

Influence of Attitudes in Learning Foreign Languages among Students of Sultan Idris Education University (UPSI)

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to determine the attitudes of students in learning foreign languages, namely Spanish, German and Japanese at Sultan Idris Education University (UPSI). This study measured the attitudes through the aspects of interest, motivation and perception of students on the basis of Socio-Educational Model presented by Gardner (1985). The methodologies used in the study were quantitative and qualitative. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data of the study. A total of 90 respondents involved in this study comprising of 30 Spanish, 30 German and 30 Japanese language students. The overall results showed positive attitudes, interest and perceptions among respondents towards learning process of all the three languages. The study found out that interest of students to attend foreign languages courses was

influenced by the internal factors like preferences, interests and enjoyment in learning foreign languages. In addition, integrative and instrumental factors also influenced the attitudes of the students. The study showed that there were no comparison of views on learning foreign languages among female and male students, and races but there were significant differences based on gender and race in the aspect of attitudes, interest and students' perceptions towards the language learned. Female students were more positive with high interest and good perceptions towards learning foreign languages. In the aspect of race, Chinese students were more positive and integrative-oriented in learning Japanese language. This was due to many similarities between Japanese language and their mother tongue. Indian students were more positive in learning European languages such as Spanish and German due to the second language factor as the languages have similarities with English language. Malay students were positive towards all the three languages as they were influenced by the instrumental factor. They wanted to learn foreign languages for their future benefits. The findings also clearly proved that interest, motivation, perception, instrumental and integrative factors played important roles in the learning process and influence the students' attitude to learn Spanish, German and Japanese. In conclusion, UPSI students have positive attitudes towards foreign language that is being learned and they are showing interest, motivation and positive perceptions.

Keywords: *attitude, foreign language, learning, interest, socio-educational model, students*

1. INTRODUCTION

In Malaysia, interest to learn and master foreign languages is currently increasing among the community. This is due to the awareness about the importance of mastering languages other than native language that can be applied in daily life. Language plays an important role in the life of a society and the advantages of mastering more than one language are priceless (Jamian Mohammad, 2000). It was supported by Hieda & Maserah (2014) that the need of mastering foreign languages has become increasingly important in creating Malaysian community with high-quality human resources; and skills to converse in variety of languages and international languages teaching are viewed as necessities to achieve that anticipation.

According to Fuller (1987), factors of learning foreign language are:

- a) foreign language is like a declaration with the same value as a degree in chemistry and it is very useful to be included in a resume.
- b) learning foreign language is an advantage in knowing a larger world.
- c) ability to use foreign language and determination to learn the language will impress foreign acquaintances from country of the language as we are trying to understand their culture and connect with them using the language.

- d) foreign language will open door to foreign culture and open our eyes to the outer world.
- e) as we learn foreign language, we will learn our language more.
- f) process of foreign language learning is very fun.

Meanwhile, according to Sakuragi (2006), the advantages of mastering foreign languages are the capability to smoothly conduct negotiations or understand the documents in occupational matters without a translator or mediator. In this regard, privilege of learning foreign language gives an added value to students in job diversity which is getting challenging and exposed to the world of globalization (Ainol Madziah&Isarji, 2009; Normalis, Hieda & Nezu, 2012).

Foreign languages learning in Institutions of Higher Learning (IPTA) such as Spanish (BS), German (BG), France (BP), Arabic (BA), Chinese (BC), Japanese (BJ), Italian (BiT) and others have been introduced by University of Malaya (UM) in 1972. In that year, foreign language courses were offered by Language Centre which is now known as Faculty of Languages and Linguistics. These foreign language courses were offered as elective or audit courses and now there are some universities that offer these courses in the form of major and minor programmes such as in UM and Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). The foreign languages that are offered in the form of major programmes are Spanish, German and Japanese.

Other than UM and UPM, foreign languages are also taught at the other Institutions of Higher Learning such as Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) and Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHO). These foreign language courses are offered as elective courses.

In UPSI, foreign language courses such as Spanish, German and Japanese language started to be offered in 2003 and received encouraging responses from students. A total of 120 students signed up to learn the languages. At first, in UPSI, these courses were offered as audit courses opened to all university students, staffs and local community. In 2011, these courses were offered as personal enrichment and elective courses. Foreign language courses are learned on a number of reasons such as social, economic, cultural, education, religion and so on. (www.upsi.edu.my).

The question is, why UPSI students who attended foreign language courses such as Japanese language, Spanish language and German language showed positive attitudes towards the languages? What were the factors that triggered the positive attitudes? Learning a foreign language in a country that is not the native and multilingual such as Malaysia, requires readiness from the students in terms of mental, physical and emotional involving various factors (Baker, 1992). In addition to differences of attitudes

among students which affect the process of language learning, there are other factors involved such as age, sex, social condition, political, economic and others.

Although there are many other factors that determine the success of learning a foreign language as the third language and so on, psychological experts agreed that attitude is the most important factor that will influence the success and failure in the achievement of a student. Positive attitude, strong interest and effort in learning will help students to master the language that is being learned quickly, easily and effectively. Students always think of appropriate and effective strategies to enhance skills in learning. While negative attitudes such as lazy, apathy, hate or look down upon a language will cause difficulty in learning and mastering the language that is being learned.

