rEFLections
Vol 31, No 3, September - December 2024

Investigating Japanese Students' Basic Psychological Needs (BPNs) Satisfaction and Frustration in Secondary School English Classes

KODAI KAMINO
Department of Global Japanese Studies, Meiji University, Japan
DANIEL HOOPER*
Department of English Communication, Tokyo Kasei University, Japan
Corresponding author email: hooper-d@tokyo-kasei.ac.jp

Article information

Article history:
Received: 30 Mar 2024
Accepted: 14 Nov 2024
Available online: 22 Nov 2024

Keywords:
Basic psychological needs
Motivation
Group dynamics
Educational psychology
Self-determination theory

Abstract

Secondary English education in Japan, despite widespread policy reform, has been identified as a context in which problems with learner motivation are commonplace and persistent. Numerous quantitative studies have highlighted student dissatisfaction with a range of pedagogical factors including a disproportionate focus on rote memorization for exam preparation and a lack of student-centered activities. The aim of this study is to investigate from a qualitative approach the degree to which secondary school students' basic psychological needs (BPNs) of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are being satisfied or frustrated within their junior high and high school English classes. Data was collected from semi-structured interviews with five university students who provided retrospective accounts of their secondary education and was subsequently deductively coded based on BPN satisfaction and frustration. Participants illustrated the key role of teacher-student and student-student interaction in both directly and indirectly facilitating satisfaction of each BPN and highlighted how more balance between exam-focused and communicative lesson content may positively contribute to student engagement and motivation. The findings of this study generally support the notion that promoting greater relatedness through positive group dynamics among both teachers and students can subsequently provide affordances for enhancing autonomy and competence satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

In Japan, for the purpose of nurturing human resources capable of contributing to an international society in line with continued globalization, English education was made compulsory in elementary schools in 2020, and more intensive English education in junior high and high schools was required under the new Courses of Study guidelines from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, and Technology (MEXT) (2017). It suggests that Japan is attempting to put more emphasis on English education to respond to changing times. Despite these efforts, however, literature on L2 learning motivation in Japan describes "a permanent state of crisis"

(Ushioda, 2015) with numerous studies identifying secondary (junior high and high school) English education as a central cause of learner demotivation (Hooper, 2020; Hosaka, 2020; Kikuchi, 2015; Miyahara, 2015; Pinner, 2016).

Some existing research (Falout et al., 2008; Murphey, 2002; Murphey et al., 2009) has focused on exploring university students' retrospectives on their secondary English education in an attempt to try to identify and remedy some of the persistent demotivators endemic in the current educational model. These studies illustrated the negative impact of teacher-fronted, passive classes and a lack of consistency between exam-focused and communicative English study on student motivation. Although these studies established a valuable foundation, grounded in student voice, providing insight into motivational obstacles within secondary English classes, their data was primarily limited to questionnaire responses. Consequently, a more in-depth, qualitative perspective that takes into account not only motivation, but also learner wellbeing, could prove a useful addition to the contributions made in these early studies.

With this in mind, in this study we utilize a Basic Psychological Needs (BPNs) framework to analyze learner experiences of English classes in Japanese secondary education. By elucidating the factors that lead to both the satisfaction and frustration of students' feelings of *autonomy, competence*, and *relatedness*, it is hoped that educators, researchers, and policy makers can be supported in making practical changes that facilitate the flourishing of secondary school English learners.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Self-determination theory and BPNs

The core focus of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is "the social conditions that facilitate or hinder human flourishing" (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p. 3). The term "flourishing" is used within SDT to describe a eudaemonic (rather than a hedonic) "pleasant and satisfying" feeling that individuals experience when [they] pursue and achieve goals that [they] define as "inherently worthy or admirable" (p. 240). SDT is an *organismic theory*, in that it assumes humans naturally exhibit tendencies to be curious, active, and connected with others. These tendencies can be subsequently be psychologically supported or thwarted by the particularities of a given social context, be it a home, an office, or a classroom. SDT comprises six sub-theories, collectively representing SDT's historic evolution since its origins (Deci, 1971) and through its application throughout a range of diverse fields including positive psychology, education, and work studies (Bradshaw et al., 2023; Mynard & Shelton-Strong, 2022; Olafsen et al., 2021; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Basic Psychological Needs Theory (BPNT; Ryan & Deci, 2017) is the fourth mini-theory under the SDT umbrella and concerns itself with examining how environmental factors may support or hinder psychological need satisfaction and how, in turn, this impacts human motivation and wellbeing. BPNT focuses on three specific needs: *autonomy*, *competence*, and *relatedness* (see Figure 1) found to be pivotal for the "energization of [humans'] action and development" (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p. 94).

Figure 1 Three basic psychological needs (Watkins & Hooper, 2023, adapted from Ryan & Deci, 2017)

Autonomy is the feeling that behavior is consistent with values and interests, allowing individuals to independently pursue engaging options based on their personal preferences. Ryan and Deci (2017) assert that autonomy has a crucial function due to its role in creating opportunities for the other two needs to be better satisfied. When individuals can act volitionally, they are able to determine and prioritize the development of skills (competence) and relationships (relatedness) that they value. *Competence* refers to feeling confidence in one's ability to accomplish particular tasks, which in turn catalyzes behavior such as accepting challenges and making effort. An important caveat, however, is that competence satisfaction or frustration is impacted by the degree that they feel that the activity is self-initiated, i.e., how much they "feel ownership of the activities at which they succeed" (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p. 95). Moreover, a crossover between autonomy frustration and competence may occur when an individual may be able to complete an externally-assigned task comfortably, but perceive it to lack value, challenge, or interest (Hamari et al., 2016; Legault, 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Finally, *relatedness* is the feeling of being connected to others, which subsequently generates comfort and safety in a given environment. A key element of relatedness is being recognized as a legitimate member of social groups and contributing to others through benevolent, *prosocial* acts (Ryan & Deci, 2017; Weinstein & Ryan, 2010). According to Reeve (2016), it has been observed that the satisfaction of all three BPNs contributes to the fulfillment of intrinsic motivation. Ryan and Deci (2017) echo this claim in regards to BPN interrelatedness and wellbeing, stating, "wellbeing is like a three-legged stool; pull out any one of these [BPN] supports and the stool will fall" (p. 250).

BPNs and language learning

Due to the strong theoretical and empirical foundations of SDT and its seemingly-broad applicability across fields, there has unsurprisingly been a wealth of studies into the impact of BPN satisfaction or frustration on language learning. Numerous studies over the past two decades have contributed to a greater understanding of how providing BPN-satisfying learning environments positively contribute to support for intrinsic motivation (Agawa & Takeuchi, 2016; Carreira, 2012), enhanced engagement (Joe et al., 2017; Noels et al., 1999; Oga-Baldwin

et al., 2017), and increasing learners' willingness to communicate (Joe et al., 2017; Karbakhsh & Ahmadi Safa, 2020). Classroom-focused studies on BPN satisfaction/frustration have highlighted the importance of peer interaction and connectedness for BPN satisfaction as positive social networks afforded students not only emotional support and encouragement, but also sources of useful experiential feedback that contributed to continued development and feelings of competence (Joe et al., 2017; Noels et al., 2019). Also highlighting the importance of BPN-oriented leadership in language learning beyond the classroom, Watkins (2022) examined the role of BPN satisfaction in an out-of-class language learning communities in Japan. Community leaders were found to have an integral role in creating a BPN-supportive environment as they worked to develop rapport between members, encouraged autonomy by giving learners choices, and helped members gain confidence by providing positive feedback. Watkins' study highlights the crucial role of leadership in the creation of BPN-satisfying learning environments and echoes findings from general education emphasizing the teacher's role in facilitating BPN support in class (Reeve, 2016; Reeve et al., 2022). In the following section, the importance of awareness related to BPN satisfaction and frustration will be foregrounded as we examine the enduring challenges relating to language learning motivation in Japan.

