

## English Language Learning Motivation and English Language Learning Anxiety in Saudi Military Cadets: A Structural Equation Modelling Approach

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### Abstract

This study aims to investigate English language learning motivation and English language learning anxiety in Saudi military cadets. Some 174 Saudi military cadets completed a questionnaire specifically developed to be used in the context of Saudi Arabia. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used to analyse a proposed model using Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) version 21. The study found that the students' language learning effort was determined by their Ideal L2 Self and their positive attitudes towards their immediate learning environment. However, the students' imposed social ideal-self as well as their negative attitudes towards their immediate learning environment contributed to their Ought-to L2 Self, which in turn increased their English learning anxiety. Parental encouragement and religious interest impacted on the Saudi L2 learners' Ideal L2 Self and their language learning attitudes, which might have helped them to see themselves as future L2 users and to adopt positive attitudes to their immediate learning environment. This in turn motivated them to invest more effort and be more persistent in learning English.

**Keywords:** English learning anxiety, intended learning effort, L2 motivational self-system, parental encouragement, religious interest

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## Introduction

Since the late 1950s researchers in the field of L2 motivation have been attempting to determine why individuals make particular choices, engage in specific actions, and persist in pursuing those choices. Gardner and Lambert (1959) were the pioneers as they claim that the L2 learners' attitudes towards the target language (L2) and the target community (L2 speakers) impact on L2 learner success in L2 acquisition. They created a socio-educational model that is based on the notion of integrativeness, which they defined as "a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other group" (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). In other words, the L2 learner "must be willing to identify with members of another ethno-linguistic group and take on very subtle aspects of their behaviour" (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, p. 135). The notion of integrativeness dominated L2 motivation research for more than three decades creating what Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) named the social psychological phase.

However, due to globalisation, English has become a lingua franca and the idea that English (L2) is owned by a particular target community is viewed as controversial (Jenkins, 2007; Jenkins, 2009; 2012). Therefore, a number of L2 motivation scholars (Dörnyei, 1990; Lamb, 2004; Norton, 2000; Yashima, 2002) have called for the notion of integrativeness to be reconsidered, on the grounds of incompatibility with the contemporary globalised context. This has generated a great deal of research that is characterised by "a concern with the situated complexity of the L2 motivation process and its organic development in dynamic interaction with a multiplicity of internal, social and contextual factors" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 72). One significant conceptual approach in this body of research is the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005).

Furthermore, emotions form an important dimension in studies concerning learner selves because discrepancies mismatches with and conflicts within the self-concept result in emotional states. For example, Markus and Nurius (1986, p. 958) state that "to the extent that individuals can or cannot achieve particular self-conceptions or identities, they will feel either positively or negatively about themselves". Language learning situations are likely to produce such contradictory emotional states. Consequently, looking at these language learning situations from a self-concept perspective is likely to provide better insights into the L2 learner's learning motivation as well as their learning anxiety, which is "a major obstacle to be overcome in learning another language" (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986, p. 125).

Using structural equation modelling (SEM) this study aims to investigate some hypothesised links between a set of variables. These variables are the three constructs of Dörnyei's tripartite model (L2 Motivational Self System), namely, English Learning Anxiety, Parental Encouragement, and Religious Interest (Alqahtani, 2017b) in an under-researched context: cadets from a Saudi Military Academy. Therefore, this study examines the relationship between future L2 self-guides (Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self) and emotions. The validity of Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System has been demonstrated in various English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts including Hungary (Csizér & Kormos, 2009), Japan, China, and Iran (Papi, 2010; Taguchi, Magid, & Papi, 2009; You, Dörnyei, & Csizér, 2016), Chile (Kormos, Kiddle, & Csizér, 2011), Indonesia (Lamb, 2012), Pakistan (Islam, Lamb, & Chambers, 2013), and Saudi Arabia (Alqahtani, 2015; 2017a; 2017b).

## Literature review

### ***The L2 Motivational Self System***

Dörnyei (2005) proposed a model which he named ‘the L2 Motivational Self System’. It draws on two fundamental theories from mainstream psychology, which are ‘possible selves’ (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and ‘self-discrepancy’ (Higgins, 1987). The proposed model has three constituents: Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self and L2 Learning Experience. The Ideal L2 Self represents the vision that L2 learners have of their future selves as a competent and/or successful L2 user, as they would like to be. The Ideal L2 Self includes the aspirations and hopes that encourage L2 learners to exert extra effort attempting to reduce the discrepancy between their actual current selves and their ideal future selves they want to be. The second construct Ought-to L2 Self represents the attributes that L2 learners assume they ought to possess in order to meet the wishes and expectations of their significant others (e.g. parents) and/or avoid unpleasant outcomes (e.g. failing an exam). This means the Ought-to L2 Self is less internalised (more extrinsic) in nature. The L2 Learning Experience refers to “situation-specific motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience” (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 106). Therefore, issues including the impact of the L2 teacher, the experience of success, the peer group, and the curriculum belong to this construct of the L2 Motivational Self System.