Even there were many studies concerning on the attitudes towards foreign language, but the studies on attitudes towards European languages learning in Malaysia were very less. This is because many studies focused on the attitudes of students who learned Asian languages such as Malay, Japanese, Mandarin, and Arabic compared to Spanish, German, French and so on. Study done by Hieda & Maserah (2014) on UKM students' attitudes towards Japanese language, as well as study conducted by Mao & He, 2010; Muhammad Alif, 2005 discussed about the type of orientation in learning Japanese language. The study of attitudes based on gender was conducted by Ishida (1988) and Muhammad Alif (2005). Study conducted by Azman Che Mat and Goh Ying Soon (2005) was related to the situation of foreign language learning in Institutions of Higher Learning. They compared the attitudes of students who learned foreign languages, namely, Arabic, Mandarin and French. A study was conducted on the attitudes of students in oral skills in Arabic in the aspect of cognitive, affective and conative (Ghazali, Nik Mohd Rahimi bin & Offered, 2010). Attitudes and reality about Arabic language mastery skill among j-QAF students had been conducted before (Ismail, Wan Maizatul Akmar & Azman (2013). However, there was a study done by Derek Mohd Sera'ai (2009) viewing the orientation and motivation of students in learning Spanish language by focusing on integrative and instrumental orientation in influencing the students' learning. Although many studies were conducted about the students' attitudes in learning foreign languages and its factors, the explanations are inadequate and insufficient (Hieda & Maserah, 2014). There are ongoing efforts done by lecturers and teachers to ensure that students are able to master the language well and they are provided with facilities such as language laboratory and others. However, studies on attitudes and factors that influence the mastery of a foreign language have yet to be conducted particularly involving foreign languages such as Japanese, Spanish and German.

2. THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to identify attitudes toward Japanese, Spanish and German as foreign languages among students who enrolled in foreign language courses in UPSI. These foreign language courses were offered to students as audit or personal enrichment

courses. Audit courses are courses without credit value and are not being assessed, and personal enrichment courses; namely the courses with credit value and calculated in students' assessment. In general, it can be assumed that the students were positive towards all foreign languages that were offered. This study explained some aspects that identified the level of interest & motivation, perceptions and attitudes among students of UPSI who enrolled in foreign language courses, namely Japanese, Spanish and German, analyzed the differences of interest & motivation, perceptions and attitudes among students based on gender, status of the courses and race, measured the relationship between interest & motivation with attitudes of students who enrolled in foreign language courses and indirectly determined the factors that influence the attitudes of students in learning foreign languages in the UPSI.

3. FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

This study focused on three components namely attitudes, interests and perceptions of students towards learning of foreign languages in UPSI and the socio-educational model (Gardner, 1985). In addition, the integrative and instrumental factors would also be seen indirectly in the component of student's attitudes. Component of attitudes refers to the tendency of acting, thinking, perceiving and sensing in facing an object, idea, situation or value. Attitude is not a behavior, but it is a tendency to behave in a certain way towards the object of the attitude.

1. Attitude as an instrument or a tool to achieve a goal (instrumental function). Someone takes a particular stance towards an object on the basis of his/her thought to what extent the object of the attitude can be used as a tool or instrument to achieve desired goals. If the object supports in achieving the goal, then people will have a positive attitude towards the object, and vice versa. This function is also often referred to as the adjustment function, because by behaving in certain attitude someone will be able to adapt to the environment. This study will identify the attitude of UPSI students in learning foreign languages to achieve learning objectives.
2. Attitude as a function of knowledge. This means that a person's attitudes towards an object will reflect knowledge of the person. In the situation a person's knowledge about something is not yet consistent then it will influence that person's attitudes towards the object. Positive attitudes will give positive results coupled with existing knowledge about the foreign languages will be able to help students to learn through.

On the other hand, perceptions refer to a person's activity in the process of giving impressions, judgments, opinions, senses and interpreting things based on the information gathered from other sources (perceived). Through perceptions we can recognize the world around us, which is the whole world that consists of objects and human beings with all the occurrences (Meider, 1958).

The component of interest is an abstract psychological process that is represented by the whole activities; there are objects that are considered as valuable until they are known and desired. Subsequently, the psychological process develops tendency towards something, desire or passion towards something. The feeling of interest raises a strong desire towards something. This desire is caused by an urge to reach for something such as an object, person, activity, and so on. Meanwhile, motivation is a matter that evokes, maintains, manages and conveys the behavior for a particular purpose. Interest is a psychological element as a source of motivation. Interest encourages (motivates) someone to act and do something according to the interest. There is a close link between the interest and this demands for gratification. Gratification is obtained from the deed (actualization) of interest; this interest will motivate someone to do something. Interest, perception and motivation will affect the student's behavior in learning foreign languages and determine triumph of the learning process.

Integrative orientation refers to the cause for an individual to learn second language for the purposes of interaction approaches or understand the community of the second language (Gardner, 1985). Integrative motivation refers to a will or desire to be like the community members of the other languages and have a relationship with the community (Gardner and Lambert, 1972). They strive to interact and communicate with native speakers of that language, and even accepted as a member of the speech community. When a person becomes a resident in a new community, integrative motivation is the main key in helping the learner to increase efficiency level of the language. In order to be a part of the other community members, a person needs to socialize in the community. A learner with high integrative motivation holds natural interest in the community of the second language. They learn the second language for the purposes of communication and get contact with the community and the culture of second language community (Littlewood, 1984, in Azlina 2009).

4. SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL MODEL (Gardner, 1985)

Most of studies on the theory and model of attitudes in learning foreign languages presented by researchers focused on Socio-Educational Model introduced by Gardner (1985). Gardner and Lambert (1972) in Mohd Firdaus (2003) presented a social psychology theory on language learning. According to this theory, the ethnocentric tendency of a second language and foreign language learner along with his/her attitudes towards the social group were believed as the reason to succeed in learning the particular language. Student orientation might be in the form of instrumental if the purpose of learning language reflected utilitarian value such as to get jobs after studying the language. Students also might have an integrative orientation if the purpose of learning language was to learn more about the culture of the language community. Gardner believed that students who showed integrative orientation towards learning languages were expected to be more successful in learning the language than those with instrumental orientation (Mohd. Firdaus 2003).

The theory of foreign language acquisition as second or third language by Gardner and Smythe (1975) in Mohd Firdaus (2003) was defined through theoretical model known as the Social-Educational Model. This model explained the attitudes and motivation of students towards second language or foreign language were influenced by social characteristics that can be found in the surrounding areas. Students who came from different backgrounds of families and communities would show different attitudes towards foreign language. In addition, factors such as teachers or lecturers, peers and classmates, learning activities and environment would support and influence the attitudes of students in learning foreign languages. Researchers will use the views and 'Socio-Educational Model' by Gardner (1985) as the basis for this research.

According to Gardner (1985), this Socio-Educational Model indicates the importance of learning a language regardless as the first, second or foreign language. Gardner believed that language acquisition involved; belief in context of a particular culture and also the role of variety of individual differences. The above model as well shows that if the cultural aspect is regarded as the most difficult aspect by students to dominate, then the student's level of achievement and language mastery will be low and difficult (Gardner, 1985 in Derek, 2009). In terms of individual differences in learning language, Gardner said that there were 4 individual differences that would determine the achievement in learning a language; which were intelligence, tendency, motivation and anxiety. Students will be able to master a language well where there are interest, positive perception towards culture and the language. This is related to intelligence, motivation, tendency and anxiety about situations that influence individual differences in languages learning and thus influence the attitudes of students. In this study, researchers will look on attitudes, motivation, interests and perceptions of students towards foreign languages learning in UPSI and how these aspects influence the attitudes of students.

Intelligence is considered to measure the extent to which an individual manage to understand all the given assignments and explanations during the process of languages learning. On the other hand, according to Cook (1991), language tendency is the student's ability to learn second language in academic classes and it is associated with the intelligence of the students. While motivation refers to the effort, desire and result related to learning a second language (Gardner in Derek, 2009). Motivation is very vital in languages learning as it will influence attitudes and determine the extent to which an individual learns to acquire language. The aspect of situational refers to fear that appears in the students towards the language learned and it can be as a barrier in the process of learning the language. In this study, researchers will focus on the aspect of motivation, interests and perceptions as well as its relationship with student's attitudes.

Socio-Educational Model also shows two contexts of language learning that can take place, namely formal and informal. In this study, learning occurred formally in classroom. While informal context refers to other purposes of learning that happen for the purpose of entertainment or communication.

Learning process that happens will give results which are linguistic and non-linguistic. Both of the results depend on the experience in both contexts of learning language. The result of linguistic refers to language proficiency such as knowledge, vocabulary, grammar and fluency in speaking, while non-linguistic results refer to the attitudes, values and so on (Gardner, 1985).

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study a set of questionnaire consisting of closed questions was used to alleviate the process of analyzing data by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software (SPSS). Likert scale which consisted of five levels of measurement (1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree, 3 = Moderate, 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree) was used to explain the opinions of students in a more detail way.

In order to identify the level of interest & motivation, perceptions and attitudes towards languages by the respondents, the study listed few items that were divided into three categories. Then, these items were arranged randomly in an arrangement that was able ensure consistency from the respondents while answering the questions. The questions used were direct and not the questions in the form of reverse or negative statement.

Table 1 describes the distribution of the items together with the arrangement in the questionnaire.

Variables	Types of Items	Number of Items
Attitudes	Positive	5, 7, 9, 12, 14, 18
Interest & Motivation	Positive	1, 4, 6, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19
Perceptions	Positive	2, 3, 8, 10, 11

Table 1: Distribution of Questionnaire Item

Each item was divided according to category of attitudes, interest and motivation & perceptions and they became as variables of the study measured based on Socio-Educational Model by Gardner (1985).

Data was collected by distributing questionnaire to all UPSI students who registered for courses of foreign languages in the Department of Modern Languages, Faculty of Languages and Communication, UPSI in Semester I/2015. Number of respondents involved in this study was 90 students (N = 90).

The selection of samples that represented each population features must be conducted in order to obtain a valid general results (Frey, 2014). Therefore, the sample selection procedures had to provide the same opportunities for every member of the population. In this study, samples were selected from three languages courses because; German and Spanish languages represented European languages in which the number of population was more than the number of French language students. While Japanese language

represented Asian language (due to the constraints in seeking for agreement from Mandarin and Arabic language students who involved in pre-test, while Tamil language was not offered). Hence the selection of the sample was as in the Figure 1;

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number of students</u>	<u>Sample size</u>
European language (German, Spanish)	46	40
Asian language (language)	60	48
Total	106	88

Figure 1 : Number of students and sample sizes according to selected languages.

