

# **A STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELLING (SEM) INVESTIGATION OF THE L2 LEARNING MODEL OF MOTIVATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AMONG TAHFIZ STUDENTS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study explores the motivation of learning English among students in selected Tahfiz government and state schools in Malaysia. Questionnaires adapted from Dornyei (2004), with an additional construct, were administered to 1,017 students aged 13 to 17. Exploratory Factor Analyses (EFA), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with Robust Maximum Likelihood estimation technique (MLR) were used. From the SEM analysis, a new model of motivation in learning English among Tahfiz students is proposed. The study discovered that attitudes towards community, promotion, prevention, parental encouragement, interest, Islamic values, ideal L2 self,

ought-to L2 self, and attitudes towards learning English all play central roles in the proposed model. A comparison motivation model between the Tahfiz government and state schools was also provided. The results suggest that Tahfiz English language teachers and other relevant parties should be aware of their students' motivation in learning English, and try to create a more conducive learning environment in the classroom. This can equip the students with sufficient language skills to be well-rounded Islamic preachers.

**Keywords:** Tahfiz; motivation model; L2 learning model; Islamic values

### Introduction

English is the most widely spoken language in the world with 1.35 billion people speaking the language as a first or second language, followed by Mandarin, Hindi, and Spanish (Szmigiera, 2021). There has been a rise in the number of countries that made English as part of the curriculum in schools (Graddol, 2006). This implies that English is regarded as a fundamental educational skill. Following this, one aspect of language research that surfaces is second language (L2) motivation. Gardner (1985) defines motivation as “the extent to which an individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity” (p. 10). According to Gardner and Lysynchuk (1990), L2 motivation is central to learning and it is an important part to retain a language.

In the area of second language acquisition (SLA), L2 learning motivation is one of the most elusive concepts. Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972) are the pioneers who introduce the integrative-instrumental aspects in measuring motivation within the social psychology framework. Integrative motivation refers to learners who hope to connect with another ethnolinguistic group, and instrumental motivation refers to learners who learn an L2 for practical reasons (Yang et al., 2013). In the quest to enhance SLA, many researchers have contributed new thoughts into the area of motivation. One prominent concept is Dornyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS), which adapts the Self Concept from the field of psychology, at the same time preserving the origins of preceding motivational frameworks such as the integrative-instrumental (Gardner & Lambert, 1959) and intrinsic-extrinsic dichotomies (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Many previous studies have adapted L2MSS for use in diverse EFL contexts (Magid, 2011; Taguchi et al., 2009) to investigate its impact on constructs such as anxiety (Yang et al., 2013), motivation in classroom context (Pawlak, 2012), study-abroad experiences (Pawlak et al., 2020), and achievement in Mandarin (Tan et al., 2017). Nevertheless, in Malaysia and other Muslim countries, there is a dearth of studies on motivation in learning English among Tahfiz students—those who learn to memorise the Quran. This gap needs to be filled because there is an increasing number of parents who favour Tahfiz education for their children as they believe that Tahfiz schools are capable of shaping their children into individuals with good character as

espoused in Islam (Bernama, 2014). Hence, based on the L2MSS by Dornyei (2005), and other Islamic elements, this study attempts to form a new model of motivation on learning of English among Tahfiz students.

### **Literature review**

#### *Motivation in Second Language Learning*

Motivation in L2 learning has charted many decades of research and historical analyses. The discussion in this area can be viewed in three phases: 1) social-psychological which is concerned with affective factors in intergroup relations, 2) situated-cognitive which focuses on learners in classroom contexts, and 3) the current period which renders diverse themes (Al-Hoorie, 2017). The social-psychological period is the “assumption that learning an L2 is different from other school subjects because L2 learning additionally requires openness to the L2 group and willingness to adopt features from it” (Al-Hoorie, 2017, p. 1). In the cognitive-situated period, the emphasis was on “why or why not some of their students are more or less successful than others, or to give teachers advice on how to motivate their students, or to provide reasons to students to help them understand their own success or lack thereof” (Gardner, 2010, p. 26). The third phase in the language motivation field is a shift to socio-dynamic perspectives (Dornyei & Ryan, 2015), characterised by the dynamic nature and its temporal variation of motivation which makes it “... hard to give this period a single monolithic title” (Al-Hoorie, 2017, p. 3).

The socio-dynamic approach has inspired Dornyei (2001) to develop the L2MSS, encompassing self-framework. In this instance, motivation in learning L2 extends beyond sociocultural factors or other-related factors such as language attitudes, cultural familiarity, and stereotypes (Gardner & Lambert, 1972), but focuses on the individual’s personal core that forms the crucial foundation of the individual’s identity or also referred to as the future version of the self (Dornyei, 2009). However, although this framework signifies an important shift of the existing motivational frameworks (Gardner, 2001; Ushioda, 2001), the basic foundation of this proposed premise is still grounded on previous motivational research in the L2 field. This framework expands the conceptual notion of integrative-instrumental motivation (Gardner & Lambert, 1959, 1972) and the concept of self that has been extensively discussed within the field of psychology. The L2MSS model by Dornyei (2005) emphasises how the language learner can see himself in a future state. More specifically, the notion of self allows the learner to visualise the desired language learner that he might become, want to become or is afraid of becoming (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011). Such notion of motivation provides empowerment to the learner by acknowledging the significant role of personal vision in the attempt to become the desired language learner (Subekti, 2018).

