Achievement.

The next three line graphs (Figures 4, 5, and 6) show the *t*-test results of learner actions for goal achievement and motivation levels. Interestingly, similar tendencies are observed in the line graphs of learner goals for learning English (Figures 1, 2, and 3). Significant differences between the two learner groups were also observed here, with clear changes visible in the line graphs. The results explain that learners with higher motivation tend to have higher factor scores in actions for goal achievement than learners with lower motivation across all three factors. That is, high motivation leads to increased efforts to take positive actions to attain goals. According to Al-Murtadha (2019), L2 motivation is closely related to learners' behavioral actions based on visualization. This study supports evidence from previous observations.
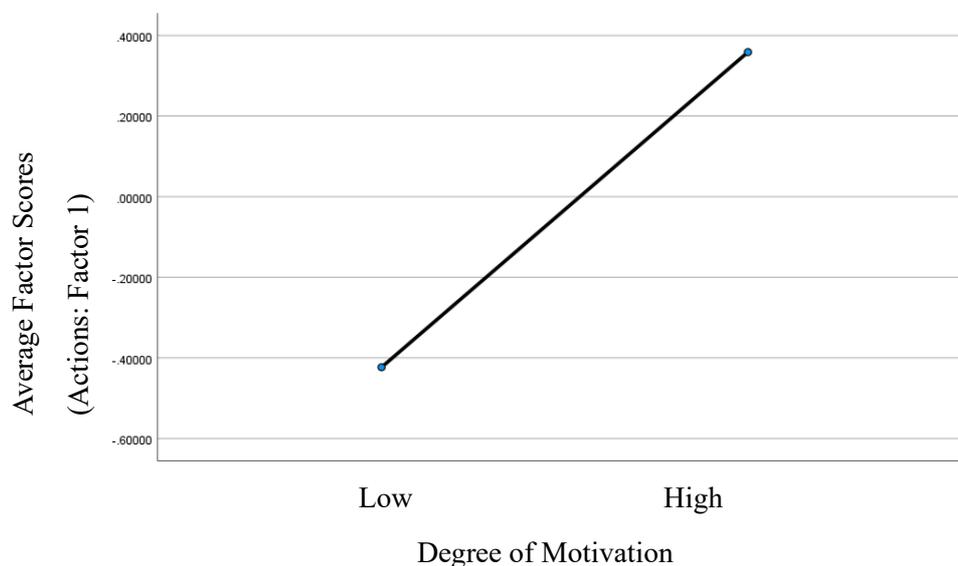

Figure 4: Factor Scores of Learner Actions for Goal Achievement (Factor 1) Based on Students' Motivation Levels

Figure 5: Factor Scores of Learner Actions for Goal Achievement (Factor 2) Based on Students' Motivation Levels
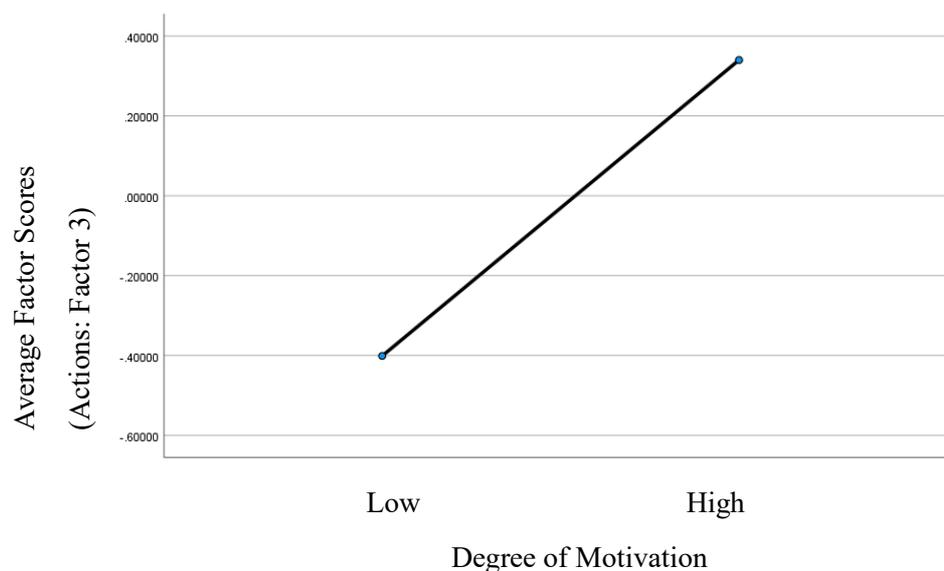

Figure 6: Factor Scores of Learner Actions for Goal Achievement (Factor 3) Based on Students' Motivation Levels