Sampling technique of the study was using quota as there were not many students registered for European and Asian languages this semester. Researchers referred to sampling table of Krejcie and Morgan (1970). In addition researchers also obtained sample sizes according to the proposed formula of Israel (2009), based on confidence level 95% i.e. $100 = 81$ respondents. The number of sample size that was recommended by Hair et al. (2010), was at least 100 people or at the rate of 5 per number of items in the questionnaire.

Therefore researchers searched out 90 respondents and quoted to be 30 for each language involved in this study. From the sample sizes that were proposed, quota sampling was carried out to obtain a number of respondents. Then, Alpha Cronbach analysis procedure was carried out to test the reliability of the items set out in the questionnaire. Generally, data of this study was analyzed using descriptive and inference analysis. Descriptive analysis such as frequency, percentage, average and standard deviation were able translate raw data into the form of statistical data. Partial correlation analysis was applied in analyzing data of the study. It is a procedure that was utilized to identify the linear relationship between two variables in the study to control the other variables that had a linear relationship with both of the variables (Chua, 2008).

In this study, this analysis was used to identify the relationship between at least two variables that affected or controlled by the controlled variable (or covariate).

Then a structured interview data collection was conducted to obtain qualitative data to complete this study.

6. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

6.1. Background of Respondents

Findings of this study were gathered from 90 respondents (N=90). Table 1 in below shows the distribution of respondents based on gender and race.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by gender and race

	Race									
	Malay		Chinese		Indian		Others		Total	
Gender	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	26	70.3	7	18.9	-	-	4	10.8	37	41.1
Female	27	50.9	11	20.8	7	13.2	8	15.1	53	58.9
Total	53	58.9	18	20	7	7.8	12	13.3	90	100

In terms of gender, female students (58.9%) were more than male (41.1%) respectively. In terms of ethnicity, Malay (58.9%) students were more than Chinese students (20%). There were 7 (7.8%) Indian students and 12 students representing the other races (13.3%).

Next, Table 2 explains the number of students by faculties. There are 9 faculties in UPSI and divided into three groups, namely, science and technology, professional and social sciences.

Table 2: Distribution of students by faculties in UPSI

Faculty			Stream		
	N	%		N	%
FSKIK	19	21.11	Science & Technology	37	41.11
FSM	18	20			
FPPM	10	11.11	Professional	15	16.67
FPE	5	5.55			
FBK	28	31.11	Social Sciences	38	42.22
FMSP	3	3.33			
FSK	5	5.55			
FSSKJ	2	2.22			
FPTV	-	-	Science & Technology	-	-
Total	90	100	Total	90	100

Data recorded that students from Science and Social stream (42.22%) had the tendency to enroll in foreign languages classes. This factor is likely due to the location of the campus (UPSI has two campuses). Social Science stream is mainly in Sultan Abdul Jalil Campus where the foreign languages courses have been offered there since 2003. While

Science and Technology stream or Professional stream are in the new campus in Proton City.

Students from Science and Technology stream (41.11%) was in the second rank in enrolling in foreign language courses. The remaining were the students of Professional courses (16.67%) who chose to attend foreign language courses. Foreign language in this study referred to Japanese, German and Spanish language only. There were no records of students from the Faculty of Technology and Vocational Education was likely to choose courses of other foreign languages such as Arabic, Mandarin or French.

6.2. Reliability of the instrument

In general, the procedure of Alpha Cronbach is used by the researchers to evaluate correlation coefficient based on the average correlation of the items in a test if the items are in the standard form (Pallant, 2015). If the items are not standardized, then the average covariant will be used in the analysis.

Thus, for this study, the researchers did a pre-test and analyze the data using *Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha (α)* procedure to measure reliability. This was due to the normal practice by the majority of researchers of using *Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha (α)* to measure the reliability of the questionnaire items (using Likert scale 5 points). The pre-test was carried out on 1st September until 10th October 2015. Respondents for the pre-test were selected among the students who signed up for French (represented European languages) and Arabic (represented Asian languages). Due to that, French and Arab students were not selected as respondents in the actual study.

Pre-test had been carried out with 45 respondents to ensure the effectiveness and their understanding on the information contained in the questionnaires. Alpha Cronbach procedure requires 30 respondent as the minimum number for the pre-test (Moasa, 2013).

In this study researchers conducted the pre-test with 45 respondents. A reliability test was conducted for all questions using Likert scale answers. Alpha Cronbach value was derived from the pre-test to determine the level of reliability of the questions asked. Alpha Cronbach values obtained showed that the results were applicable as in Table 3.

Table 3: Reliability of the research instruments

Item	<u>Before</u>		<u>After</u>	
	Total Item	Alpha Cronbach Value	Total Item	Alpha Cronbach Value
Section B				
Attitude	6	0.708	6	0.709
Interest & Motivation	8	0.686	7	0.710
Perception	6	0.695	6	0.701

All categories were assessed with a score of 0.7 and above. This explained that the presented items had high consistency. The items were also understandable and did not have more than one meaning or confusing.

6.3. Language Attitude of the Respondents

Table 6 shows the assessments of three constructs measured in the study. Assessment of attitudes was determined based on the mean score for all questions of each attitude category. These three categories of attitude resulted to a positive assessment. This procedure was measured by referring to the procedure and evaluation performed by Hieda and Maserah (2014). Results reported 1.00-1.49 (very negative), 2.50-3.49 (neutral), 3.50-4.49 (positive) and 4.50-5.00 (very positive). Table 6 shows the assessment obtained in this study.