Dornyei (2005, 2009) proposes three important components in the L2MSS model: Ideal L2 Self, ought-to L2 Self and L2 Learning Experience. The ideal L2 self refers to the person that the individual is to become. It is a powerful stimulus for the individual

as it compels the individual to learn the target language to achieve the ideal L2 self as he attempts to reduce the discrepancy that may exist between the individual's actual self and ideal self. Additionally, this component comprises the integrative and instrumental motivational orientations postulated in Gardner's (2010) motivational framework which emphasises improvements such as accomplishment or inspiration in which the L2 learners inspires to become a part of the L2 community (i.e., integrative motivation) or hope to gain realistic goals (instrumental motivation) e.g., getting better jobs, salaries or career promotion (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011). The second component (the ought-to-L2 self) encompasses the attributes that an individual potentially perceives that he or she ought to possess to prevent negative outcomes (Dornyei, 2005, p. 105). It is consistent with Gardner's prevention-focused instrumental motivation such as an L2 learner practising diligently using the target language to gain good results and avoid failing his language tests (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011). Finally, L2 Learning Experience entails specific motives in situations that are closely related to immediate learning experiences and environments (Dornyei, 2005). External factors surrounding the L2 learner such as the people around him (i.e., teachers, peers) or environments (i.e., curriculum) can have an impact on the learner's motivation to learn the target language.

Ushioda (2011) states that the ability for L2MSS Model to encapsulate the complexity of an individual's motivation allows researchers in the relevant fields to make in-depth approximation of the individual's current experience as they engage in goal-oriented behaviours such as language learning. Essentially, the proposed L2MSS Model is an alternative motivational framework used to identify the extent to which learners can determine their motivated L2 learning behaviour as they attempt to achieve the desired L2 learning goals (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011). In this paper, the L2MSS model, combined with some Islamic elements, was tested on a group of Tahfiz school students to investigate an emerging model for this specific learner group.

#### *Some Major Studies on L2MSS*

A comparative study on L2MSS was performed by Taguchi et al. (2009), involving learners from different educational contexts, that is, Japan, China, and Iran. The study, participated by 5,000 participants, documented specific cross-cultural differences across the three countries even though L2MSS was found to contribute to the intended learning effort. For instance, the aspect of attitudes to L2 culture and community on the ideal L2 self, was reported to be twice the amount as the instrumentality-promotion among the Japanese students in comparison to the Chinese and Iranian participants. Such findings illustrate that learner motivation is context-specific due to the significant effects of the surrounding factors during the learning process.

Papi (2010) also carried out a study which aimed to identify Iranian learners' motivation and its contribution to learners' anxiety and intended learning effort. The findings indicated that while the ideal L2 self and the L2 learning experience were found to be low, the ought-to L2 component is related with a significant rise of the learners' anxiety level. Overall, the entire L2MSS variables played a crucial part in learners'

learning intentions. The results matched the concept of ideal L2 self proposed by Dornyei and Ushioda (2011), whereby the component is closely related to the instrumental achievement. Similarly, the documented ought-to L2 self reveals that to avoid negative outcomes, worries about future uncertainties may result in higher anxiety among the participants.

These studies highlighted the significant role of L2MSS model in gaining insights about learners' language learning motivation. It offers a window for researchers to have a clear understanding regarding learner's motivation during their learning process.

### *Tahfiz Students and the English Language*

Tahfiz schools are regarded as one of the best places to produce *Huffaz*, the memorisers of the holy Quran. The main focus of Tahfiz schools and its curriculum then, is to equip their students with the skills to read, memorise, and understand the contents of the Quran. Thus, proficiency in the Arabic language was vital (Ku Azizan et al., 2017). Many studies have been conducted to investigate issues related to the teaching and learning of Arabic (Samah, 2012), students' interests, and quality of teachers (Samsuiman et al., 2014) as well as Arabic language modules (Ku Azizan et al., 2017). With the improvement of the curriculum and demands of the society, Tahfiz schools now focus on producing Muslim professionals who are *Huffaz* and embrace the knowledge and teachings of the Quran (Rashed et al., 2021). Now, Tahfiz schools have begun to gain popularity among the Muslim society (Abu Bakar & Mohd Yusoff, 2016; Ahmad, 2015; Che Noh, 2017; Md Nawi et al., 2014). Most parents who send their children to Tahfiz schools wish to see them flourish as good Muslims, become *Huffaz* and be able to engage in missionary (*dakwah*) activities (Abdullah et al., 2016; Ismail et al., 2021; Rashed et al., 2021).