Almost all the studies that used the L2 Motivational Self System as the main theoretical framework found the Ideal L2 Self to be the most significant variable for predicting L2 students’ learning effort (Alqahtani, 2017a; Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Kormos et al., 2011; Taguchi et al., 2009). In some studies it explained more than 40% of the variance in the students’ learning effort, which is “an exceptionally high figure in motivation studies” (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 87). In addition, studies like Csizér and Kormos (2009) and Kormos et al. (2011) found that the Ought-to L2 Self and the L2 Learning Experience directly affected the Ideal L2 Self.

Nevertheless, studies such as Kormos et al. (2011) and Lamb (2012) found that the influence of the Ought-to L2 Self on students’ learning effort was minimal. This caused Kormos et al. (2011) and Taguchi et al. (2009) to suggest that the Ought-to L2 Self plays a more significant role in Arab and Asian contexts as “family expectations are powerful motives” (Dörnyei, Csizér, & Németh, 2006, p. 93). A number of studies have found that parental encouragement has a direct impact on the Ought-to L2 Self (Csizér & Kormos, 2008; Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Kormos et al., 2011; Taguchi et al., 2009). Therefore, Csizér and Kormos (2008) concluded that the Ought-to L2 Self is “entirely socially constructed” (p. 177).

In terms of its impact on learners’ L2 learning effort, the L2 Learning Experience resembles the Ideal L2 Self. Some studies have found that the impact of the L2 learning experience is even more significant (Alqahtani, 2015; 2017a; 2017b; Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Islam et al., 2013; Lamb, 2012). A number of variables have been found to have a direct impact on the L2 learning experience, e.g. the Ideal L2 Self (Alqahtani, 2017a; Papi, 2010; Taguchi et al., 2009), the Ought-to L2 Self (Papi, 2010), parental encouragement (Alqahtani, 2017a; Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Kormos et al., 2011), and religious interest (Alqahtani, 2017a). It is worth mentioning that various terms have been used interchangeably to refer to the L2 Learning Experience or to part of it; for instance ‘Language Learning Attitudes’ (Alqahtani, 2015; 2017a; 2017b), ‘Attitudes to L2 Learning’ (You et al., 2016), ‘Attitudes to Learning English’ (Islam et al., 2013; Taguchi et al., 2009), and ‘L2 Learning Attitude’ (Kormos et al., 2011). This study will refer to this construct as ‘Language Learning Attitudes’.

### ***L2 anxiety and motivation***

L2 anxiety refers to “the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning” (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989, p. 284). L2 anxiety usually exerts a negative impact on the process of L2 learning. For instance Coulombe (2001) and Gardner (2005) found that language learning achievements were negatively affected by L2 anxiety. Another example is avoidance behaviour (e.g. missing classes) by anxious L2 learners (Horwitz et al., 1986). Furthermore, anxious L2 learners are likely to take more time learning new vocabulary items in comparison with other L2 learners in the same class (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989). The anxious L2 learners also find it harder to recall these vocabulary items. Finally, in oral activities anxious L2 learners are likely to be more reluctant to volunteer answers (Ely, 1986).

In the context of L2 learning, there are two well-known dichotomies that previous studies have identified when describing L2 anxiety, namely, Facilitating anxiety vs. Debilitating anxiety (Scovel, 1978), and State anxiety vs. Trait anxiety (Spielberger & Gorsuch, 1983). Firstly, facilitating anxiety positively influences the behaviour of L2 learners and promotes their performance whereas the debilitating anxiety has a devastating influence on their behaviour and performance. Secondly, the latter dichotomy take into consideration whether the anxiety is passing and temporary (i.e. state anxiety) or the anxiety is stable across different situations and does not fluctuate (i.e. trait anxiety).

Researching a multi-faceted concept like L2 anxiety is not an easy task. As an attempt to pave the way for research, Horwitz et al. (1986) proposed that L2 anxiety comprises three distinct performance-related levels: “communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation” (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 127). In order to measure such levels they developed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). However, they do not believe that these anxieties simply transfer to the classroom. Horwitz et al. (1986, p.128) view foreign language anxiety as a “distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process”. Later, Papi (2010), developed a similar scale to FLCAS and this is the one which this study uses. The scale mainly focuses on the connection between interaction in English as a foreign language (in the Iranian context) and anxiety. Papi’s study revealed that the L2 Motivational Self System and English anxiety are connected. For example, L2 learning experience and Ideal L2 Self reduce students’ English anxiety while Ought-to L2 Self increases their English anxiety. Similar results have been found by MacWhinnie and Mitchell (2017) in a Japanese context as Ideal L2 Self and L2 learning experiences correlate with lower levels of anxiety, whereas Ought-to L2 self is indicative of increased anxiety.