Motivation and engagement within English education in Japan

English language learning (ELL) in Japan has long been regarded as being in a troubled and at times contradictory state. The English language, English proficiency, and particularly conversational fluency, is frequently regarded as a valuable commodity or status symbol within modern Japanese culture with English commonly featuring in advertisements and being sold through "English villages" (Seargeant, 2009) and *eikaiwa* (conversation) schools (Hooper & Hashimoto, 2020; Kubota, 2011). Conversely, Japanese ELL has also been described as a "motivational wasteland" (Berwick & Ross, 1989) with average TOEFL and TOEIC scores often ranked poorly in comparison to other Asian countries (Hongo, 2014; Yoshida, 2003). A significant amount of blame for this situation has been directed at the secondary education system due to junior high school and high school English classes traditionally being centered on a Japanese variety of the grammar-translation method called *yakudoku*. *Yakudoku* classes are generally teacher-led, taught primarily in Japanese, and involve word/sentence level translation from Japanese to English and vice versa with no communicative component present (Kosuge, 2020). There are numerous reasons that, despite policy changes and a push to move away from *yakudoku* and towards cultivating proficiency in *eikaiwa* (English conversation) by MEXT (Noda & O'Regan, 2019), widespread meaningful changes in pedagogy have not appeared to manifest (Bartlett, 2016; Humphries & Burns, 2015; Machida, 2019; Nishino, 2011). The most commonly-cited reason for the persistence of traditional teaching methods is backwash from standardized entrance tests for high school or university that create a perceived need for *yakudoku*-oriented, exam-focused English classes (Suzuki & Roger, 2014; Underwood, 2012). However, this is but one factor among a wide range of obstacles that teachers perceive to exist preventing them from diverging from this style of pedagogy, including teachers' deference to their senior colleagues, teachers' language anxiety, concerns over classroom management and testing of oral skills, and student/parent expectations (see Burke & Hooper, 2020, for a detailed review). Numerous researchers (Kikuchi, 2015; Kikuchi & Browne, 2009; Matsuda, 2011; Miyahara, 2015; Morimoto, 2022; Snyder, 2019) have reported that *yakudoku*-style classes and the

enduring gap between the more communicative pedagogy advocated for by MEXT and the realities of the classroom are key contributors to the demotivation found in many Japanese English learners.

In a study by Falout et al. (2008), 440 university students were asked via a questionnaire about what they found to be desirable and undesirable practices from their experiences in secondary English education. Key findings included students desiring increased consistency between exam- and communication-focused classes, more focus on communication, more enthusiasm from teachers, and less teacher-fronted and memorization-focused pedagogy. Although some respondents stated that grammar study for test preparation was necessary, it was suggested that this was due to a sense of resignation rather than any kind of positive affect. This was evident in statements such as, "[it] was painful that we studied only grammar. But studying grammar was useful for me to get into a good high school" (p. 237). Indeed, the researchers argued that as many of the students had likely never experienced a communicative style of teaching, their responses "before they have a contrast frame of reference may simply result in evaluations that reinforce the status quo" (p. 237).

Snyder (2019) also highlights the negative impact on students' motivation and engagement that the passivity endemic in secondary English education has caused, stating "English education in Japanese high schools is done *to* students, not *with* them" (p. 137, emphasis in original). Snyder claims that creating a BPN-supportive classroom is one way for teachers to create or enhance student engagement, which may subsequently lead to an increase in intrinsic motivation for language learning. He argues that autonomy satisfaction can be fostered by developing trusting student-teacher relationships through frequent dialogue about lesson content which stands in contrast to the authoritative, top-down approach common in junior high and high schools. Snyder claims that competence can be enhanced by increasing transparent assessment practices where "[s]tudents should know from the start of class how and when they will be assessed" (p. 141) and where learners are compared to their own past performances rather than with their classmates. Finally, he states that feelings of relatedness can be increased through measures such as deemphasizing inter-student competition, learning students' names, and having students collaboratively devise ways to meet course goals. Snyder's perspective highlights how, in many ways, several characteristics of a BPN-supportive environment may stand in stark contrast to the dynamics of a Japanese secondary school English classroom. Therefore, a teacher may need to invest significant effort and negotiate entrenched technical cultures (Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004) within junior high and high schools if they are to construct an educational environment that takes learners' BPNs into account.

With the issues discussed above in mind, in this article, we hope to contribute to the ongoing discussion on Japanese secondary English education and what pedagogical practices might satisfy or frustrate the basic psychological needs that underpin learner motivation and wellbeing in this educational context. Consequently, in the current study, Japanese freshman university students were interviewed about their English classes they experienced in secondary education in order to address the following question:

In what ways did BPN satisfaction and frustration occur within secondary English education classes in Japan?

It is hoped that focusing on this question will offer additional insights relating to the discussion on motivation within secondary English education in Japan and stimulate increased teacher reflection regarding their own pedagogical approaches.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The study focused on five university freshmen students who had all attended different junior high and high schools in the northern-Kanto region of Japan and had no previous relationship to each other. The reason for targeting university freshmen despite the content of the study being related to English classes in secondary education was that they were thought to have more vivid memories compared to university seniors while also having experienced a variety of English classes at four different educational settings (elementary school, junior high school, high school, and university). Therefore, it was determined that they could evaluate their secondary English classes from a broader, overarching perspective as was demonstrated in similar existing studies (Falout et al., 2008; Murphey, 2002; Murphey et al., 2009). In total, five students were selected to participate in the current study (see Table 1).

Table 1

List of study participants

Pseudonyms	Gender	Age (at time of interview)	University	Major
Fuuta	M	18	public university in Chiba prefecture	Engineering
Noa	M	19	private university in Miyagi prefecture	Welfare
Ririka	F	20	public university in Miyagi prefecture	Education
Haruto	M	19	public university in Shizuoka prefecture	Science
Ruka	F	19	private university in Kanagawa prefecture	Education

Data collection

All data was collected in the form of mixed face-to-face and online semi-structured interviews in line with a qualitative research paradigm. This was deemed to elicit a deeper understanding of the learners' experiences as qualitative research allows the researcher to hear the real voices of individuals (Watkins, 2022), and it is difficult to attain such thought-provoking data by other means (Hiromori, 2020). For the interviews, a purposeful sample (Japanese university freshmen with experience of secondary English education) of 20 interview candidates was secured from students who had formerly attended a cram school at which one of the researchers was working. Of the 20 initial candidates who provided informed consent to participate in this study, five participants were selected by random sampling (via a random number generator). Despite the relatively limited sample size, this has been recognized as acceptable in certain types of qualitative study based on data quality (Sim et al., 2018). Furthermore, several factors

indicated that an acceptable degree of "information power" (Malterud et al., 2016) existed in our data and that this would likely achieve the saturation necessary to effectively address our research question. These factors included the use of an established theoretical framework (SDT/BPNs), the homogeneous nature of the participants based on our purposeful sampling (Japanese freshmen university students with experience of secondary English education), and the detail and depth that we were able to obtain within our semi-structured interviews and member checking sessions, due in part to trust established from Kamino's "insider" relationship with participants (Richards, 2003).

Before the interviews, all of the participants received a plain language statement including an overview of the study and completed a research consent form in Japanese (Appendix A). The interview protocol of ten questions included four general questions inquiring about the nature of their secondary school English classes, followed by six questions focusing respectively on autonomy (two questions), competence (two questions), and relatedness (two questions) (Appendix B). The interview protocol was created in an iterative process where existing BPN-oriented literature was examined and potential questions were discussed with researchers external to the project experienced in SDT or group dynamics research. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format, meaning that the initial questions provided a coherent framework which could be expanded upon organically as points of ambiguity or interest emerged through the interview process (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Mann, 2016). All interviews were conducted entirely in Japanese. During each interview, one researcher audio recorded the session and the resulting data was subsequently transcribed for later analysis. All data excerpts included in the current study are English translations of the Japanese original data.