Table 4: Assessment for the review

Category	Measured Construct	Min	Assessment
1	Interest & Motivation	4.29	positive
2	Perception	4.02	positive
3	Attitude	3.95	positive

The findings reported positive assessment by the respondents in all of the three categories. Category 1 (Interest & Motivation) recorded positive assessment with the highest Mean value (Mean = 4.29). While category 2 (Perception) recorded the second highest value Min (mean = 4.02) showing a positive assessment. Category 3 showed (Attitude) the lowest assessment compared to category 1 and 2 (mean = 3.95). Based on the mean score reported, respondents learned foreign languages due to positive interest and motivation. These findings provided the implications that UPSI students have a positive assessment in learning a foreign language.

6.4. The level of interest & motivation

Subsequently, in order to identify the level of interest & motivation, perceptions and attitudes of the respondents, the results of analysis are reported in Table 7. Table 7 shows eight statements that measured student's interest and motivation in foreign language courses. In this study the items were categorized into five levels. Evaluation of level determination was based on the mean score for each question in each category. Guide to grading levels are; Level 1:1.00 – 1.49 (very negative), level 2:1.50 – 2.49 (negative) level 3:2.50 – 3.49 (neutral) level 4:3.50 – 4.49 (positive) and level 5: 4.50 –

5.00 (very positive). The guide of grading level was customized from the study of Hieda and Maserah (2014).

Table 5: Level of Interest & Motivation

No	Statement	Disagree	Agree	mean	sp	level
1	I am interested to enroll in a foreign language course of my choice that is offered in this university	4	86	4.59	0.58	4
		4.4%	95.6%			
2	I found that the foreign language subject of my choice was very interesting compared to other subjects	14	76	4.29	0.75	4
		15.6%	84.4%			
3	I learn the foreign language of my choice because the tone sounds interesting	29	61	3.98	0.87	4
		32.2%	67.8%			
4	I choose to learn this foreign language in order to visit the particular country	29	61	3.91	1.20	4
		32.2%	67.8%			
5	I am very happy to learn the foreign language of my choice	8	82	4.52	0.66	4
		8.9%	91.1%			
6	I am interested to listen to the foreign language songs particularly the language of my choice	23	67	4.13	0.90	4
		25.6%	74.4%			
7	I like to learn foreign language of my choice	3	87	4.62	0.55	4
		3.3%	96.7%			
8	I am planning to learn the foreign language of my choice to a higher level	14	76	4.29	0.84	4
		15.6%	84.4%			
Total				4.29	0.46	4

Guide to grading levels are; Level 1:1.00 – 1.49 very negative, Level 2:1.50 – 2.49 negative, Level 3:2.50 – 3.49 neutral, Level 4:3.50 – 4.49 positive, and Level 5:4.50 – 5.00 very positive.

In overall, this study found out that student's interest and motivation were at positive levels. It could be seen in the overall mean value of 4.29 (standard deviation = 0.46). There were six statements that recorded the mean value exceeded 4.00 which were the first, second, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth statement. The highest mean was identified on the seventh statement (mean = 4.62, sp = 0.55).

The seventh statement measured feedback of the students regarding their contentment in learning foreign language of their choice. This finding indicated that the main factors affecting students' interest and motivation in foreign language course were integrative and instrumental factors, namely objectives of learning that happened (Gardner, 1985).

This findings were explained further by referring to the second highest mean (mean = 4.59, sp = 0.58) identified from statement "I am interested to enroll in a foreign language course of my choice that is offered at this university" and also at the third highest mean (mean = 4.52, sp = 0.66), on the statement "I am very happy to learn the foreign language of my choice".

Based on the highest mean value, the study found out that the interest and motivation of students in learning foreign languages were influenced by internal factors, such as the student's favorite, interest and enjoyment in learning foreign languages. In addition, students also provided feedback that foreign language course was very interesting compared to other subjects (mean = 4.29, sp = 0.75) and they also showed a tendency to learn foreign languages at a higher level (mean = 4.29, sp = 0.84).

At the same time, students acknowledged that they have interest in listening to foreign language songs (mean = 4.13, sp = 0.90). There are two statements that recorded the lowest mean which were the fourth statement (mean = 3.91, sp = 1.20) and the third statement (mean = 3.98, sp = 0.87) because learning occurred due to the interest to learn the language because of instrumental factors that were fun and enjoyment, not on the basis of integrative factors namely a will or desire to become members of the community of that particular languages. For that reason, the third and fourth statement were recorded the lowest mean.

6.5. Level of perceptions

In order to identify the level of student's perception towards foreign language courses, assessment was made based on five statements such as in Table 6. The perceptions were categorized into five levels starting with 1 (very negative) to 5 (very positive).