### ***Parental encouragement***

The influence of parents on their offspring’s language learning motivation is of considerable importance forming “an important constituent of the motivational complex” (Dörnyei et al., 2006, p. 14). Parental encouragement is an important constituent of the social influence that the immediate learning environment exerts on L2 learners’ motivation. Research has drawn attention to the fact that “the bidirectional nature of the socialisation process between parents and children, as well as interactions with multiple socio-contextual forces” (Pomerantz, Grolnick, & Price, 2007, cited in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011) must be considered to form part of the dynamic relationship between motivation and context.

The significant role of parental encouragement in forming and sustaining students' language learning motivation has been noticed by a number of previous L2 motivation studies. In their study conducted in a Hungarian context, Csizér and Kormos (2009) found that parental encouragement positively contributes to the formation of the Ought-to L2 Self, which makes parental encouragement a main determinant of the students' L2 self-concept. Alqahtani (2017a) reached similar conclusions in the Saudi context. In addition, Csizér and Kormos (2009) found that parental encouragement impacts on students' attitudes towards English as an international language. Alqahtani (2017a) also found that parental encouragement made a direct contribution to the English language learning attitudes of Saudi students.

Finally, studies in Saudi Arabia and Hungary have found that L2 students receive encouragement and support from parents regardless of their parents speak English or not (Alqahtani, 2017a; Csizér & Kormos, 2009). This support might reflect the parents' perspective regarding the importance of their children acquiring English to provide better future prospects (Kormos & Csizér, 2007). A number of previous studies have found that parental influence on children's language learning motivation is likely to be more significant in Arab and Asian cultures (Alqahtani, 2015; 2017a; 2017b; Islam et al., 2013; Lamb, 2012; Taguchi et al., 2009).

### ***Religious interest***

Alqahtani (2017b) recently proposed this latent variable, which was found to have an impact on the L2 motivation of Saudi students. Religious interest refers to Saudi students' perception that learning English may serve as a means of correcting the distorted image of Islam that the international community may have "since media coverage of the international war on terrorism and political rhetorical has done much to promote negative images of Islam" (Alqahtani, 2017a, p. 91). Therefore, although religious interest represents a distal and long-term goal in language learning, it can be regarded as instrumental. This highlights the significant role of English as an international language in EFL contexts, including Saudi Arabia (Jenkins, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2005). The notion of interest includes "a salient cognitive aspect – the curiosity in and engagement with a specific domain – as well as a prominent affective dimension concerning the joy associated with this engagement" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p.93). For Hidi and Renninger (2006) interest is "an outcome of the interaction between a person and a particular content", therefore, "the potential for interest is in the person but the content and the environment define the direction of interest and contribute to its development" (Hidi & Renninger, 2006, p. 112). Interest, therefore, is not static but may change over time. Renninger (2009) asserts that issues such as stored knowledge, stored values and feelings make interest "experienced-based, and is not necessarily age-related" (Alqahtani, 2017a, p. 86).

Previous research by Alqahtani found that religious interest as a significant constituent of the Saudi L2 learners' motivation. For example, Alqahtani (2017b) found that religious interest to be one of the best predictors for the reported learning effort in his study population. In another study, Alqahtani (2017a) found that religious interest indirectly contributed to participants' intended learning effort via their language learning attitudes.

