L2 motivation in urban and rural areas: A quantitative study

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L2 motivation is considered to be a relatively new topic, as it started to gather momentum in the 1950s thanks to Krashen and his ”Affective Filter Theory”. At present there very many different theories and approaches which try to explain this complex concept. ”The Self-Determination Theory” (Deci and Ryan, 1985) or ”L2 Motivational Self System” (Dörnyei, 2005), to name but two, are among the most influential theories regarding L2 motivation.

The main aim of this study is to test whether living in a city or in a rural area affects the levels of intrinsic/extrinsic motivation (Self-Determination Theory) of primary students learning English as a second language, along with their perceptions of their Ideal Self/Ought-to-be Self (L2 Motivational Self System). The participants are a total of 550 Primary school pupils from different schools in the Spanish region of Castilla-La Mancha, who have completed a 5 point likert scale questionnaire (including background questions and questions related to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation along with the Ideal Self and the Ought-to-be Self)

The results of this study are tentative since data collection is still in progress. However, they show that both hypotheses are correct. Firstly, students from big cities are indeed more intrinsically and extrinsically motivated than those living in rural areas. Secondly, city students are more engaged with their Ideal Self that their peers from small villages. Finally, as for the Ought-to-be Self, very little difference was encountered between the two groups. Thus, these results have important pedagogical implications for teachers, practitioners and parents from rural areas.


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