Trustworthiness

We employed the four dimensions criteria (credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability) to evaluate the strength of this qualitative study (Given & Saumure, 2008). Creswell (2013) recommends that researchers specify a minimum of two of these criteria to demonstrate a qualitative study's trustworthiness (Ahmed, 2024). To enhance the credibility of the study, investigator triangulation (Rothbauer, 2008) was a key characteristic of the collaborative data analysis process and terminal member checks were conducted (Jensen, 2008) in which findings and analyses were shared and discussed with all participants. We also engaged in peer debriefing with the same researchers who assisted us in the creation of our interview questions (confirmability) and included a positionality statement to improve transparency (credibility) regarding the subjective interpretations made during the study (Ahmed, 2024). Furthermore, to enhance the transferability of our findings to other studies, we incorporated both detailed descriptions of participant narratives and direct quotes in our findings.

Researcher positionality

This study was conducted by two researchers, one of whom (Kamino) is a Japanese graduate student and one of whom (Hooper) is a university professor and long-term resident of Japan. Both researchers are fluent in both Japanese and English. While the first author was in charge

of data collection, both authors were involved in the initial planning and data analysis stages of the research. Both authors of this study have either worked (as a teacher or teacher-trainee) or studied within every stage of the Japanese education system over approximately two decades. Therefore, between us, we share a nuanced understanding of the common lived experiences of Japanese learners of English. Regarding the researchers' relationship to the study's participants, they were either former cram school English students or acquaintances of one of the researchers (Kamino) from high school. Although these existing relationships should be taken into consideration in terms of researcher positionality, it was determined that there would be minimal direct influence on the topics discussed other than familiarity with the researcher potentially increasing the degree of self-disclosure. It must also be recognized that, in Hooper's case, he has a privileged position as a "native speaker"[1] faculty member within Japanese higher education and this should be considered in relation to our subjective interpretation of the lived experiences of Japanese English learners.

Data analysis

Upon transcription, participant data was collaboratively analyzed by both researchers utilizing thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Congruent with this study being conducted within an interpretivist paradigm, the participants' remarks were both inductively and deductively analyzed through a process of reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2020), and later classified into themes based on BPN (autonomy, competence, relatedness) satisfaction or frustration. For instance, any coded items that were determined as examples of participants being forced to act against their volition were assigned to the *autonomy frustration* theme. Frequent meetings were held between the researchers in which any areas of ambiguity or differences in interpretation were discussed and explored further in an iterative process moving between data and theory/existing literature until mutually-agreed interpretations were reached. Furthermore, similar to as demonstrated in Shelton-Strong (2020), the resulting interpretations were also discussed with several external researchers with extensive experience in the area of the study who acted as peer debriefers and a "reflective sounding board" (p. 972) that helped us to both reconsider and confirm our findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In the following subsections, we will discuss our interpretations of the interview data, divided into three deductive categories of psychological needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) and examined in terms of BPN satisfaction and frustration.

Autonomy

Autonomy satisfaction is linked to being more self-determined and responsible for one's own actions.

[1] The term "native speaker" is displayed in quote marks in this article due to its socially-constructed and contestable nature (Moussu & Llurda, 2008).

In terms of how much participants viewed their ability to act and learn in a volitional way, most responses indicated dissatisfaction with their secondary school English classes. However, as can be observed in Table 2, this was not a simple condemnation of their junior high or high school teachers, but rather represented a complex and multifaceted interplay between autonomy-satisfying and autonomy-frustrating elements.

Table 2

Factors relating to participants' autonomy satisfaction and frustration

Autonomy Satisfaction	Autonomy Frustration
• grammar to pass entrance examinations • conversation classes • pair and group work • peer teaching • self-study time with classmates • listening to foreign music • student-selected activities in class • ease of asking and answering questions	• teacher-led instruction • lack of opportunities to speak English • little chance of interacting with foreign assistant language teachers (ALTs) • Japanese teachers not speaking in English • lack of variety in lesson content • being called upon by teachers

Concerning autonomy satisfaction (see Table 2), the first factor common to many of the items described above was the ability of the learners to be the locus of control, thus affording agency for active engagement within activities. From the interview data, it was evident that for most (four out of five) of the participants, key sources of autonomy satisfaction were engaging in interaction with classmates and an atmosphere where students were comfortable asking questions of the teacher and students whenever they needed to. Congruent with the literature on autonomy-supportive teaching (Reeve et al., 2022), the promotion of relatedness through fostering student-student or student-teacher dialogue is also tied to autonomy support. The positive attitude from participants towards peer teaching is perhaps particularly important to note due to the fact that it affords learners to act as the *producers*, rather than mere *recipients* of knowledge, while simultaneously affording them opportunities to engage in mutually-beneficial prosocial acts.

Conversely, all participants also reported that they had little aversion to yakudoku-style classes. The reason for this was that it was essential for them to obtain high scores in standardized English tests and high-stakes entrance examinations.

> It was good because I could learn the grammar to pass the exam. That was all I was expecting from the class.
> (Fuuta, 2023, 9/18)

> My goal was to learn English grammar for use in examinations, so when ALTs came, the class became like playtime and we did not progress.
> (Noa, 2023, 9/23)

> I think grammar classes should be important. A balance between school English and real English is necessary, though.
> (Ririka, 2023, 9/25)

These three participants were highly conscious of the need for exam-focused classes. Noa, in particular, argued that foreign assistant teachers might not be necessary at all, because when they came to class lesson content centered around activities that he perceived to lack value, such as playing games and singing foreign songs. This position highlights an issue raised in several existing studies (Falout et al., 2008; Hooper, 2023; Nagatomo & Allen, 2019) on a lack of coherence between *eigo* (exam-focused) and *eikaiwa* (communication-focused) instruction within Japanese English education. Due to test washback and a perceived lack of viable alternatives, these exam-focused classes attend to be regarded by students as a "necessary evil" (Nagatomo & Allen, 2019, p. 4) with no acceptable "contrast frame of reference" (Falout et al., 2008, p. 237) as *eikaiwa* study is often perceived as frivolous or lacking practical value (Nagatomo, 2016). While it is acceptable to learn English for the purpose of getting a better score on English tests, if students are motivated exclusively by extrinsic sources, they are more susceptible to demotivation when they face a setback at some point (Hiromori, 2023). Additionally, there is concern that distorted perceptions of their own ability, if based purely on standardized test scores, might lead to growing demotivation for English study (Kikuchi & Sakai, 2009). Therefore, rather than school English education framing English ability only in terms of scoring points on tests (extrinsically-motivating), also providing opportunities for learners to enjoy English use more through student-centered and interest-led (intrinsically-motivating) English activities is likely to be beneficial.

In terms of autonomy frustration (see Table 2), most learners felt a sense of coercion and pressure from a teacher-controlled environment while taking classes. Furthermore, all but one participant expressed feelings akin to the following statement from Noa.

> There is nothing that I wanted to do in English classes. This is because I thought that the passive style of learning, where students just write what the teacher writes on the blackboard in their notebooks and swallow what the teacher says, was the norm. My expectation was that this is what junior high school English classes would be all about. Junior high school education is compulsory, after all, which makes students more passive.
> (Noa, 2023, 9/23)

From this, it suggests that some students may not even question the passive style of lessons implemented by their teachers. Presumably, this is because many teachers tend to offer similar types of lessons, so students have nothing to compare them with, and they genuinely accept them as the norm (Falout et al., 2008). Controlling, teacher-driven classes are capable of covering the full range of content that will feature in examinations in a limited amount of time, and makes it relatively straightforward to control the progress of the class and students (Nishino, 2011). In addition, such teaching methods are strongly rooted in the Japanese educational tradition (Egitim, 2021) and make teachers feel secure as they are congruent with their intuitive teaching practices based on their *apprenticeship of observation* (Lortie, 1975) i.e., their past experiences as learners. However, despite these factors, many students, notwithstanding their lack of "contrast frame[s] of reference" (Falout et al., 2008, p. 237) related to the English classes they want to receive, still expressed their desire for chances to speak English and for an education model in which they could experience the enjoyment of language learning whilst also feeling comfortable.