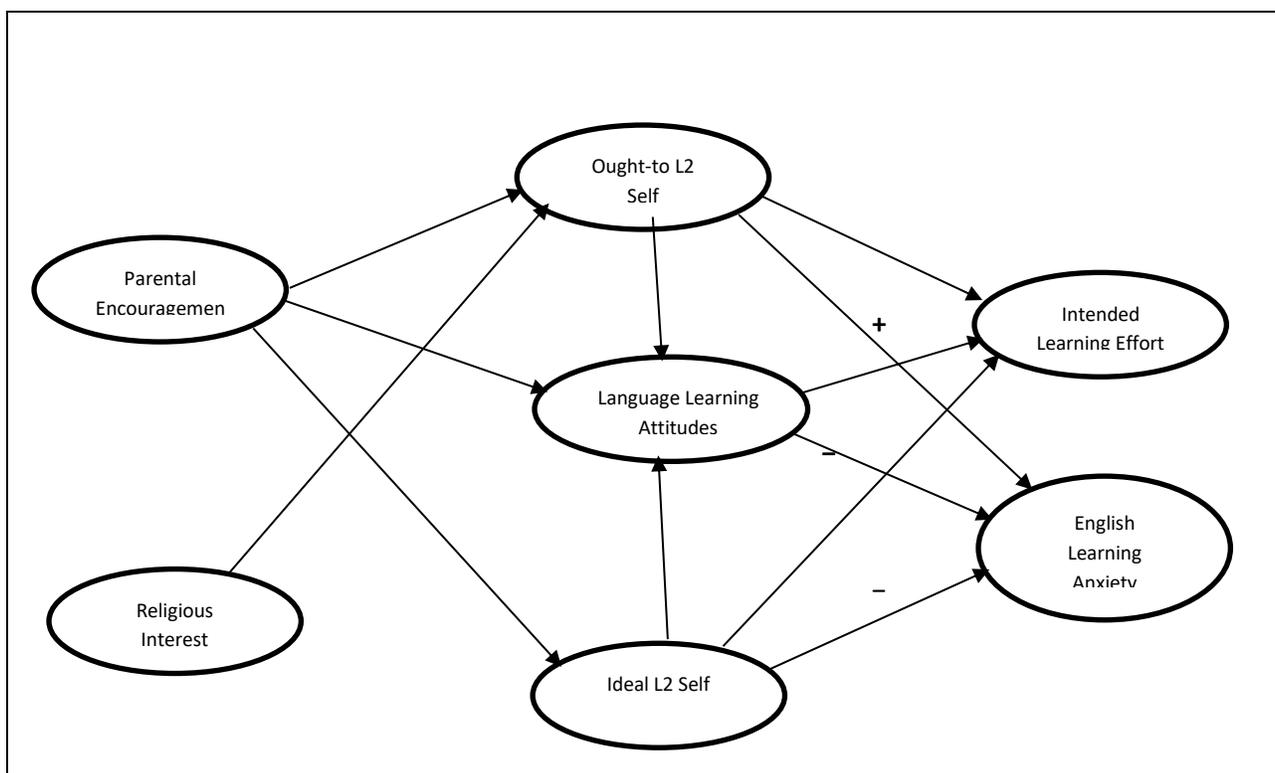
## **Method**

### ***The hypothesised model***

Building on previous research in the field of L2 motivation and L2 anxiety, the initial hypothesised model for this study is composed of seven latent variables: Parental Encouragement, Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self, Language Learning Attitudes, Intended Learning Effort, Religious Interest, and English Learning Anxiety (see Figure 1). Based on the above literature, the initial model contains 13 hypothesised causal paths. Since Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self, and Language Learning Attitudes are the constituent components of L2 motivation, there is a path from each construct leading to Intended Learning Effort. This assumption is supported by the findings of a number of previous studies including Alqahtani (2015; 2017b), You et al. (2016), Islam et al. (2013), Kormos et al. (2011), Papi (2010), and Taguchi et al. (2009). In addition, based on the findings of similar studies in Asian contexts such as Saudi Arabia (Alqahtani, 2015; 2017a; 2017b), Pakistan (Islam et al., 2013), Japan, China, and Iran (Papi, 2010; Taguchi et al., 2009; You et al., 2016), it is hypothesised that the students' future L2 selves (Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self) would affect their attitudes towards learning English.

Saudi society is a collective, conservative society (see Alqahtani (2015; 2017a) for further detail); therefore, it is expected that two latent variables will have a considerable importance, namely, Parental Encouragement and Religious Interest. Firstly, parental encouragement is linked to the Ideal L2 Self because in collective societies like Saudi Arabia parents are expected to affect the construction of their children's ideal selves "forming what is known as a social ideal self" (Papi, 2010, p. 471). Secondly, there is empirical evidence that Parental Encouragement also has a direct effect on the Ought-to L2 self (Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Kormos et al., 2011; Taguchi et al., 2009). Thirdly, in accordance with the findings of a previous study in a Saudi context (Alqahtani, 2017a), it is hypothesised that Parental Encouragement would directly affect students' attitudes towards learning English. Fourthly, Religious Interest is regarded as an instrumental language learning goal (see literature above), so it is linked to the Ought-to L2 self as it is less internalised (more extrinsic) in nature (Kormos et al., 2011). Finally, based on the findings of a similar study in a Saudi context (Alqahtani, 2017a), it is hypothesised that Religious Interest would have a direct impact on Saudi students' attitudes towards learning English.