Table 6: Level of Perceptions

No	Statement	Disagree	Agree	mean	sp	level
1	I enrolled in the foreign language course of my choice in order to be able to understand films in that language.	17	73	4.24	0.75	4
		18.9%	81.1%			
2	I chose to learn this foreign language in order to get better job opportunity after graduation.	20	70	4.22	0.82	4
		22.2%	77.8%			
3	Skills in the foreign language	17	73	4.17	0.72	4

	that I have chosen will be able to help me to understand the cultures of the native speaker.	18.9%	81.1%			
4	The need of mastering foreign language of my choice is due to its importance in the global level and for the purpose of future.	20	70	4.13	0.82	4
		22.2%	77.8%			
5	I will be considered as smart when knowing foreign language particularly the one that I chose.	55	35	3.33	1.09	3
		61.1%	38.9%			
Total				4.02	0.56	4

Guide to grading levels are; Level 1:1.00 – 1.49 very negative, Level 2:1.50 – 2.49 negative, Level 3:2.50 – 3.49 neutral, Level 4:3.50 – 4.49 positive, and Level 5:4.50 – 5.00 very positive.

Based on the total mean value of 4.02 (standard deviation = 0.56), student’s perception level was at a positive level. There were four statements that recorded mean values of more than 4.00, that were, the first statement “I enrolled in the foreign language of my choice in order to be able to understand films in the language”, the second statement “I chose to learn this foreign language in order to get better job after graduation”, third statement “Skills in foreign language that I have chosen help me to understand the cultures of native speaker” and the fourth statement “the need of mastering foreign language of my choice is due to its importance in the global level and for the purpose of future”. This matter showed that the instrumental factor played an important role in influencing learning process and the selection of languages learned (Gardner, 1985).

The mean highest was identified at the first statement (mean = 4.24, sp = 0.75), while the second statement recorded the second highest mean (mean = 4.22, sp = 0.82). This finding suggested that the main perception of foreign language courses students is by learning foreign languages they could understand films of these languages. It was related closely with the student's interest in listening to the songs of foreign language that is being learned (Table 4.2). This situation showed that the student made the medium of films and songs as alternatives in learning to master the language learned.

In addition, the study found out that the students showed perceptions that they have opportunity to get better job and are able to understand cultures of the speakers when they have knowledge of their selected foreign language. At the same time, students showed perceptions that mastering foreign language is important as it perceived as essential at the global level and also for their future. It can be seen in the mean value of the fourth statement (mean = 4.13, sp = 0.85).

However, most of the students involved in this study (61.1%) disagree with the last statement “I am considered as smart when knowing a foreign language, especially the language of my choice”. This means that student’s perception of the word ‘smart’ is too

large because the student has yet to reach that level as they are at the beginner level of learning the chosen language. This is consistent with what was said by Gardner (1985) that intelligence is considered to determineto which extent individuals can understand all assignments and explanations given during the process of language learning. On the other hand, according to Cook (1991), language tendency is the student’s ability to learn a second language in academic classes and it is associated with the intelligence of students.

Data showed student’s perceptions of learning foreign languages such as Japanese, German, and Spanish were at the positive level. It was associated with the orientation that was the purposes of the learning (Gardner, 1985). Findings indicated that students learned languages in this study because of integrative factor, that is to understand what has been spoken by the second community, and to help students to understand cultures of the community speaker, but it is not referring to the aspiration to be accepted as a part of the community. It is basically to understand what the dialogues in films are and also to understand the culture of the concerned community. Student’s perception is related to the instrumental factors that are for the purpose of understanding and benefits for oneself other than to get a good job and important for the future. This shows the instrumental factors is more influencing in student’s learning process (Gardner, 1985).

6.6. The level of attitudes

Student's attitudes towards foreign language courses in this study are shown in Table 7. Clear division of categories were based on five levels which were; very negative, negative, neutral, positive and very positive.

Table 7: Level of Attitude

No	Statement	Disagree	Agree	Mean	sp	Level
1	I enrolled in foreign language course of my choice in order to improve my grade when I graduate later.	28	62	3.88	1.01	4
		31.1%	68.9%			
2	I will apply skills of foreign language that I have chosen in and outside of classroom.	28	62	3.88	0.84	4
		31.1%	68.9%			
3	Mastering foreign language of my choice enable me to be confident is communicating with native speaker.	27	63	3.89	0.84	3
		30%	70%			
4	I learn foreign language of my choice in order to be easy to involve in cultural activity of native community.	37	53	3.66	0.95	4
		41.1%	58.9%			

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5	If there is a program related to foreign language that I am learning, I will watch it.	15	75	4.21	0.77	4
		16.7%	83.3%			
6	I will search for additional sources about foreign language of my choice such as on certain website.	14	76	4.17	0.67	4
		15.6%	84.4%			
Total				3.94	0.91	4

Guide to grading levels are; Level 1:1.00 – 1.49 very negative, Level 2:1.50 – 2.49 negative, Level 3:2.50 – 3.49 neutral, Level 4:3.50 – 4.49 positive, and Level 5:4.50 – 5.00 very positive.

In overall, this study found that the student's attitudes were at the positive level (mean = 3.94, sp = 0.91). There were two statements that recorded mean value more than 4.00 which was the fifth statement (mean = 4.21, sp = 0.77), and the sixth statement (mean = 4.17, sp = 0.67). Referring to the two highest mean values, the study found out that students were positive towards foreign language by watching foreign language programs. In addition, they also took initiative to find additional resources on website. The percentage of students who agreed with both statements were high which were 84.4% and 83.3%.