In sum, by contrasting both autonomy satisfaction and frustration, it seems that varied lessons balancing exam-focused and communicative English and the creation of an environment conducive for peer and teacher interaction may be key considerations for teachers aiming to enhance students' feelings of autonomy. By offering a range of options for learning activities and by building trust so that students feel comfortable giving honest lesson feedback (Snyder, 2019), teachers can strike a desirable balance aligned with the localized needs of their students that integrates both exam-focused and communicative lesson content. In this way, both teacher and students become active agents engaged in the co-construction of a classroom that satisfies the needs of both key stakeholders (Reeve et al., 2022).

Competence

Competence is linked to having the confidence to accomplish actions and the opportunity to demonstrate personal ability in a meaningful way

When describing the degree to which they felt competent within their English classes, the participants shared a variety of ideas, and many of them expressed confidence in their English proficiency within their secondary school classes.

Table 3

Factors of competence satisfaction and frustration raised by participants

Competence Satisfaction	Competence Frustration
• acquisition of textbook-level grammar	• ease of lesson content
• high or perfect score on tests	• low score on tests
• raising a hand multiple times	• inability to speak English
• participation in English speech contest	• inability to listen to English
• successful conversations with ALTs	• teacher reprimand and evaluation

In terms of competence satisfaction (see Table 3), it was revealed that learners tended to judge their English proficiency based on either their test scores or their perceived communicative ability. Tests are quantifiable and an easy-to-administer way for students to visualize their progress, and participants' responses indicated that they can indeed be an effective tool for building confidence in the school classroom as long as they are used appropriately. Additionally, when students were able to convey their thoughts and feelings to others in English, they felt a sense of achievement and eudaemonic pleasure. Consequently, this created a positive feedback loop that encouraged them to continue speaking in English. Ririka, who managed to represent such a cycle most successfully among the participants, discussed how she competed in an English speech contest. In response to the question of whether she had any anxiety about participating in the competition and why she was so confident, she made the following comment.

> I could not speak English perfectly in the contest, but I thought it was all right if I made a mistake. It was a valuable experience in life. At first, I was scared, but it does not mean that I would die because of it. I am living, so I want to try everything. I do not want to regret it.
> (Ririka, 2023, 9/25)

Based on this statement, Ririka did not appear to experience any great degree of fear when speaking English. It was probably this adventurous spirit and growth mindset (Lou & Noels, 2020) that helped to keep her driven during her language studies. In fact, when inquired about her motto, she said, "Anything but dying is a scratch" (2023, 9/25). Ririka's case highlights a complex interplay in which individual differences (Dörnyei, 2014) such as personality traits impact confidence in the English language significantly. It might be argued that those with cautious personalities tend to be excessively concerned about mistakes, while those with less inclined personalities are more likely to boldly engage in trial and error repeatedly. It follows, in turn, that individual differences among learners have a significant impact on their achievement, and teachers need to be aware of this fact when planning lessons and during their actual classroom instruction (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015).

On the other hand, as the mirror image to competence satisfaction, in the case of competence frustration (see Table 3), learners judged themselves as incompetent if they received low test scores or felt unable to communicate using English. If students experience difficulties with what they are learning and do not achieve good scores in tests, they are likely to experience demotivation (Kikuchi & Sakai, 2009; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009). Some participants also revealed that too much confidence or high proficiency relative to the class may also lead to competence frustration. Since many participants regarded the content of their secondary school English classes as boring and easy, the lessons were unstimulating due to a perceived lack of value or meaning (Legault, 2017). On this point, an interesting statement was raised by Fuuta.

> The class content was too easy. And I did not listen to it because it was so simple. I was made to repeatedly go over what anyone could understand if they just read the textbook. I always got a perfect score on tests, so it was a pain in the neck for me to even take those tests. But, if I got a perfect score on tests, teachers and classmates thought I was smart, so I probably felt superior because I was different from others. In retrospect, I might have looked down on my classmates a little because they were not at the same level as me.
> (Fuuta, 2023, 9/18)

Seemingly, one might expect that the sense of superiority Fuuta experienced to be linked to competence satisfaction. However, according to Legault's definition (2017), competence is the psychological need connected with having a *meaningful* effect on one's surroundings, which spurs the pursuit of rewarding and deeply satisfying experiences and is the baseline for psychological growth and well-being. Hence, because Fuuta did not feel meaningful and fulfilled competence, this resulted in his frustration with feelings of overconfidence in class.

Given that students with either lower or higher competence may not be able to engage satisfactorily within English classes tailored to suit an average of learner's abilities, teachers could take measures to operationalize higher-proficiency students' engagement in the classroom and create lessons designed to meet a broader range of educational needs. For instance, the introduction of peer-teaching interventions such as a student-teacher system (Bas, 2022) could be considered as a way to increase learners' self-efficacy and motivation for language learning. If implemented, a student-teacher system would demand teachers adopt more of a facilitative

or managerial role rather than simply relating textbook content, and could direct more attention to students requiring extra support. In addition, more-able students could deepen their understanding of lesson content through teaching peers and act as relatable near-peer role models (Murphey & Arao, 2001) who could in turn inspire others. On the other hand, less-able students may be able to more comfortably ask questions and solve problems in collaboration with their peers rather than attempting to broach a marked teacher-student power gap. Some participants reported experiencing such peer-teaching approaches, and this will be discussed in greater detail in the subsequent section on relatedness. Furthermore, as Fuuta pointed out in his comment, classes in which students merely need to understand textbook content may be evaluated negatively by higher-proficiency students. Naturally, choosing to ignore content from the MEXT-designated textbooks is not a realistic option for secondary school teachers. However, based on this finding, secondary school English classes may benefit from increased student-teacher collaboration and dialogue so that both classroom stakeholders can co-construct a pedagogical approach hinged not on teaching textbooks, but by teaching *with* textbooks.

Based on participants' perspectives, increased opportunities for peer teaching and judicial use of tests and textbooks both appear to be promising steps that teachers might take to improve competence satisfaction in secondary school English classes. The data also implied that competence satisfaction may be the most challenging of the psychological needs to be satisfied within this educational setting. Due to the influence of individual differences and contextual constraints, it might be the case that secondary school students will feel unable to accomplish meaningful development unless autonomy and relatedness satisfaction are fulfilled first. Accordingly, in other words, increasing the potential for autonomy and relatedness satisfaction might be the highest priority in order to boost students' competence.

Relatedness

Relatedness is linked to social acceptance or recognition and being able to establish amicable connections with others.

When interviewees were asked to describe their relationship with the other people (students/teachers) in their English classes, many of them implied that their relationships were lacking in depth. It was therefore surmised that their desire for rapport and human connection was not adequately satisfied within those environments.

Table 4

Factors of relatedness satisfaction and frustration raised by participants

Relatedness Satisfaction	Relatedness Frustration
• teaching classmates • getting help from classmates • being praised by teachers and classmates • interacting with ALTs • pair and group work • cooperative atmosphere	• not being able to interact with foreign assistant language teachers (ALTs) • lacking support from teachers • being mocked by teachers • being scolded by teachers • poor level of classmates • demotivated classmates • lack of pair and group work

From the perspective of relationship satisfaction (see Table 4), participants commonly noted that opportunities to teach each other lesson content enhanced both their relationship growth and personal development. For instance, Fuuta and Ruka described their experiences as follows:

> There were occasions when I worked in pairs or groups during class, and I taught my classmates. I was delighted when they told me that I was impressive, and while teaching I discovered new things that I had not noticed on my own and learned a lot.
> (Fuuta, 2023, 9/18)

> I felt very comfortable when there was pair or group work because I was able to immediately ask about areas I did not understand. I also taught my classmates what I could help them with, and if I got positive feedback from them, it gave me more confidence. I think an atmosphere where everyone can cooperate with each other is a great way to release nervousness.
> (Ruka, 2023, 9/29)

The statements of both participants indicate that they gained confidence in their language learning through the development of their interpersonal relationships and obtained knowledge, emotional support, and connection from collaborating with other classmates through pair and group activities. Receiving recognition and warm feedback from others based on something a person has done can be a source of happiness as a human being (Delin & Baumeister, 1994) and signs of BPN satisfaction derived from engaging in autonomous prosocial acts (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010) are also detectable in Fuuta's comments. Additionally, it is also suggested by Ruka's remarks that peer cooperation reduced her own affective filter/language anxiety (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Kawasaki, 2023; Krashen, 1985) and enhanced the emotional dimension of her language learning. Existing research has illustrated the potential for language anxiety or relatedness frustration to stifle autonomous learning (Hooper, 2023; Mynard et al., 2020; Watkins, 2022), and teachers have an essential role to play in empowering their students by minimizing such negative affect as much as possible. In light of these considerations, it appears prudent for teachers to afford students as many opportunities as possible to interact with each other to encourage deeper exploration of content and create mutually-supportive relationships. This means that perhaps the ideal role of teachers may no longer be to teach by simply transferring knowledge, but to support students' expressions of autonomy through the co-creation (in partnership with students) of relatedness-fostering classrooms. In this way, the role of secondary school English teachers might continue to evolve from mere knowledge sources to running companions.