The final three paths link the constituent components of L2 motivation (Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self, and Language Learning Attitudes) with English learning anxiety but display a different pattern. In the case of these three constituents of L2 motivation, Ideal L2 Self and language learning attitudes are considered internal while Ought-to L2 Self is considered external (Dörnyei, 2005; Kormos et al., 2011; Papi, 2010). Therefore, it is hypothesised that the pathways from Ideal L2 Self and Language Learning Attitudes to English Learning Anxiety are negative, while the pathway from the Ought-to L2 Self to English Learning Anxiety is positive. This assumption is also supported by empirical evidence, e.g., Papi (2010) and MacWhinnie and Mitchell (2017).



**Figure 1** Schematic representation of the initially tested model for the sample. Note. The plus sign (+) and the minus sign (–) show positive and negative paths, respectively

### **Participants**

The population of the study is drawn from cadets at the Saudi Military Academy which young Saudi men who have completed high school are eligible to join. Cadets spend three years (elementary, intermediate and final level) studying various subjects in two main domains: civilian and military. English is one of the civilian subjects that cadets must study throughout their three years at the Academy. Successful cadets graduate with a bachelor's degree in military sciences. The participants in this study are all elementary level cadets so the average age of participants is 19. The study questionnaire was distributed to students with the help of five colleagues, and completed questionnaires were collected afterwards. A total of 174 cadets volunteered to participate in the study, representing 21% of the 819 elementary level cadets.

### **Instrument**

The author developed a questionnaire based on a number of recent studies investigating L2 motivation and language learning anxiety of learners in various EFL contexts such as Hungary (Dörnyei et al., 2006), Japan (MacWhinnie & Mitchell, 2017; Ryan, 2009), China (You et al., 2016), Iran (Papi, 2010), Pakistan (Islam et al., 2013), and Saudi Arabia (Alqahtani, 2015; 2017a; 2017b). The questionnaire employs a five-point Likert scale with each response being allocated a score ranging from one to five (strongly disagree = 1 and strongly agree = 5). With the help of a number of suitably qualified lecturers, the wording, comprehensibility and suitability of the questionnaire items were assessed. On the basis of their feedback, some items were eliminated or reworded. The questionnaire was then piloted with the help of 39 cadets. Next, any required

changes were made on the basis of the analysis of the obtained data. The final version of the questionnaire that was used in this study consists of seven latent variables and has 40 items in total. Before questionnaires were distributed among participants, the author gave instructions to his colleagues concerning questionnaire administration to ensure anonymity of the respondents. Below is a summary of the definitions of the seven latent variables with sample items:

- Parental Encouragement: “measures the extent to which the parents of participants support and encourage their offspring’s English learning” (Alqahtani, 2017b, p. 166). Example: My parents encourage me to study English.
- Ideal L2 Self: “investigates the imagined personally desired self of respondents as future L2 users” (Alqahtani, 2017b). Example: Whenever I think of my future career, I imagine myself being able to use English.
- Ought-to L2 Self: “represents the imagined future English using selves of participants as demanded or expected by their significant others” (Alqahtani, 2017b). Example: I believe that learning English is necessary to me because people surrounding me expect me to do so.
- Language Learning Attitudes: “investigates whether respondents enjoy the experience of English learning” (Alqahtani, 2017b). Example: I really enjoy learning English.
- Intended Learning Effort: “is used as the criterion measure to determine respondents’ perceptions of the effort they put into their English learning” (Alqahtani, 2017b). Example: I am working hard at learning English.
- Religious Interest: “measures participants’ perceptions of the benefits of learning English for representing Islam in a better way to the international community” (Alqahtani, 2017b). Example: As a Muslim, I think the knowledge of English would help me to represent Islam to the international community in a better way.
- English Learning Anxiety: measures how anxious participants are when speaking English either in the English classroom or when communicating with other speakers of English outside the classroom. Example: I feel nervous and confused when I speak English in my English class.

### *Data analysis*

Firstly, the data obtained were entered into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (IBM SPSS Statistics 20) to create usable input for Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) version 21, which was used to run the structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis. Following Dörnyei’s (2007) instructions, a number of checks were run to spot outliers and errors prior to starting data analysis. These probes resulted in two questionnaires (1.1%) being eliminated from the sample, which is regarded as acceptable. After that, reliability analysis was conducted for the seven variables. All obtained acceptable Cronbach’s alpha values ( $> .60$ ), which meets the standards for social sciences research (Pallant, 2010). Therefore, it can be claimed that all the seven variables attained internal consistency. Table 1 shows Cronbach’s alpha coefficients, means and standard deviations for the latent variables.