*Dakwah* or preaching activities include conducting *usrah* (small Islamic classes), leading the recital of *zikir* (remembrance of Allah), and giving religious talks (Ismail et al., 2021). To fulfil the aim of effective engagement in *dakwah* activities, Tahfiz schools have implemented changes to their curriculum and teaching approaches. Emphasis is placed upon the use of *turath* (heritage) curriculum, Arabic language proficiency, and memorisation approaches (Ku Azizan et al., 2017; Ismail et al., 2021; Rashed et al., 2021). However, to carry out *dakwah* activities effectively, mastery of the English language is also vital (Abdullah et al., 2021; Sahiba, 2019). One issue that hampers the mastery of English among Islamic school students is "students' inability to use it in daily activities" (Rohmah et al., 2019, p. 93).

In Ahmad et al.'s (2014) study, the English teachers felt that a majority of students had negative views toward the English language as it was not very important to those from the religious stream. The English teachers also said that students from the religious stream lacked the basic knowledge of English and did not display effort to master the language. Tahfiz students may be knowledgeable in Islamic teachings but with little motivation to master the English language, their *dakwah* activities would be limited to those who can understand the language(s) that they choose to employ and

may not be able to engage in missionary activities in English-speaking contexts. It is therefore crucial to explore the attitudes and motivation in learning English among Tahfiz students to understand and later, overcome, their issues and challenges.

### Method of the Study

A total of 1,017 English language learners aged 13-17 participated in the study. Table 1 shows that the participants consisted of 577 (56.7%) students from 3 Government Tahfiz schools and 440 participants (43.3%) from Selangor State Tahfiz schools. The gender distribution was quite balanced, with 51.2% being females and 48.8% being males. The majority of them were 14-year-old students (40.2%) followed by 16-year-olds (31.2%), 15-year-olds (13.1%), 17-year-olds (10.2%), and 13-year-olds (5.3%).

An overwhelming majority of the participants have never travelled overseas before (91.2%) at the time when the data were collected. Additionally, 47% of the participants had academic exposure to native English-speaking teachers compared to 53% who have never been taught by native speakers. In relation to the participants' level of English proficiency, the analysis indicated that 45.5% reported an intermediate level, followed by 34.7% at a lower intermediate level, 8.9% at an upper intermediate level and above, 8.2% at a post-beginner level, and finally 2.7% at the beginner level.

**Table 1**  
*Respondents' demographic profile*

No	Variable		Frequency	%
1.	Gender	Male	496	48.8
		Female	521	51.2
2.	Age	13	54	5.3
		14	409	40.2
		15	133	13.1
		16	317	31.2
		17	104	10.2
3.	School	Government Tahfiz schools	577	56.7
		Selangor State Tahfiz schools	440	43.3
4.	Native (English L1) teacher	Yes	479	47.1
		No	538	52.9
5.	Overseas experience	Yes	91	8.9
		No	926	91.1
6.	Self-reported proficiency level	Upper Intermediate & Above	91	8.9
		Intermediate	463	45.5
		Lower Intermediate	353	34.7
		Post-Beginner	83	8.2
		Beginner	27	2.7

### *Instrument*

Two types of instruments were used in this empirical study. The first was a language Motivational Self System (L2MSS) scale adapted from Dornyei (2005). A total of 43 out of 67 items were used in the present study. Ten factors (from the original 13) were selected for this study (Table 2). Dornyei's (2005) L2MSS instrument has been extensively used in various research settings and translated into languages such as Chinese, Japanese, Persian, and Arabic (Csizer & Kormos, 2009; Dwaik & Shehadeh, 2010; Papi, 2010; Taguchi et al., 2009).

To test the proposed L2 motivational model, components such as cultural interest, attitudes towards L2 community, criterion measures, and motivational self-system such as ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and attitudes towards learning English were adapted from established questionnaire surveys (Clement & Baker, 2001; Dornyei, 2001; Gardner, 1985; Noels et al., 2000). Many studies (e.g., Dwaik & Shehadeh, 2010; Papi, 2010; Taguchi et al., 2009) have tested the internal consistency of the scale and found it reliable to be used for meaningful academic endeavours. The value of its reliability according to previous studies ranged between .69 and .93 across different settings and contexts. The reliability values across the components, means, and standard deviations are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
*Reliability Values, Means and Standard Deviations of the Instrument Used*

Factors	Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Mean	SD
Attitudes towards Community	4	.868	4.80	.88
Promotion	5	.869	5.26	.63
Prevention	5	.889	4.78	.89
Parental Encouragement	4	.875	4.61	.86
Ideal L2 Self	5	.866	5.05	.81
Ought-to- L2 Self	4	.899	4.32	.96
Interest	4	.867	4.99	.75
Self-Confidence	4	.877	5.54	.58
Attitudes towards L2	4	.870	4.70	.95
Islamic Value	5	.876	5.25	.88
Criteria Measures	4	.865	4.87	.75

The second instrument was a self-constructed scale which measures the Islamic values component and initially consisted of 10 items. The scale measures Islamic values that motivate learners towards learning the English language. The Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was used to establish the construct validity of the scale and test the internal consistency of its items. The result of EFA yields one distinctive factor with five high factor loading items, while other items were discarded because they loaded on an

unhypothesised factor. The Cronbach's alpha of the factor was .88 which suggests that the scale is highly reliable and is suitable to be employed for academic exercises.