In the meantime, students who were involved in this study believed that the mastery of foreign language would help them to be more confident in communicating with native speakers (mean = 3.89, sp = 0.84). Furthermore, the students also showed tendency to use the chosen foreign language skills in and outside classes (mean = 3.88, sp = 0.84). It can be seen based on the percentage of students who agreed with the statement which was (68.9%).

The study also found out that the students believed that the selection of foreign language courses could improve their grades (mean = 3.88, sp = 1.01). It is shown that instrumental factor plays an important role on the student's attitudes. The lowest mean was identified for the fourth statement (mean = 3.66, sp = 0.95), which was "I learn foreign language of my choice in order to be easy to involve in cultural activity of native community." This finding meant that the native speaker of the language was limited in Malaysia and the opportunity to engage in cultural activity of the community was very less. This showed that integrative orientation was not a major factor that influenced student's language learning. According to Gardner (1985) in the theory of Socio-Educational, integrative orientation occurred when students learned a second language for the purpose of communicating with native speakers and being accepted as member of the community of that particular language.

6.7. Differences of interest & motivation, perception and attitude based on gender

T-Test of Independent sample in Table 8 was used to determine the mean difference in all of the main constructs of the study based on the student's gender. Based on the significant values ($p > 0.05$), this study found out that all constructs of the study did not show a significant difference in the mean based on gender. This findings indicated that the gender of students did not cause different views towards interest and motivation, perceptions and attitudes towards foreign language courses.

The study found out that female students showed higher mean than male students in interest and motivation, perceptions and attitudes towards foreign language courses. Female students were also more than male students who signed up for these foreign languages courses. These findings were consistent with findings in the study of Hieda & Maserah (2014) that; there were more female students than male students, and female students had a more positive orientation compared to male students. The results of this study also showed that female students had high interest.

Table 8: T-Test of independent sample on interest & motivation, perception and attitude differences based on gender

Variable	Gender	N	M	SP	t	P-Value
Interest & Motivation	Male	37	4.28	0.47	0.07	0.94
	Female	53	4.29	0.46		
Perception	Male	37	4.00	0.53	0.20	0.83
	Female	53	4.03	0.58		
Attitude	Male	37	3.93	0.49	0.24	0.81
	Female	53	3.95	0.52		

($p > 0.05$)

6.8. Differences of interest & motivation, perception and attitude based on status of the course

The status of foreign language courses in UPSI is divided into two types, namely, audit and enrichment. Audit course is not included in student's result of accumulated grade. On the other hand, the result of enrichment course will affect the student's cumulative grade but only for Level I. All Level II and III of all foreign language courses are audit courses. Based on these differences, researchers measured the difference of interest & motivation, perceptions and attitudes by the type of the courses namely audit or enrichment.

T-test of independent sample in Table 9 was used to determine the mean differences in all the main constructs of the study based on the status of the course. Based on the significant values ($p > 0.05$), this study found out that all of the constructs of the study did not show significant difference based on the status of the course. This finding showed that the status factor, whether audit or enrichment course, did not cause different

views among student on the interest & motivation, perceptions and attitudes towards foreign language courses.

The results showed that students of enrichment course recorded higher mean than students of auditcourse. However, the otherwise situation was identified in the aspects of attitude, in which students of audit course showed higher mean than students of enrichment course.

Table 9: T- test of independent sample for differences in interest & motivation, perceptions and attitudes based on the status of the course

Variable	Status	N	M	SP	t	P-Value
Interest & Motivation	Audit	54	4.24	0.48	1.16	0.25
	Enrichment	36	4.36	0.43		
Perceptions	Audit	54	4.01	0.56	0.21	0.79
	Enrichment	36	4.04	0.57		
Attitudes	Audit	54	3.96	0.50	0.24	0.84
	Enrichment	36	3.93	0.52		

($p > 0.05$)

6.9. Differences of interest & motivation, perception and attitude based on races

In order to determine the mean difference of interest & motivation, perceptions and attitudes of students by race, this study conducted one way Anova test reported in Table 10. All the identified constructs recorded p-values of more than 0.05. This matter showed that there was no significant mean difference in all of the constructs of the study. This finding also indicated that the factor of race did not affect the students to show different views on interest and motivation, perceptions and attitudes.

Mean distribution of interests and motivation of students according to race, showed that students from other races recorded the highest min followed by Malay students and Indians. The lowest mean was identified on the Chinese students. Although the mean difference was insignificant, but pattern of the mean indicated that Chinese students were more interested in attending Japanese language course compared to European languages such as German and Spanish. This is because Japanese Linguistics has a lot in common with Chinese language. These results were consistent with findings of Hieda & Maserah (2014) that the Chinese students were positive towards learning Japanese because there were similarities between Japanese and their native language.

Furthermore, the results showed that Indian students had better perceptions and attitudes compared to the students of other races. However, there was one matter that should be noted, which was about the students from other races who showed the lowest mean of perceptions and attitudes. This was inconsistent with the highest mean that was identified on the mean of interest and motivation. These results indicated that the perceptions and attitudes of students, background, social characteristics and mastery of

second language students such as proficient in English and common features in terms of Linguistics also influenced the attitude of students.