Conversely, regarding relatedness frustration (see Table 4), there was a prevalent perception that the opportunities for pair and group work as described above were extremely limited, with many students feeling as if they were attending classes alone despite being in a classroom full of peers. Consequently, the extent to which interactions with teachers, ALTs, or students could be maintained within the classroom became a crucial factor in relatedness satisfaction or frustration. Furthermore, some interviewees had experienced teasing or reprimands from teachers, contributing to demotivation. In this regard, Ruka expressed the following sentiments.

> Of course, it was unpleasant to be scolded by the teacher or see someone else being scolded, but for me, it was more dissatisfaction with classmates than with the teacher. Anyone would be upset if someone was sleeping or studying another subject during class. If there are people like that around me, I would lose motivation too.
> (Ruka, 2023, 9/29)

According to Ruka, these were persistent classroom management issues, as students with low confidence in their ability would sleep during class, and those already proficient or confident in English would engage in covert study of other subjects during English lessons. As a result, this led to reprimands from teachers and a negative atmosphere in the classroom. This previously discussed competence frustration resulting from unmet needs of both high- and low-proficiency/confidence students contributed to a vicious cycle in which relatedness and general classroom atmosphere were also adversely affected. Ruka's comment highlighted how these issues could ripple out and adversely impact the motivation of surrounding students. It has been claimed that motivation has a contagious quality (Hiromori et al., 2021), meaning that if many students are enthusiastic about learning English, it inspires both teachers and students, while a marked lack of motivation in some students can cause a spread of demotivation among others. Furthermore, it is naturally disheartening for teachers who dedicate considerable effort to lesson planning to be undervalued by students based on their teaching methods (Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004). Thus, teachers should not only focus on the content of their lessons, but also consider how to convey that content to students effectively and deepen their understanding.

As one potential solution, addressing problems with insufficient opportunities for pair and group work, as implicated in participants' experiences of relatedness frustration, could be explored. English is not simply *eigo* (Hiramoto, 2013; Nagatomo, 2016; Nagatomo & Allen, 2019)–an academic subject or an exam topic, but also a means of communicating ideas and feelings that requires extensive practice and various language activities to develop. However, according to the participants, much class time is spent sitting quietly, listening to the teacher. By creating opportunities for interaction with others, an environment where English must be communicatively used can be established, potentially meeting the needs of students who want to speak English more. A number of alternative pedagogical interventions, such as separating students based on proficiency level or the differentiation technique, can also be utilized to address motivation or proficiency gaps. However, these are arguably conceptually grounded in the mitigation or circumvention of issues of low student self-concept or self-efficacy rather than tackling its underlying causes. Conversely, increasing opportunities for peer collaboration heightens the chance for near-peer role modeling (Muir, 2018; Murphey & Arao, 2001) to occur. Seeing near-peers as relatable success-stories or leaders can represent a source of vicarious experience (Bandura, 1997), where seeing others overcome challenges through "effortful coping behavior" (Bandura, 1977, p. 197) can help struggling students to believe that success may also be possible for them. Taking this into consideration, the previously-discussed introduction of a student-teacher system could also shift the learning environment from the traditional model of receiving knowledge from teachers to a collaborative learning environment where students learn and deepen their understanding of language together. This transition could fundamentally increase opportunities for both interaction and prosociality, positively influencing the psychological well-being of students (Kawasaki, 2023).

However, there were also indications that interaction with others could also be sources of negative affect. For instance, consistent with findings from Watkins (2022), criticism of pair work from Fuuta highlighted a tendency in class to foster a competitive spirit or develop judgmental attitudes towards others.

> The English proficiency of classmates around me was low, and we could not engage in conversation. It was stressful for me to have to adjust to the other person's level to make them understand.
> (Fuuta, 2023, 9/18)

> I do not like pair work. If my pair is good at English, I feel inferior. And I feel even worse when I think I am bothering my pair. Also, there was an opportunity to teach each other in class, but I did not want to teach. I would be embarrassed if what I taught was wrong.
> (Haruto, 2023, 9/30)

Considering Haruto's statement, it seems evident that pair work, involving only two students, made it easier for gaps between one's English proficiency and that of others to be exposed. It could therefore be speculated that group work involving multiple individuals may alleviate this type of anxiety or social comparison. Hence, teachers should be mindful that simply providing opportunities for interaction with others may not necessarily engender harmonious connections or give rise to improvement in classes. Not all students may initially desire increased interaction with others and pair or group work may require proactive scaffolding or engineering on the part of observant teachers. Additionally, the embarrassment Haruto reported is a common classroom management consideration for many Japanese teachers (Nishino, 2011; Sugino, 2010). Japan is considered a shame culture (Bear et al., 2009), and many Japanese students tend to avoid raising their hands and speaking up. This tendency stems from prioritizing how other learners perceive their remarks, which can be inhibitory in language learning. Most people, and particularly adolescents, naturally tend to avoid embarrassment if possible, so it is imperative to create a learning environment in which all stakeholders behave in a way that does not induce embarrassment in others. If teachers and classmates provide immediate warm, positive feedback to students who speak up, they will feel relieved and come to believe that speaking up was a good decision. Positive engagement becomes normalized, and the feelings of embarrassment are likely to gradually diminish as a result.

In summary, key themes tied to relatedness satisfaction and frustration were the provision or denial of opportunities for multiple-person interaction and the presence or absence of peer/teacher dynamics leading to language anxiety, embarrassment, and non-facilitative social comparison. Participants' perspectives, reflecting the pivotal role of social interaction and connection for classroom motivation and wellbeing, echoed findings from Watkins' study (2022), which indicated relatedness satisfaction may be the most vital element for promoting language learning among the three psychological needs. This was also evident in Ruka's comments.

> When I talked or solved problems with my classmates during class, what we discussed remained deeply ingrained in my memory. And we devised ways to remember words with classmates, making studying enjoyable. Memories formed during collaborative learning were more positive.
> (Ruka, 2023, 9/29)

Just as in the self-access learning communities that Watkins investigated, within the secondary English classes that our participants described, satisfying the need for relatedness appeared to be a crucial foundation for facilitating the satisfaction of the other BPNs. Establishing a positive and warm social atmosphere affords both teachers and learners opportunities to develop trust and thereby move class activities in more autonomy-supportive directions. From there, sharing decision-making and responsibility with students can then facilitate the varied study options and peer support that seemed to engender competence satisfaction in our participants. A positive class atmosphere promotes ease of expression, facilitates interaction, and ultimately brings about an enjoyable learning experience. The diverse emotions that emerge within such an environment inspire humans to strive for the benefit of others, improving the qualities and skills necessary for thriving in contemporary society. We close this section with a thought-provoking and instructive comment from Ruka that illustrates this far better than we could.