### *Correlation among Factors*

Correlations among the factors are one of the most significant prerequisites of multivariate analyses especially in structural equation modelling (SEM). Hence, the existence of linear relationships among the factors in the proposed model is among the fundamental requirements for meaningful employment of SEM. Nonetheless, the relationship among exogenous variables should be minimal to avoid multicollinearity. Therefore, the correlation among the factors was examined using Pearson Correlation to test the magnitudes and directions of the relationships among the factors. The result of the analysis suggested moderate statistical relationships among the factors. As shown in Table 3, most of the observed variables are significantly and positively correlated.

The analysis suggested a moderate correlation between attitudes towards community ( $r = .63, p = .01$ ) and promotion ( $r = .63, p = .01$ ) on one hand, and ideal L2 self on the other. The analysis also found prevention and parental encouragement to be statistically and positively correlated with ought-to L2 self ( $r = .61$  and  $.49, p = .01$ ) respectively, while parental encouragement ( $r = .35, p = .01$ ) and attitudes towards community ( $r = .46, p = .01$ ) were statistically and positively related to Islamic value. Additionally, the analysis showed that interest ( $r = .62, p = .01$ ) and self-confidence ( $r = .48, p = .01$ ) are positively and statistically correlated with attitudes towards learning English among participants. Finally, ideal L2 self ( $r = .61, p = .01$ ), ought-to L2 self ( $r = .29, p = .01$ ), Islamic values ( $r = .47, p = .01$ ) and attitudes toward learning English were statistically and positively correlated with criteria measure, while ideal L2 self statistically and positively ( $r = .19, p = .01$ ) correlated with ought-to L2 self.

These moderate correlation values justified the usage of SEM for this study because the factors were related while suggesting that there was no problem with multicollinearity.

### *The Proposed Model*

Aligned with previous studies that have pointed out the complex relation among the proposed motivational variables, Figure 1 shows that attitudes towards community, promotion, prevention, and parental encouragement to be indirectly affecting criteria measures via ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self and Islamic values. The study also proposes that interest and self-confidence exert indirect relationships with criteria measures through attitudes towards learning English.

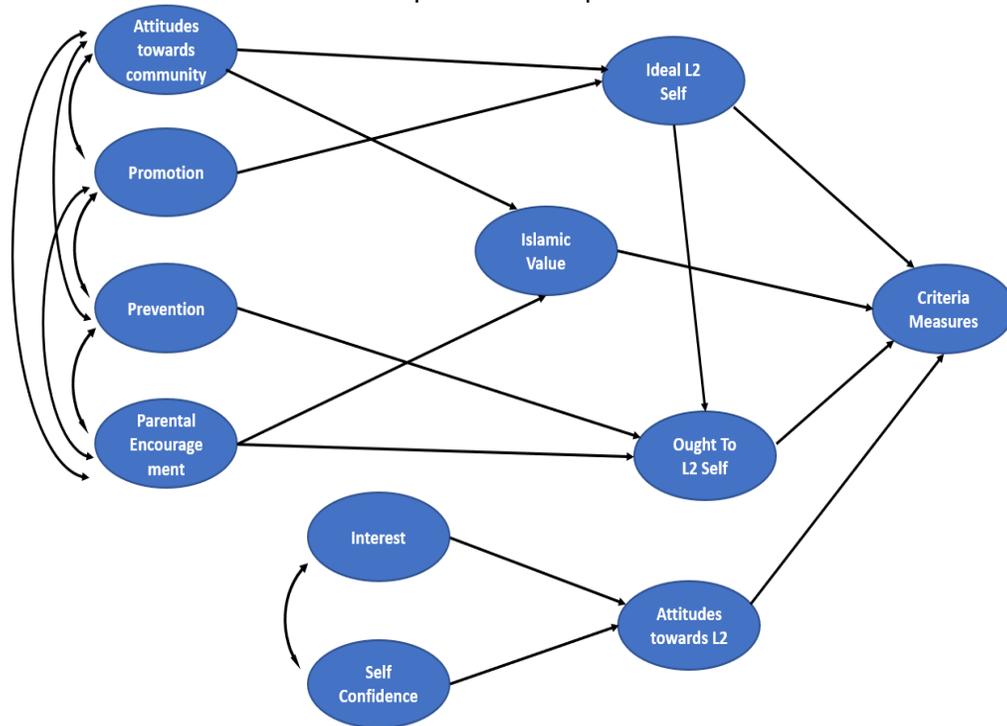
**Table 3**  
*Correlations among factors*