Discussion

This study posed four research questions concerning learners' goals and their corresponding actions for goal achievement. Concerning RQ1 and RQ2, it developed two original scales: *Goals for Learning English Scale (GLE Scale)* and *Actions for Goal Achievement Scale (AGA Scale)*. Both scales exhibited a high internal consistency of α= .87 and α= .90, respectively. The *GLE Scale* comprises three factors: *enhancing communicative competence, positive attitudes towards English use*, and *maintaining minimum required English skills*. There are ten items that exemplify learner goals in EFL classrooms in general and may accommodate diverse learning styles across various contexts. The *AGA Scale* comprises twelve items and is grouped

into three factors: *daily self-directed English practice*, *technology-based English training*, and *active engagement in communication activities*. This scale reflects potential actions for goal attainment from the learners' perspective. This study represents one of the initial endeavors to develop a set of scales for assessing learners' goal levels and understanding their desire to pursue these goals, despite prior research addressing the scale development of English learning goals (e.g., Dowson & McInerney, 2004; Midgley et al., 1998; Mikami, 2017). These scales will help us understand learners' attitudes toward their learning goals and could be useful as research tools for quantitative surveys.

Regarding RQ3, the relationships between learner goals and WTC were examined. The results showed that both learner goals for learning English and learner actions for goal achievement exhibited positive correlation with WTC. Learners with a high WTC typically possess goal-oriented behavior and demonstrate willingness to pursue those goals. Previous studies indicate positive and significant relationships between goal-setting and positive learner outcomes such as WTC (e.g., Al-Murtadha, 2019; Bloom, 2013). This study clarified the positive relationships between English learning goals and WTC, along with learner actions for goal achievement and WTC. These findings align with those of prior research.

RQ4 pertained to the relationships between learner goals and motivation levels. The results showed that highly motivated learners scored higher in English learning goals than their low-motivated peers. These findings suggest that highly motivated learners are highly goal-oriented compared to low-motivated learners. In addition, highly motivated learners typically attain higher scores in goal achievement activities than their lowly motivated counterparts. Highly motivated learners seem to be taking positive actions for goal achievement more frequently than their lowly motivated learners. A clear contrast was evident among the two learner groups. Motivated students set goals, work hard to achieve them, and gain confidence from past successes (Živanović & Subotin, 2018). Further, Bloom (2013) explains that once learners perceive that their goals can be achieved, their motivation increases. This study clarified the impact of motivation levels, demonstrating that high motivation fosters the establishment of English learning goals and the implementation of actions necessary for goal achievement. Fatemi et al. (2014) explain that when learners pursue a goal, they continuously monitor and evaluate their progress. Perceiving successful progress toward a goal enhances self-efficacy, which in turn sustains and strengthens their motivation to persist. Pursuing an ultimate goal in learning English sustains motivation to continue studying, therefore maintaining this positive cycle of progress is essential.

Conclusion

This study aimed to assess learner goals alongside learner actions to achieve those goals. New original scales were created based on Japanese EFL learners' responses, and the relationships between learner motivation and WTC were examined. However, certain limitations should be noted in this study. First, because of the exploratory nature, the data was collected at a singular point in time; therefore, additional analysis is needed to confirm the current findings. In addition, because the study used a convenience sampling method, a confirmatory analysis of the two developed scales is essential for future research. Third, it may be feasible to gather qualitative data, such as open-ended questionnaires or personal interviews, as a follow-up study to enhance the comprehension of the statistical data from the present study. Despite its

limitations, the study certainly enhances our comprehension of the essential role of goal-setting and action-taking in the success of EFL learners. The originally developed scales of this study may assist teachers and researchers in evaluating EFL learners' goal levels and their willingness to pursue these goals.

Goal setting is effective when students are "being motivated, being committed, being positive, recognizing success, and identifying means" (Al-Murtadha, 2019, p. 148). Moreover, Zhu et al. (2023) explain that when learners attain their goals, their sense of accomplishment and fulfillment may enhance their engagement, thereby leading to a virtuous cycle. From a pedagogical perspective, Öztürk (2019) further emphasizes the role of teachers as the following:

> (T)eachers should instruct learners about personal goal setting and support them in their actions so that they can achieve their goals. Supporting learners and scaffolding them in goal setting process may result in positive attitudes and higher intrinsic motivation(.) (p. 102)

Encouraging learners to set goals at their appropriate level and supporting them to act towards their goals is crucial for enhancing positive learner outcomes in EFL learning. It is also essential to provide instruction that promotes learners' reflective practices, includes occasional formative assessments with feedback from teachers or peers, and helps students set their own learning goals (Shinozaki et al., 2023). For instance, it may be effective for EFL teachers to have students create portfolios that include reflections on their learning experiences, test results, and possible improvements for specific classes. In such activities, providing teacher feedback and incorporating opportunities for peer-review may also help learners set appropriate learning goals. Establishing achievable goals allows learners to experience a sense of fulfillment upon achieving them, potentially facilitating their successful learning in the future.

Acknowledgement

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