> Humans cannot live alone. Opportunities to help or be helped by others will come. Classes are a practice ground for that. They are places for honing the skills necessary for survival.
> (Ruka, 2023, 9/29)

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which students' BPNs are satisfied or frustrated in their secondary school English classes. Although it has been established that autonomy-support is pivotal in satisfying other BPNs, this study also highlights the important role that relatedness can play in providing fertile ground from which autonomy can take root in the language classroom. A trusting teacher-student relationship enables teachers to delegate more class time and content control to their students while simultaneously demonstrating to students that they can offer suggestions regarding class content without fear of reproach or embarrassment. This also holds true for peer interaction, as fulfilling relationships built between students cultivate an atmosphere of commitment to prosocially work for the benefit of others and thus increase the scope for autonomous engagement. Furthermore, receiving scaffolding and constructive feedback from others can empower students to understand their own strengths and weaknesses, leading to an increase in feelings of competence (Kawasaki, 2023). As such, there is an implication that by focusing time and effort on relatedness satisfaction, teachers can set a positive cycle in motion where student wellbeing and learning motivation are sustained. Table 5 below summarizes factors indicated in this study to be important items for future English learning in Japanese secondary school English classrooms based on the satisfaction of each BPN.

Table 5

Summary of key potential contributors to English classroom BPN satisfaction

Autonomy	Competence	Relatedness
• atmosphere conducive for peer/teacher interaction • balance between exam-focused and communicative English	• peer collaboration/ student-teacher system • effective use of tests and textbooks	• ample opportunities for multi-person interaction • emotionally supportive and anxiety-mitigating classroom dynamic

The main limitations of this study stem from its qualitative nature and the small number of participants, so the results obtained cannot be generalized. Moreover, since the study focused solely on English language learning in secondary schools, it is unclear as to whether the results would be applicable to other primary or tertiary educational settings. Furthermore, this study represents but one retrospective snapshot of secondary school English classes. Insights from stimulated recall or classroom observations within longitudinal studies of current junior high and high school students are likely to produce more reliable and richer ethnographic accounts of everyday classroom realities. Nevertheless, this small-scale study highlights how framing learner perspectives on classroom language learning in terms of BPN satisfaction and frustration can contribute to teachers' understandings of learner needs. This, in turn illustrates what actionable changes could be made to engender increased learner engagement and wellbeing. Central to the situation in Japan is the crucial role that teacher-student and student-student interaction appear to play in positive classroom dynamics as well as the pedagogical engineering necessary to make such interaction less face-threatening. Finally, although this study focuses solely on Japanese secondary English education, this study potentially raises implications that could be applied to English education within numerous other Asian countries such as Korea, China, or Thailand where balancing exam-focused and communicative educational needs has often been problematic due to numerous practical or ideological factors (Butler, 2011). Surveying students' perspectives on both the educational goals of English classes and the teaching methodologies enacted to achieve those goals is a valuable source of nuanced and contextually appropriate data. This data can, in turn, greatly aid teachers in working with students to create BPN-satisfying learning environments where exam-focused and communicative educational approaches may be democratically reconciled. It is hoped that future research in this area will clarify these issues further and help create classroom learning environments that support the wellbeing and growth of both teachers and students.

THE AUTHORS

Kodai Kamino is a graduate student in the Department of Global Japanese Studies at Meiji University, Japan. He is qualified to teach English in all of the elementary, junior high and high schools in Japan. His research interests include teacher psychology, motivation, engagement, and well-being.
Kamino0313@outlook.jp

Daniel Hooper is an associate professor in the Department of English Communication at Tokyo Kasei University, Japan. He has been teaching in Japan for 17 years in numerous contexts including primary/secondary schools, conversation schools, and universities. His research interests include teacher/learner identity, self-access learning communities, and communities of practice.
hooper-d@tokyo-kasei.ac.jp

REFERENCES

Agawa, T., & Takeuchi, O. (2016). Validating self-determination theory in the Japanese EFL context: Relationship between innate needs and motivation. *Asian EFL Journal, 18*(1), 7–33. https://doi.org/10.4236/wjet.2018.62026

Ahmed, S. K. (2024). The pillars of trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Journal of Medicine Surgery and Public Health, 2*, 1–4. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.glmedi.2024.100051

Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review, 84*(2), 191–215. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.84.2.191

Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. Macmillan.

Bartlett, K. (2016). Japanese teachers' attitudes towards incorporating CLT in the high school English language classroom: An ethnographic study. *Kwansei Gakuin University Humanities Review, 21*, 93–104. https://eprints.usq.edu.au/30700/

Bas, G. (2022). Effect of student teachers' teaching beliefs and attitudes towards teaching on motivation to teach: Mediating role of self-efficacy. *Journal of Education for Teaching, 48*(3), 348–363. https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2021.2006043

Bear, G. G., Uribe-Zarain, X., Manning, M. A., & Shiomi, K. (2009). Shame, guilt, blaming, and anger: Differences between children in Japan and the US. *Motivation and Emotion, 33*, 229–238. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11031-009-9130-8

Berwick, R., & Ross, S. (1989). Motivation after matriculation: Are Japanese learners of English still alive after exam hell? *JALT Journal, 11*(2), 193–210. https://jalt-publications.org/sites/default/files/pdf-article/jj-11.2-art3.pdf

Bradshaw, E. L., DeHaan, C. R., Parker, P. D., Curren, R., Duineveld, J. J., Di Domenico, S. I., & Ryan, R. M. (2023). The perceived conditions for living well: Positive perceptions of primary goods linked with basic psychological needs and wellness. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 18*(1), 44–60. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2021.1991446

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2020). One size fits all? What counts as quality practice in (reflexive) thematic analysis? *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 18*(3), 328–352. https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2020.1769238

Burke, M., & Hooper, D. (2020). The Japanese educational context. In J. Mynard, M. Burke, D. Hooper, B. Kushida, P. Lyon, R. Sampson & P. Taw (Eds.), *Dynamics of a social language learning community: Beliefs, membership, and identity* (pp. 29–36). Multilingual Matters.

Butler, Y. G., (2011). The implementation of communicative and task-based language teaching in the Asia-Pacific region. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 31*, 36–57. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190511000122

Carreira, J. M. (2012). Motivational orientations and psychological needs in EFL learning among elementary school students in Japan. *System, 40*, 191–202. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2012.02.001

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Deci, E. L. (1971). Effects of externally mediated rewards on intrinsic motivation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 18*(1), 105–115. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0030644

Delin, C. R., & Baumeister, R. F. (1994). Praise: More than just social reinforcement. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour, 24*, 219–241. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5914.1994.tb00254.x

Dewaele, J. M., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2014). The two faces of Janus? Anxiety and enjoyment in the foreign language classroom. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching, 4*(2), 237–274. https://doi.org/10.14746/ssllt.2014.4.2.5

Dörnyei, Z. (2014). *The psychology of the language learner: Individual differences in second language acquisition*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410613349

Dörnyei. Z., & Ryan, S. (2015). *The psychology of the language learner revisited*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315779553

Egitim, S. (2021). Collaborative leadership in English language classrooms: Engaging learners in leaderful classroom practice and strategies. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 2021*, 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2021.1990413

Falout, J., Murphey, T., Elwood, J., & Hood, M. (2008). Learner voices: Reflections on secondary education. In K. Bradford Watts, T. Muller & M. Swanson (Eds.), *JALT 2007 Conference Proceedings* (pp. 231–243). JALT. https://www.academia.edu/2872906/Learner_voices_Reflections_on_secondary_education

Given, L. M., & Saumure, K. (2008). Trustworthiness. In L. M. Given (Ed.), *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research method*s (Vols. 1 & 2) (pp. 895–896). Sage.