The SEM model is made up of two sub-models, the measurement model and the structural model (Byrne, 2009). In this study, the estimation of the parameters was based on the maximum likelihood method. The measurement model was initially created on the basis of theoretical

considerations outlined earlier in the literature review. Then the latent variables were combined into a full structural model. The overall model fit was evaluated using the indices frequently advised in the SEM literature (Byrne, 2009; Schumacker & Lomax, 2010; Tseng, Dörnyei, & Schmidt, 2006). The indices reported in this study are: chi-square (CMIN), chi-square divided by the degree of freedom (CMIN/df), goodness of fit index (GFI) (Hu & Bentler, 1999), adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) (Tseng et al., 2006), incremental fit index (IFI) (Tseng et al., 2006), comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Fan, Thomson, & Wang, 1999; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Schumacker & Lomax, 2010).

**Table 1** *Cronbach's alpha coefficients, means and standard deviations for the latent variables.*

of the scale	Cronbach's alpha value	Mean	Std. deviation
1. Parental Encouragement	.78	3.83	.70
2. Ideal L2 Self	.85	3.89	.69
3. Ought-to L2 Self	.72	3.22	.75
4. Language Learning Attitudes	.86	3.29	.80
5. Intended Learning Effort	.70	3.92	.62
6. Religious Interest	.78	4.46	.61
7. English Learning Anxiety	.78	2.83	.83

## Results

One of the most important indices that ideally should not be significant is chi-square. However, chi-square is sensitive to sample size as non-significant probability levels can normally be achieved with a sample size below 100 (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). Therefore, a significant chi-square was inevitable. The fit indices (CMIN/df, GFI, AGFI, IFI, CFI, TLI, and RMSEA) showed very good levels. As the majority of the fit indices indicate an acceptable model, it can be claimed that the theoretical model is supported by the data. The joint goodness of fit measures for the final model are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2** *Selected fit measures for the final model*

Index	Current level	Accepted level
CMIN/df	2.15	< 3
GFI	.97	>.90
AGFI	.90	>.90
IFI	.98	>.90
CFI	.98	>.90
TLI	.95	>.90
RMSEA	.08	<.05 to .08

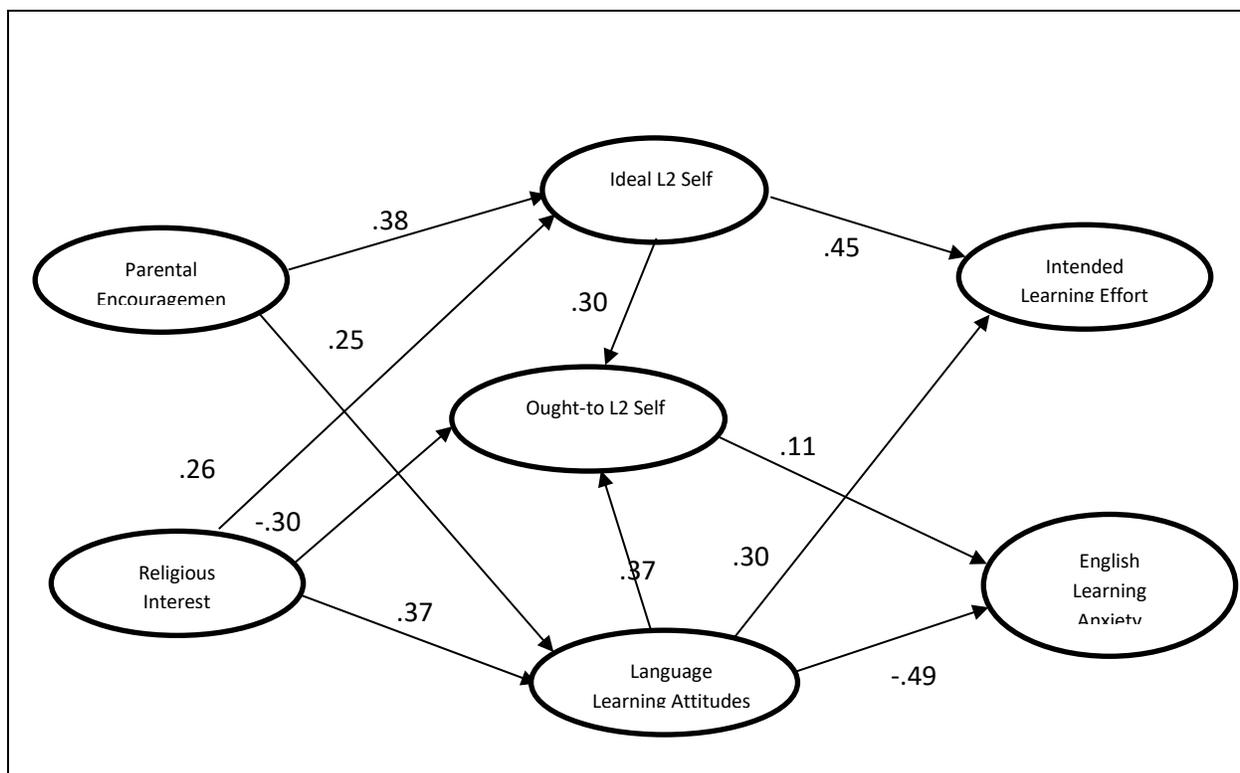
Analysis showed that five of the relations were not significant for the sample so these pathways were omitted from the initial model. The following pathways were removed:

- Parental Encouragement → Ought-to L2 Self
- Ought-to L2 Self → Language Learning Attitudes
- Ideal L2 Self → Language Learning Attitudes
- Ought-to L2 Self → Intended Learning Effort
- Ideal L2 Self → English Learning Anxiety

As a result of analysis, three new pathways were added to the model, namely:

- Religious Interest → Ideal L2 Self
- Language Learning Attitudes → Ought-to L2 Self
- Ideal L2 Self → Ought-to L2 Self

Therefore, the final model includes eleven significant relations. The schematic representation of the final model with the standardised estimates of the study sample is represented in Figure 2.



**Figure 2** The final model with standardised estimates. The plus sign (+) and minus sign (-) show positive and negative paths, respectively

**Discussion**

In order to gain insights into the characteristics of the language learning motivation of the Saudi learners of English in this under-researched context (the Saudi Military Academy), the influence of the three constructs of the L2 Motivational Self System on Intended Learning Effort was firstly examined. It can be seen from the structural model obtained that the Ought-to L2 Self did not

contribute to learners' reported Intended Learning Effort. The absence of the motivational role of the Ought-to L2 Self coincides with the findings from previous studies (Csizér & Lukács, 2010; Kormos & Csizér, 2008; Lamb, 2012). Dörnyei (who proposed the L2 Motivational Self System) was also sceptical about the role of the Ought-to L2 Self stating that "because the source of the second component of the system, the Ought to L2 Self, is external to the learner, this future self-guide does not lend itself to obvious motivational practices" (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 32). The lack of the motivational power of the Ought-to L2 Self might be due to the fact that English language education in Saudi Arabia is highly exam-oriented (Al-Mohanna, 2010; AlAhmadi, 2007; Alqahtani, 2015). This might have exerted extra pressure on the Saudi cadets, which is likely to have affected their persistence and effort in English language learning.

The model also showed that the Ought-to L2 Self positively contributed to the Saudi students' English Learning Anxiety, lending further support to the findings of a number of studies in Asian contexts such as Iran (Papi, 2010) and Japan (Aubrey, 2014; MacWhinnie & Mitchell, 2017). The source of the Ought to L2 Self is external to the learner (Dörnyei, 2009). In addition, Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) view anxiety as a characteristic of individuals who are concerned about the impression that others might have about them. One of the components of foreign language anxiety is fear of negative evaluation, which is "apprehension about others' evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively" (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 128). Therefore, the Ought-to L2 Self is likely to make the Saudi cadets more anxious.

The other two constituents of the L2 Motivational Self System (Ideal L2 Self and Language Learning Attitudes) impacted on Intended Learning Effort confirming the results of previous studies such as Alqahtani (2017a), You et al. (2016), Kormos et al. (2011), Papi (2010), Csizér and Kormos (2009), and Taguchi et al. (2009). Nevertheless, the impact of the Ideal L2 Self was higher than the impact of Language Learning Attitudes, which coincides with the findings of a number of previous studies in diverse EFL contexts; e.g., Chile (Kormos et al., 2011) and China (Taguchi et al., 2009). The Ideal L2 Self is "a combination of future-oriented goals and perceptions of one's ability to reach these goals" (Kormos et al., 2011, p. 507). This may suggest that these Saudi cadets had already developed an action plan to reach their proximal goals, which might have affected the effort and persistence they invested in accomplishing such goals.

In addition, the model also showed that Parental Encouragement affected the Saudi students' Ideal L2 self, meaning that parents may have helped their offspring to develop their action plan. This lends more support to the findings of previous studies in various EFL contexts, including Saudi Arabia (Alqahtani, 2017a), Chile (Kormos et al., 2011), and Hungary (Csizér & Kormos, 2009). These studies found that parents' belief in the importance of learning English and the support and encouragement they provide their children with is likely to positively impact on L2 learners' future L2 selves. Furthermore, Religious Interest also contributed to the Saudi cadets' Ideal L2 Self. The influence of Parental Encouragement and Religious Interest reflects Saudi Arabia's conservative Islamic culture that can be attributed to "two inter-related main factors: the influence of religion, and the influence of tribal and family traditions" (Mellahi & Wood, 2001, p. 143). Therefore, the Saudi cadets' Ideal L2 Self that is endorsed by their parents and their social standards might be "what is known as social ideal self" (Papi, 2010, p. 471).