Variables	Attitu	Promo	Prevent	Parental	Ideal_L2	Ought_L2	Interest	Confide	A_L2_Eng	I_Value	Criteria
Attitu											
Promo	.48**										
Prevent	.13**	.45**									
Parental	.41**	.44**	.30**								
Ideal_L2	.63**	.63**	.20**	.37**							
Ought_L2	.18**	.35**	.61**	.49**	.19**						
Interest	.73**	.54**	.17**	.42**	.68**	.18**					
Confide	.50**	.47**	.19**	.32**	.56**	.18**	.48**				
A_L2_Eng	.63**	.56**	.17**	.39**	.64**	.18**	.62**	.41**			
I_Value	.46**	.50**	.20**	.35**	.52**	.21**	.51**	.42**	.43**		
Criteria	.68**	.57**	.26**	.53**	.61**	.29**	.64**	.53**	.58**	.47**	

Note: attitu means attitudes towards community, promo means promotion, prevent means prevention, parental means parental encouragement, idea\_L2 mean Ideal L2 Self, ought\_L2 means Ought-To L2 Self, confide means Linguistic self-confidence, A\_L2\_Eng means Attitudes Toward Learning English, I\_value means Islamic Value, Criteria mean Criteria measures. \*\* = .01, N = 1017

The proposed model hypothesises that ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, Islamic values, and attitudes towards learning English language to be mediator variables, while exogenous variables (attitudes towards community, promotion, prevention, parental encouragement, interest, and self-confidence) are covaried.

**Figure 1**  
*Proposed Structural Equation Model*



*Data Analysis and Statistical Techniques*

All data were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. Prior to SEM analysis, EFA was conducted to test the construct validity of the employed instrument. The EFA analysis suggested that the construct validity of the adapted instrument was maintained and the self-constructed instrument’s construct validity was established. The EFA also showed that items of the adapted instrument were distinctively and highly loaded on their respective factors without any cross-loading problem. However, five of the self-constructed Islamic value items were discarded due to problems of cross-loading, low value of factor loading, and loading items on unhypothesised factor. After satisfactory EFA were obtained, the data were subjected to SEM using Mplus software version 8 (Muthén & Muthén, 2018). The model parameters were estimated using the robust maximum likelihood estimation technique

(MLR). MLR was employed to provide standard errors and examine the model fit that is robust to the non-normality data. Measurement model analysis was conducted to further investigate the construct validity of the instrument and the result yielded an adequate fit. Overall, the data set reached univariate normality. Nevertheless, the assumption of multivariate normal distribution was violated, shown through the value of Mardia's normalised multivariate kurtosis of 19.3. According to Lin and Bentler (2006), this value is significantly higher than the acceptable range of +5. Further check of Mahalanobis distance uncovered 21 possible multivariate outliers; however, the cases were still retained in later analyses because the response and background information did not display any proof of abnormality. Additionally, a robust version of maximum likelihood estimation was employed for both CFA and SEM to prevent the likelihood of estimation bias due to outliers. As was previously highlighted, all effect estimates were tested using Mplus mediation analysis for statistical significance. To ensure the consistency of interpretation in calculating each effect, a standardised, rather than unstandardised path coefficient, was employed.

### Results of Analysis

Prior to SEM, the six exogenous variables, four mediator variables, and an endogenous variable were tested in one measurement model. They were discovered to fit the data satisfactorily. Measurement modelling was performed to examine the uniqueness of each item before they were combined in a structural model. Indices such as  $\chi^2$  with its associated p-value, TLI, CLI, RMSEA, and SRMR were used to test the model fit (Hancock & Mueller, 2013). The measurement model analysis yielded a fit model,  $\chi^2 = 3098.863$ ,  $df = 976$ ,  $p = .001$ ; SRMR = .058, RMSEA = .046, 90% CI = .044 - .048, CFI = .956 and TLI = .948. All the factor loadings of indicators were statistically significant. A check on the standardised residual showed no noticeable local oddity (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1993). All factor correlations were below .80. This implies satisfying discriminant validity throughout the factors (Brown, 2015). Finally, Cronbach's alpha ranged from .58 to .96, signalling an acceptable internal consistency with each factor.