Table 10: One-way Anova test for differences of interest& motivation, perceptions and attitudes based on races

Variables	Race	N	M	SP	F	P-values
Interest & Motivation	Malay	53	4.31	0.47	0.57	0.63
	Chinese	18	4.17	0.47		
	India	7	4.28	0.44		
	Others	12	4.38	0.45		
Perceptions	Malay	53	4.01	0.57	0.66	0.58
	Chinese	18	4.00	0.52		
	India	7	4.28	0.67		
	Others	12	3.91	0.48		
Attitudes	Malay	53	3.97	0.51	1.18	0.32
	Chinese	18	3.87	0.55		
	India	7	4.21	0.46		
	Others	12	3.79	0.38		

($p > 0.05$)

6.10. The relation of interest, motivation and perceptions with attitudes

Table 11 shows Pearson correlation analysis (r) to determine the relationship between two independent variables namely interest & motivation as well as perceptions with dependent variables namely attitudes.

Table 11: Pearson correlation test for the relationship of interest and motivation and perception with attitude

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables: Attitude	Strength of the Relationship
Interest & Motivation	0.64**	Strong
Perception	0.78**	Strong

Based on the significant p value that was less than 0.05, both of the variables had significant relationship with attitudes. Referring to the Coefficient of Relationship Strength (Cohen, 1988) in Table 14, relationship strength of interest & motivation with attitudes ($r = 0.64$, $p < 0.05$), and perceptions with attitude ($r = 0.78$, $p < 0.05$), the identified relationships were strong. It showed that the more positive interest and motivation as well as student's perception towards foreign language courses, the more positive their attitudes towards the language course would be. This indicated that students with high integrative and instrumental oriented in language learning could possess strong interests, perception and attitudes in learning and would show positive attitude towards learning.

Table 12: Coefficient interpretation of relationship strength

<i>Size</i>	<i>Explanation</i>
$r = .10$ until $.29$ at $r = -.10$ until $-.29$	Small
$r = .30$ until $.49$ at $r = -.30$ until $-.49$	Medium
$r = .50$ until 1.0 at $r = -.50$ until -1.0	Strong

7. SUMMARY

Summary of this study showed that race factor would affect the attitudes formation and selection of foreign language that wanted to be learned by the students. Chinese students preferred to learn Japanese because the characteristics of the language are similar to Japanese language. In addition, the social distance and ethno-culture stereotypes as in the study conducted by Heida & Maserah (2014) as well proved that closer social distance would result to positive integrative orientation among students. Chinese students showed more passion to be as a part of Japanese community when learning their language. While Malay students were more interested in learning all of the three languages due to instrumental factors and enjoyment to learn new languages but not to join the culture of the language concerned. Occupational factors and entertainment were the causes of student's attitudes. Indian students preferred European languages due to the influence of English language that they have mastered. Similar characteristics that existed in Spanish and German with English helped the students to understand the particular foreign language effectively. Students of other races also showed high interest in learning foreign languages. In addition to race, gender, and status of the course, student's study flows also played important role in influencing their attitudes. The study found out that instrumental factors give more influence to the student's attitudes particularly for European languages learning such as German language and Spanish language. This was due to the student's interest in learning for the purpose of enjoyment as they are able to watch movies, listen to songs, get good jobs, also for economic and travelling purposes. While, in learning Japanese language, factors or integrative orientations were more dominant among students. Students learned to interact, approach or understand the community of Japanese language, and subsequently they anticipated to be accepted in the language community (Gardner, 1985). In overall, students showed high interest, positive perception and good motivation in learning Japanese, Spanish and German language. Positive attitudes were able to help students during the teaching and learning process.

8. CONCLUSION

This article aimed to identify the attitudes of students towards learning foreign languages in UPSI. This study explained some of the aspects which were; determining the level of interest & motivation, perceptions and attitudes among UPSI students who enrolled in foreign language courses, namely, Japanese, Spanish and German, analyzing the difference of interest & motivation, perceptions and attitudes among students by

gender, status of the course and race, measuring the relation between interest & motivation and perceptions with attitudes of students who learned foreign language courses and finally determined the factors that influenced the attitude of students in learning the foreign language in UPSI. This study explained about language attitude and the factors based on Socio-Educational Model introduced by Gardner (1985). In overall, this study could be as guidance to all parties who are related to the learning of foreign languages in Malaysia mainly to lecturers, language teachers in order to help students to master the language effectively. Positive attitude of the students should be maintained and continued throughout the learning process to ensure the learning objectives are achieved. Indirectly, this study also describes on the attitudes, interests and perceptions of students towards learning foreign languages in UPSI in particular, Spanish language, German language and Japanese Language.

Since this study only focused on respondents from public universities such as UPSI, study by Hieda and Maserah (2014) was at UKM and Azlina Redzuan Aliff (2009 and 2005) was at UPM, it is proposed that similar study should be conducted in Private Universities with foreign language courses or programmes. Comparison of attitudes can also be done between students of public universities and private universities or colleges. Comparative study as well can be done by focusing on the motivation of Malay, Chinese, Indian and other races students in learning foreign language regardless of Spanish language, German language, Japanese language, France language, Arabic language and Chinese language in Malaysia. Comparison of student's attitudes who learn Spanish, German and Japanese language in Malaysia with foreign students who learn the language in the country of native speaker in relation to the strategies, materials, activities and appropriate methods for foreign languages learning in Malaysia in order to ensure effective teaching and learning techniques can be produced. Finally, Socio-Educational Model by Gardner can applied to other foreign languages in Malaysia (Hieda and Maserah, 2014).

Appreciation

This study was financed by University Research Grant (UPSI 2015-2016).

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