Hamari, J., Shernoff, D. J., Rowe, E., Coller, B., Asbell-Clarke, J., & Edwards, T. (2016). Challenging games help students learn: An empirical study on engagement, flow and immersion in game-based learning. *Computers in Human Behavior, 54*, 170–179. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.07.045

Hiramoto, M. (2013). English vs English conversation: Language teaching in modern Japan. In L. Wee, R. B. H. Goh & L. Lim (Eds.), *The politics of English: South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Asia Pacific* (pp. 228–248). John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/wlp.4.16hir

Hiromori, T. (2020). *A guide to writing articles on English education: Tips and advice for getting your article published in a journal*. Taishukanshoten. https://www.taishukan.co.jp/book/b512801.html

Hiromori, T. (2023). *Mechanisms for learning English: Effective study methods based on second language acquisition research*. Taishukanshoten. https://www.taishukan.co.jp/book/b625474.html

Hiromori, T., Yoshimura, M., Mitsugi, M., & Kirimura, R. (2021). Watch your partner's behaviors: Motivation contagion in L2 pair work. *Journal of Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics, 25*, 25–47. https://doi.org/10.25256/PAAL.25.1.2

Hongo, J. (July 18, 2014). *Japan ranks 40th of 48 countries in TOEIC scores*. The Wall Street Journal. https://www.wsj.com/articles/BL-JRTB-17437

Hooper, D. (2020). Understanding communities of practice in a social language learning space. In J. Mynard, M. Burke, D. Hooper, B. Kushida, P. Lyon, R. Sampson & P. Taw (Eds.), *Dynamics of a social language learning community: Beliefs, membership, and identity* (pp. 108–124). Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/MYNARD8908

Hooper, D. (2023). Mind the gap: Student-developed resources for mediating transitions into self-access learning. *JASAL Journal, 4*(1), 32–54. https://jasalorg.com/mind-the-gap-student-developed-resources-for-mediating-transitions-into-self-access-learning/

Hooper, D., & Hashimoto, N. (Eds.) (2020). *Teacher narratives from the eikaiwa classroom: Moving beyond "McEnglish"*. Candlin & Mynard. https://doi.org/10.47908/13

Hosaka, Y. (2020). A study on "teaching classes in English" 3 – Analysis of the attitude survey of junior high school students. *The Journal of Takusyoku University, 142*, 297–315. https://takushoku-u.repo.nii.ac.jp/records/341

Humphries, S., & Burns, A. (2015). 'In reality it's almost impossible': CLT-oriented curriculum change. *ELT Journal, 69*(3), 239–248. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccu081

Jensen, D. (2008). Credibility. In L. M. Given (Ed.), *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods* (Vols. 1 & 2) (pp. 138–139). Sage.

Joe, H.-K., Hiver, P., & Al-Hoorie, A.H. (2017). Classroom social climate, self-determined motivation, willingness to communicate, and achievement: A study of structural relationships in instructed second language settings. *Learning and Individual Differences, 53*, 133–144. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2016.11.005

Karbakhsh, R., & Safa, M. A. (2020). Basic psychological needs satisfaction, goal orientation, willingness to communicate, self-efficacy, and learning strategy use as predictors of second language achievement: A structural equation modeling approach. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research, 49*, 803–822. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-020-09714-7

Kawasaki, M. (2023). The influence of peer interaction on emotion regulation in the English classroom. *The Learner Development Journal, 7*, 59–77. https://doi.org/10.37546/JALTSIG.LDJ7-4

Kikuchi, K. (2015). *Demotivation in second language acquisition: Insights from Japan*. Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781783093953

Kikuchi, K., & Browne, C. (2009). English educational policy for high schools in Japan: Ideals vs. reality. *RELC Journal, 40*(2), 172–191. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688209105865

Kikuchi, K., & Sakai, H. (2009). Japanese learners' demotivation to study English: A survey study. *JALT Journal, 31*(2), 183–204. https://jalt-publications.org/recentpdf/jj/2009b/art3.pdf

Kosuge, K. (2020). Various problems of "teaching methods" and "activities" in English classes. *The Journal of Musashino University, 10*, 1–7. https://mu.repo.nii.ac.jp/records/1409

Krashen, S. (1985). The input hypothesis: Issues and implications. Longman.

Kubota, R. (2011). Learning a foreign language as leisure and consumption: Enjoyment, desire, and the business of eikaiwa. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 14*(4), 473–488. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2011.573069

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. Sage.

Legault, L. (2017). The need for competence. In V. Ziegler-Hill & T. K. Shackelford (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of personality and individual differences* (pp. 1–4) Springer Reference. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-28099-8_1123-1

Lortie, D. (1975). *Schoolteacher*. University of Chicago Press. https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/S/bo3645184.html

Lou, N. M., & Noels, K. A. (2020). Breaking the vicious cycle of language anxiety: Growth language mindsets improve lower-competence ESL students' intercultural interactions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 61*, Article 101847. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2020.101847

Machida, T. (2019). How do Japanese junior high school teachers react to the teaching English in English policy? *JALT Journal, 41*(1), 5–26. https://jalt-publications.org/sites/default/files/pdf-article/jj2019a-art1.pdf

Malterud, K., Siersma, V. D., & Guassora, A. D. (2016). Sample size in qualitative interview studies: Guided by information power. *Qualitative Health Research, 26*(13), 1753–1760. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732315617444

Mann, S. (2016). *The research interview: Reflective practice and reflexivity in research processes*. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137353368_1

Matsuda, A. (2011). "Not everyone can be a star": Students' and teachers' beliefs about English teaching in Japan. In P. Seargeant (Ed.), *English in Japan in the era of globalization* (pp. 38–59). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230306196_3

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. (2017). *Courses of study* (pp. 1–9). Kairyudo. https://www.mext.go.jp/component/a_menu/education/micro_detail/__icsFiles/afieldfile/2019/03/18/1387018_010.pdf

Miyahara, M. (2015). *Emerging self-identities and emotions in foreign language learning: A narrative oriented approach*. Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781783093823

Morimoto, S. (2022). Development of a class evaluation form based on demotivating teacher studies and its application to prospective and in-service English teacher training. *The Journal of Tamagawa University, 62*, 93–116. https://tamagawa.repo.nii.ac.jp/record/1404/files/1_2021_93-116.pdf

Moussu, L., & Llurda, E. (2008). Non-native English-speaking English language teachers: History and research. *Language Teaching, 41*(3), 315–348. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005028

Muir, C. (2018). *Motivational aspects of using near peers as role models*. Cambridge Papers in ELT series. https://www.cambridge.org/gb/files/2015/7488/6244/CambridgePapersInELT_NearPeers_2018_ONLINE.pdf

Murphey, T. (2002). From the horse's mouth: Advice from second-semester Japanese-university students to J/SHS English teachers in Japan. *Learning Learning, 9*(1), 2–10. https://ld-sig.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/2002a.pdf

Murphey, T., & Arao, H. (2001). Reported belief changes through near-peer role modelling. *TESL-EJ, 5*(3), Article ej19a1. https://www.tesl-ej.org/wordpress/issues/volume5/ej19/ej19a1/

Murphey, T., Falout, J., Elwood, J., & Hood, M. (2009). Inviting student voice. *Asian EFL Journal, 36*, 221–235. https://asian-efl-journal.com/PTA-May-2009.pdf

Mynard, J., Burke, M., Hooper, D., Kushida, B., Lyon, P., Sampson, R., & Taw, P. (2020). *Dynamics of a social language learning community: Beliefs, membership, and identity*. Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/MYNARD8908

Mynard, J., & Shelton-Strong, S. J. (2022). *Autonomy support beyond the language learning classroom: A self-determination theory perspective*. Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781788929059

Nagatomo, D. H. (2016). *Identity, gender and teaching English in Japan*. Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781783095216

Nagatomo, D., & Allen, D. (2019). Investing in their futures: Highly-motivated students' perceptions of TEAP and university entrance exams. *The Language Teacher, 43*(5), 3–7. https://doi.org/10.37546/JALTTLT43.5-1

Nishino, T. (2011). Japanese high school teachers' beliefs and practices regarding communicative language teaching. *JALT Journal, 33*(2), 131–155. https://jalt- publications.org/files/pdf-article/art2_19.pdf

Noda, M., & O'Regan, J. P. (2020). L1 marginalisation in Japan: Monolingual instrumentalism and the discursive shift against yakudoku in the Japanese government's Course of Study. *Current Issues in Language Planning, 21*(2), 135–152. https://doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2019.1647998