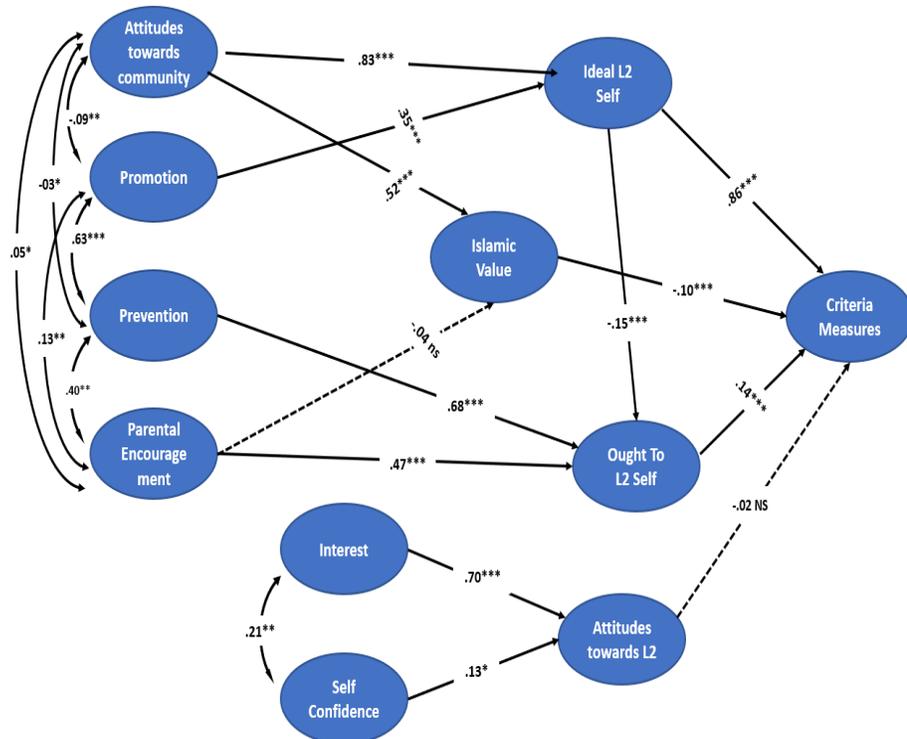
#### *Testing the Full Structural Equation Modelling*

The full hypothesised model was tested using the same criteria of measurement model testing. The proposed model encompasses the six exogenous, four mediators, and one endogenous variable. Robust maximum likelihood was also used to estimate the parameters. All analyses were performed on variance-covariance matrix ( $n = 1017$  observations) and they yielded a convinced model fit. The result of the analysis showed a reasonable fit of data,  $\chi^2 3605.935$   $df = 873$  and  $p = .001$ , SRMR = .049, RMSEA = .056, 90% CI = .054 - .058, CFI = .963 and TLI .952, suggesting that the hypothetical model is acceptable. According to Figure 2, attitudes towards L2 community and promotion statistically and positively predicted ideal L2 self ( $\beta = .83$ , and  $\beta = .35$ ) at .001 respectively, while the ideal L2 self subsequently and statistically predicted the criterion

measures ( $\beta = .86, p = .001$ ). Moreover, prevention and parental encouragement significantly and positively predicted the ought-to L2 self ( $\beta = .68, \beta = .47$ ) at  $p = .001$  for prevention and parental encouragement respectively, while ought-to L2 self subsequently correlated with criterion measures ( $\beta = .14, p = .001$ ).

Furthermore, attitudes towards community statistically and positively predicted Islamic values ( $\beta = .52$ ) at .001 while parental encouragement was statistically insignificant with Islamic values ( $\beta = -.04, p = .70$ ). Additionally, criterion measures were negatively and statistically predicted by Islamic value ( $\beta = -.10, p = .027$ ), while attitudes toward learning English was statistically insignificant ( $\beta = -.02, p = .77$ ). Moreover, the analysis suggested that attitudes toward learning English was predicted by learner's interest in English ( $\beta = .70, p = .001$ ) and linguistic self-confidence ( $\beta = .13, p = .04$ ). However, attitudes toward learning English were found to be statistically insignificant for criteria measures ( $\beta = -.02, p = .74$ ).