To a lesser degree, Language Learning Attitudes contributed to the Saudi cadets' English Learning Effort. There is a consensus regarding the significant influence of Language Learning Attitudes on L2 learners' learning effort in EFL contexts (Alqahtani, 2015; 2017a; 2017b; Islam et al., 2013; Kormos et al., 2011; You et al., 2016). This suggests that these Saudi L2 learners have realised the importance of English for their future and that this may have helped them to maintain positive attitudes towards their immediate learning environment, which in turn may have encouraged them to invest more effort and persistence in learning this language.

Parental Encouragement and Religious Interest also contributed directly and indirectly to the Saudi L2 learners' Ought-to L2 Self. Previous studies conducted in various Islamic countries (Al-Haq & Al-Masaeid, 2009; Alqahtani, 2017a) found that L2 learners view learning English as "a religious and a national duty" (Al-Haq & Smadi, 1996, p. 307). Given that "media coverage of the international war on terrorism and political rhetorical has done much to promote negative images of Islam" (Alqahtani, 2017a, p. 91), it is possible that the Saudi L2 students might view learning English as an opportunity to "restore the health and reputation of their religion as one of tolerance and compassion" (Alqahtani, 2017b, p. 170). This may have helped them to experience feelings of enjoyment during their duty of learning English. While this enjoyment might have helped them to invest more effort and persistence in their language learning, their sense of responsibility to learn English may have exerted more pressure on them, and this in turn might possibly have increased their English learning anxiety.

Furthermore, Language Learning Attitudes contributed negatively to English Learning Anxiety, which was in line with the findings of previous studies (Aubrey, 2014; MacWhinnie & Mitchell, 2017; Noels, Clément, & Pelletier, 1999; Papi, 2010). This negative association between Language Learning Attitudes and English Learning Anxiety suggests that the more enjoyment Saudi L2 learners feel during the English learning process the less anxious they are likely to feel. This confirms the findings of Aida (1994) and Young (1991) that negative language learning experiences increase L2 students' anxiety while positive experiences lessen this anxious.

Finally, the model revealed that Ideal L2 Self and Language Learning Attitudes indirectly affected English Learning Anxiety via Ought-to L2 Self. It must be remembered that both the Ought-to L2 Self and Ideal L2 Self "come under the label of possible selves", so they are not "completely detached from reality" (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 12). Therefore, "the degree to which participants expect their feared or wished for possible selves to come true affects their self-esteem, current mood, and optimism" (Segal, 2006, p. 91). Therefore, the contribution of Ideal L2 Self to students' English Learning Anxiety via its impact on their Ought-to L2 Self suggests that part of the Saudi cadets' Ideal L2 Self does not seem to be well-developed, plausible and/or compatible with social ideal self (see the argument above), which may have exerted pressure on this sample of L2 learners. It is possible that this adds to their anxieties regarding their English learning. Similarly, the influence of Language Learning Attitudes on students' English Learning Anxiety through their Ought-to L2 Self might be due to negative English learning conditions encountered by this sample of Saudi L2 learners such as poor linguistic proficiency of English teachers, a poorly designed English curriculum, and a lack of suitable classroom facilities, reported by previous studies in similar Saudi settings (Al-Seghayer, 2005; Alqahtani, 2015). These poor conditions may have created negative language learning experiences in these Saudi L2 learners, which possibly in turn increased their English learning anxiety.

## Conclusion

This study investigated the internal structure of English learning motivation and English learning anxiety in a sample of Saudi military cadets. The structural equation model showed that the Ideal L2 Self of these Saudi students and their positive attitudes towards their immediate learning environment motivated them to invest more effort and persistence in learning English. However, their negative attitudes towards the immediate learning environment as well as their imposed social ideal-self affected their Ought-to L2 Self, which in turn increased their English learning anxiety. The model also reflected the Islamic conservative culture of Saudi society as Religious Interest and Parental Encouragement impacted on the Saudi L2 learners' Ideal L2 Self and their attitudes towards their immediate learning environment. It is possible that this helped them to develop an action plan to reach their proximal goals and may have enabled them to envisage themselves as future L2 users as well as having positive attitudes towards their immediate learning environment.

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