Noels, K. A., Clément, R., & Pelletier, L. (1999). Perceptions of teachers' communicative style and students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. *The Modern Language Journal, 83*, 23–34. https://doi.org/10.1111/0026-7902.00003

Noels, K. A., Adrian-Taylor, S., Saumure, K. D., & Katz, J. W. (2019). Motivation and the support of significant others across language learning contexts. *Journal for the Psychology of Language Learning, 1*, 106–141. https://www.jpll.org/index.php/journal/article/view/noelsetal

Olafsen, A. H., Halvari, H., & Frølund, C. W. (2021). The basic psychological need satisfaction and need frustration at work scale: A validation study. *Frontiers in Psychology, 12*, Article 697306. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.697306

Oga-Baldwin, W. L. Q., Nakata, Y., Parker, P. D., & Ryan, R. M. (2017). Motivating young language learners: A longitudinal model of self-determined motivation in elementary school foreign language classes. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 49*, 140–150. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2017.01.010

Pinner, R. (2016). *Authenticity and teacher-student motivational synergy: A narrative of language teaching*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351184298

Reeve, J. (2016). Autonomy-supportive teaching: What it is, how to do it. In J. C. K. Wang, W. C. Liu & R. M. Ryans (Eds.), *Motivation in educational research: Translating theory into classroom practice* (pp. 129–152). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-287-630-0_7

Reeve, J., Ryan, R. M., Cheon, S. H., Matos, L., & Kaplan, H. (2022). *Supporting students' motivation: Strategies for success*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003091738

Richards, K. (2003). *Qualitative inquiry in TESOL*. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230505056

Rothbauer, P. M. (2008). Triangulation. In L. M. Given (Ed.), *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods* (Vols. 1 & 2) (pp. 892–894). Sage.

Ryan, R., & Deci, E. (2017). *Self-determination theory: Basic psychological needs in motivation, development, and wellness* (2nd ed.). Guilford Publications. https://doi.org/10.1521/978.14625/28806

Sakai, H., & Kikuchi, K. (2009). An analysis of demotivators in the ELF classroom. *System, 37*, 57–69. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2008.09.005

Sato, K., & Kleinsasser, R. C. (2004). Beliefs, practices, and interactions of teachers in a Japanese high school English department. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 20*(8), 797–816. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2004.09.004

Seargeant, P. (2009). *The idea of English in Japan: Ideology and the evolution of a global language*. Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781847692030

Shelton-Strong, S. J. (2020). Advising in language learning and the support of learners' basic psychological needs: A self-determination theory perspective. *Language Teaching Research, 26*(5), 963–985. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168820912355

Sim, J., Saunders, B., Waterfield, J., & Kingstone, T. (2018). Can sample size in qualitative research be determined a priori? *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 21*(5), 619–634. https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2018.1454643

Snyder, B. (2019). Creating engagement and motivation in the Japanese university language classroom. In P. Wadden & C. C. Hale (Eds.), *Teaching English at Japanese universities: A new handboo*k (pp. 137–143). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315147239-15

Sugino, T. (2010). Teacher demotivational factors in the Japanese language teaching context. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 3*, 216–226. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.07.036

Suzuki, H., & Roger, P. (2014). Foreign language anxiety in teachers. *JALT Journal, 36*(2), 175–199. https://jalt-publications.org/sites/default/files/pdf-article/jj2014b-art2.pdf

Underwood, P. (2012). Teacher beliefs and intentions regarding the instruction of English grammar under national curriculum reforms: A theory of planned behaviour perspective. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 28*(6), 911–925. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2012.04.004

Ushioda, E. (2015). Foreign language motivation in Japan: An 'insider' perspective from outside Japan. In M. T. Apple, D. Da Silva & T. Fellner (Eds.), *Language learning motivation in Japan* (pp. 1–14). Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781783090518-003

Watkins, S. (2022). Creating social language learning opportunities outside the classroom: A narrative analysis of learners' experiences in interest-based learning communities. In J. Mynard & S. Shelton-Strong (Eds.), *Autonomy support beyond the language learning classroom: A self-determination theory perspective* (pp. 182–214). Multilingual Matters. https://www.multilingual-matters.com/page/detail/Autonomy-Support-Beyond-the-Language-Learning-Classroom/?k=9781788929035

Watkins, S., & Hooper, D. (2023). *From student to community leader: A guide for autonomy-supportive leadership development*. Candlin & Mynard. https://doi.org/10.47908/25

Weinstein, N., & Ryan, R. M. (2010). When helping helps: Autonomous motivation for prosocial behavior and its influence on well-being for the helper and recipient. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 98*(2), 222–244. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0016984

Yoshida, K. (2003). Language education policy in Japan: The problem of espoused objectives versus practice. *The Modern Language Journal, 87*(2), 290–292. https://doi.org/10.2307/1193041

Appendix A

Plain language statement and participant consent form

参加同意書
◯研究課題名

To What Extent are Japanese Students' Basic Psychological Needs (BPNs) Satisfied in Secondary School English Classes?

（日本の中学校/高校の英語の授業における基本的心理欲求はどの程度満たされているのか?）

本研究は、中学校/高校の英語の授業と生徒の動機づけや動機減退の関連について明らかにすることを目的とします。皆さまの貴重なお時間を頂戴し恐縮ですが、何卒ご協力のほどよろしくお願いいたします。

調査におきましては、皆さまが置かれている状況を十分に配慮して質問をさせていただきますが、まれにデリケートな内容に触れなければならない可能性もございます。具体的な内容をお話ししていただく場合には、個人が特定されないように内容を抽象化いたします。話しにくい内容である場合は、無理にお答えいただかなくても結構です。また、気分がすぐれない場合には、いつでも休憩や中止をすることができます。

この研究に参加しないことで、皆さまが不利益を被ることは一切ございません。また、同意した後もいつでも同意を撤回することができます。何かご不明な点やご質問がございましたら、下記連絡先までご連絡ください。

◯説明事項
① 参加者のプライバシーについては、十分に配慮いたします。
② インタビューは録音させていただきます。
③ インタビューにより得られたデータにつきましては、厳重に保存いたします。
④ インタビューで得た情報は、承諾なしに開示または公表されることはありません。
⑤ 本研究への参加に同意しても、いつでも処分無しに撤回することができます。
⑥ このインタビューは研究以外の目的で使用いたしません。

◯記入欄
※説明事項を読み、本研究に参加していただける場合には以下の欄にご記入ください。

私（参加者）は、研究目的のために文書の使用を（　　）承諾します。
（　　）承諾しません。

私（参加者）は、この研究に参加することに同意します。

2023年　　月　　日

研究参加者署名：＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿.

研究者署名：＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿.

Appendix B

Interview protocol

<General Background>
① How did you feel about your English classes at school?
(学校の英語の授業はどうでしたか?)

② What, if anything, did you find interesting?
(面白かったと思うことは何かありましたか?)

③ What, if anything, did you find boring?
(つまらなかったと思うことは何かありましたか?)

④ What emotions did you commonly feel when taking English classes?
(英語の授業を受けていて、よく感じた感情は何でしたか?)

<Autonomy>
⑤ How much could you do what you wanted to do in your English classes?
(英語の授業では、自分のやりたいことはどれくらいできましたか?)

⑥ To what degree did you feel in control during activities in your English classes?
(英語の授業では、どの程度自分は主体的・積極的であると感じましたか?)

<Competence>
⑦ How did you rate your English proficiency?
(自分の英語力をどのように思いましたか?)

⑧ In what situations did you feel you were good or bad at English?
(どのような場面で英語が得意・不得意だと感じましたか?)

<Relatedness>
⑨ Please describe the relationship between you and the other people (students/teachers) in your English classes.
(あなたとクラスの他の人々(生徒や先生)との関係についてお答えください。)

⑩ To what degree did you feel supported or connected to others in your English classes?
(英語の授業で、あなたはどの程度他の人に支えられていると感じましたか?)