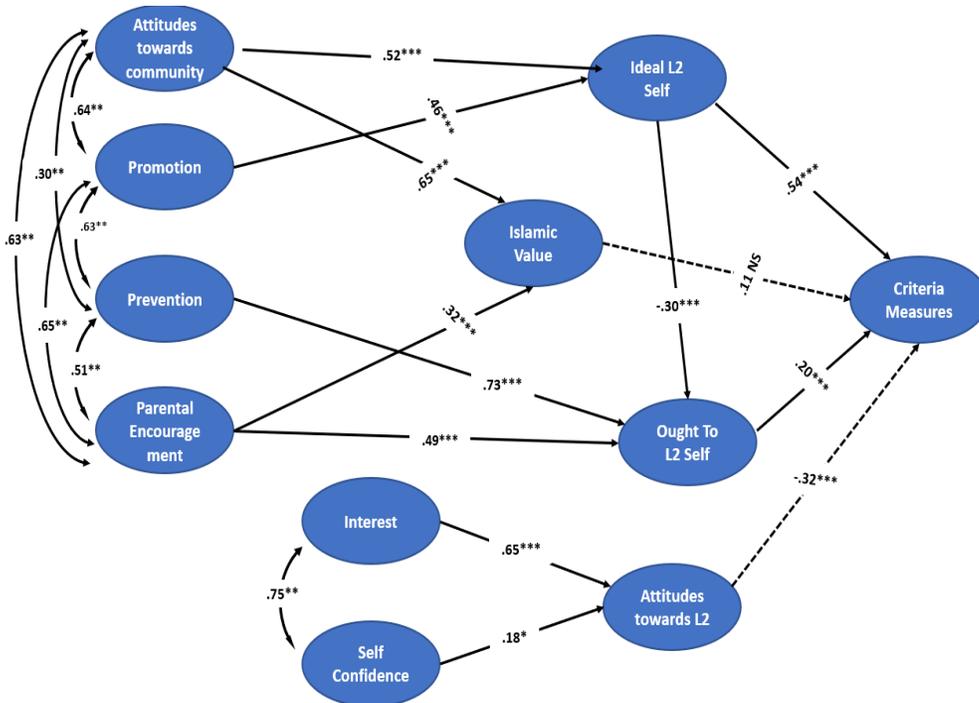
**Figure 2**  
*Structural Equation Model*



*Comparison across Schools*

To investigate the differences across the schools and compare the outcome measures, a two-group SEM model was performed. The main objective of performing a two-group comparison is to test the fitness of the proposed model across the schools and examine the difference, if any, across the parameters estimated. The results of analysis suggested that the two-group SEM model had a good fit to the data  $\chi^2 = 5958.764$ ,  $df = 1820$  ( $\chi^2/df = 3.27$ )  $p = .0001$ ,  $RMSEA = .067$ ,  $90\% CI = .065 - .069$ ,  $CFI = .947$ ,  $TLI = .933$ ,  $SRMR = .05$ .

**Figure 3**  
*Tahfiz Government School Model*



As illustrated in Figure 3, for Government Tahfiz schools, the results indicated that attitudes towards the L2 community ( $\beta = .52$ ) and promotion ( $\beta = .46$ ) were both at .001, statistically affected the ideal L2 self and subsequently correlated with criterion measures ( $\beta = .54$ ,  $p = .001$ ). Moreover, prevention ( $\beta = .73$ ) and parental encouragement ( $\beta = .49$ ) at .001 also affected ought-to L2 self, while ought-to L2 self was significantly and positively correlated with criterion measure ( $\beta = .20$ ,  $p = .001$ ). Unlike the full model, attitudes towards community ( $\beta = .65$ ,  $p = .001$ ) and parental encouragement ( $\beta = .32$ ,  $p = .001$ ) positively and statistically impacted Islamic values. However, Islamic values were found to be statistically insignificant ( $\beta = .11$ ,  $p = .11$ ).

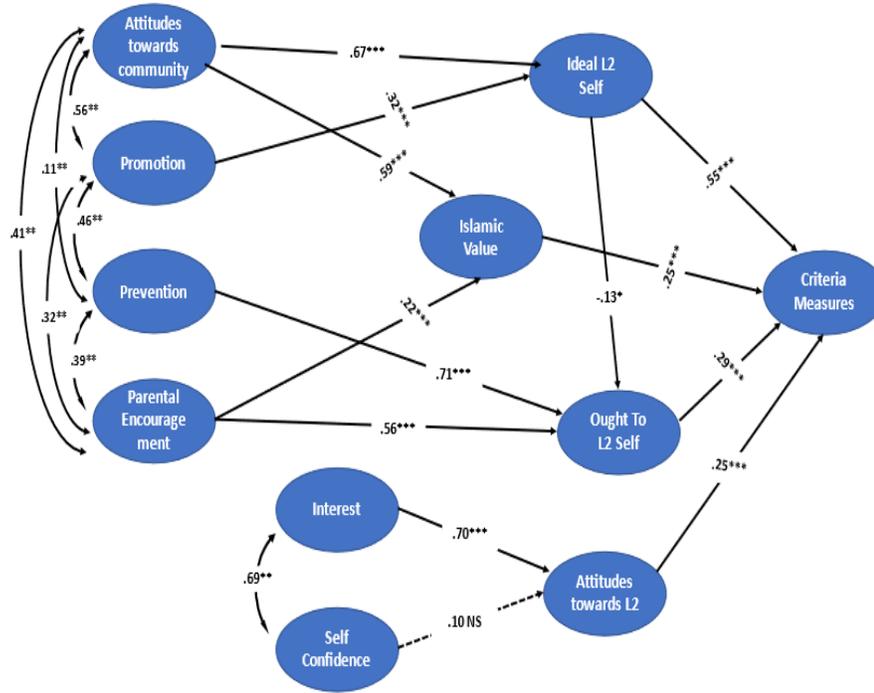
Additionally, interest in the English language ( $\beta = .65, p = .001$ ) and linguistic self-confidence ( $\beta = .18, p = .029$ ) positively and statistically impacted attitudes towards learning English, and subsequently, attitudes toward learning English affected criterion measures ( $\beta = .32, p = .001$ ). Unlike the full model, the exogenous variables were statistically and significantly covaried and the values of covariances ranged between .30 to .75 all at .001 (See Figure 3).

For Selangor state Tahfiz schools, the comparison analysis (invariance) indicated that attitudes towards community ( $\beta = .67$ ) and promotion ( $\beta = .32$ ), both of which were at .001, positively and statistically impacted ideal L2 self, which subsequently affected criterion measures ( $\beta = .55, p = .001$ ). Moreover, prevention ( $\beta = .71$ ) and parental encouragement ( $\beta = .56$ ), both at .001, statistically and positively impacted ought-to L2 self, which consequently affected criterion measures ( $\beta = .29, p = .001$ ). Unlike the full model and the government Tahfiz school model, both attitudes towards community ( $\beta = .59, p = .001$ ) and parental encouragement ( $\beta = .22, p = .001$ ) statistically and significantly affected Islamic values and eventually criterion measures ( $\beta = .29, p = .001$ ). The analysis also suggested that interest in learning the English language was statistically and positively impacting attitudes toward learning English, which consequently affected criterion measures ( $\beta = .25, p = .001$ ). However, linguistic self-confidence was found to be statistically insignificant for attitudes towards learning English language ( $\beta = .10, p = .19$ ).

The exogenous variables were also shown to be statistically and significantly covaried and the values of their covariances ranged from .11 to .69 all at .001.

The invariance analysis suggested that although both models are suitable, the values of relationships among the variables revealed that the Selangor Tahfiz schools group model was slightly better in terms of model fits than the Government Tahfiz schools group model. This suggests that all variables in this model are more suitable and appropriate for Selangor Tahfiz schools group compared to the Government Tahfiz schools group. The major reason is that Islamic values play a significant role in mediating between attitudes towards community and parental encouragement on one hand and criterion measures on the other for the former group model. Additionally, only linguistic self-confidence was found to be statistically insignificant for Selangor Tahfiz school model, while Islamic values and attitudes toward learning English language were statistically insignificant for the government Tahfiz school model. Finally, the values of beta for Selangor Tahfiz school model were generally higher compared to the government Tahfiz school model, which indicated that the concerned factors are strong and effective predictive measures in Selangor Tahfiz school group. However, the results confirmed that the model was well-replicated across the same settings, irrespective of the groups.

**Figure 4**  
*Tahfiz State School Model*



**Discussion and Conclusion**

The findings of this empirical study provide important insights into the motivational model of English language learning among the Tahfiz students in Malaysian schools. The study found that attitudes towards community, promotion, prevention, parental encouragement, interest, Islamic values, ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and attitudes towards learning English language play pivotal roles in the proposed motivational model. However, the magnitudes and directions of the exogenous and mediator towards endogenous (criterion measures) varied. According to the analysis, ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self positively and directly predicted students’ criterion measures, and Islamic values and attitudes towards learning English language were insignificant. These findings suggested that learners’ intended efforts to learn English language could be partially comprehended and identified from these factors.

These findings are consistent with the proponents of attitudes and motivational theory by Dornyei (2005) and many previous studies (Amengual-Pizarro, 2018; Hughes et al., 2020; Taguchi et al., 2009). According to Taguchi et al. (2009) and Hughes et al. (2020) in a replicated study of the former, ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self which are significant components of the Motivational Self System play significant roles in mediating between attitudes to L2 culture and community, promotion, prevention, and family influence on one side and criteria measures on the other.

Another significant contribution of the proposed model is the additional element of Islamic values specifically for Tahfiz students. Based on the newly proposed model in this study, it is hoped that teachers and other relevant parties can have better insights on how to motivate and inspire the Tahfiz students in English language classrooms to help them become well-rounded Islamic preachers.

Successful language learning requires learners to have the knowledge of the language and the motivation to learn it (Yang et al., 2013). This paper has proposed a motivational model, specifically for Tahfiz students, in the effort to prepare them to become better global preachers in disseminating Islamic teachings. The model corroborates with Dornyei's (2005) L2MSS, whereby elements which include community, promotion, prevention, parental encouragement, interest, ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and attitudes towards learning English language have been shown to play a part in the motivational model for Tahfiz students, with a new addition of Islamic values in the model. Further research would be needed to determine the motivational model for other Tahfiz schools not under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education Malaysia, and also other Tahfiz settings in other Islamic countries.

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#### **Ethics Review Board Statement**

The study was conducted according to the guidelines as approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (Protocol Code: USIM/JKEP/2020-86), approval date: 16 April 2020.

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