



# A Study of the Learning Goals of University Students of Korean as a Foreign Language

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## Abstract

Research has shown that motivation is a major determinant of success in second and foreign language learning. This article focuses on Singapore students' learning motivation: Why do university students in Singapore decide to learn the Korean language? There is anecdotal evidence that *Hallyu* or the Korean Wave might have promoted a keen interest in Korea and its culture, and encouraged many to learn the Korean language. This same enthusiasm inspired by the Korean Wave might also have a bearing on the learning motivation of Korean as a foreign language (KFL) students at the university level. However, till date, there have been no research studies that investigated the motivation of Korean language learners in Singapore and provided insightful empirical data. This study was designed to fill this void and examined the learning goals of university KFL students in Singapore. The study involved a total of 80 students who responded to a questionnaire on their learning goals. Factor analyses conducted on the data collected revealed five factors among students' learning goals, namely "pop culture," "career," "achievement," "academic exchange," and "foreign languages and cultures." The presence of the major factor "pop culture," which accounted for the largest percentage of the total variance, indicates that the Korean Wave had indeed provided the motivation for many to learn Korean. The article will also discuss the implications of the study's findings for the teaching practice and curriculum development at the NUS and beyond, e.g. with regard to how teachers can sustain and increase students' learning motivation as well as better align their learning goals with the teaching objectives of academic institutions. In addition, suggestions for further research will be presented.

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## 1 Introduction

Much research has been done on the role of motivation in the field of second/foreign language learning, and has shown that motivation is one of the main determinants of successful language learning. Dörnyei (2001) identifies three aspects of motivation, namely the choice of a particular action, the persistence with it, and the effort expended on it. Gardner (1985a) proposes that motivation is defined by three components: desire to achieve a goal, effort expended in this direction and satisfaction with the task. Motivation thus has an obvious effect on the amount of work and the duration of time one is willing to invest in a particular task or learning in general, and it determines the extent of active, personal involvement in second and foreign language learning. In fact, there is evidence that motivation directly influences students' learning strategies (e.g. Cohen & Dörnyei, 2002; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Schmidt, Boraie, & Kassabgy, 1996), their general proficiency level (e.g. Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner, 1985a; Guo, 2004), persistence (e.g. Mat-

sumoto & Obana, 2001) and language maintenance (e.g. Clyne, 2003; Clyne & Klipp, 1999; Wright & Kurtoglu-Hooton, 2006).

It is evident from the definitions of motivation above that learners' learning goals and orientations are important considerations in the study of language learning motivation, as they provide the motives and the impetus for one's choice of language, and the effort and persistence displayed in learning it. This article reports on a study which investigated Singapore university students' goals for learning Korean as a foreign language (KFL) and sought to identify underlying factors among the students' learning goals. It will begin with a review of the major theories of motivation in second/foreign language learning as well as other relevant studies on students' learning goals and motivation. Thereafter, it will present the current study, its background, methodology, main findings and the implications of these findings for curricular practice and further research.

## 2 Literature review

The work of Gardner and his associates in the study of second language (L2) learning motivation has been highly influential, not just because it led to the formulation of the first major L2 motivation theory (Gardner & Lambert, 1959, 1972; Gardner, 1985a), but perhaps even more so because of the intense academic interest and research it has generated in this field. Drawing on his research into L2 learning motivation among English-speaking and French-speaking populations in Canada, Gardner (1985a) proposed a model that differentiates between *motivation* and *orientation*. In his view, the construct of motivation can be further sub-divided into three components: 1) motivational intensity; 2) desire to learn the language; and 3) attitudes towards learning the language.

Orientations, on the other hand, have a bearing on learning motivation in that they generate a certain level of motivation (both effort and desire) and direct it towards the learning of a language. They will also influence and interact with the attitudes learners hold and display towards the learning of that language. Gardner differentiated between *integrative* and *instrumental* orientations. The former is characterised by positive attitudes towards the language and the target language community, and suggests that the L2 learner has the desire to interact with or be similar to members of that particular community and perhaps even to be integrated into that community. The latter describes utilitarian approaches to L2 learning and is present if the L2 learner is seeking pragmatic gains through his L2 proficiency; for example, to secure better career prospects. Initially, Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972) argued that an integrative orientation is more likely to be associated with successful L2 learning outcomes because of the underlying assumption of positive attitudes towards the target language and the target language community.

Despite the impact and influence of Gardner's work, there has been no lack of criticisms directed at his theory and its inadequacies. Much of the criticism focused on the fact that Gardner's theory was developed based on data derived from the Canadian L2 context. Therefore, it may not be generalisable or applicable to other contexts (see e.g. Noels, Pelletier, Clément, & Vallerand, 2003). For instance, it was questioned if the primacy of the integrative orientation, as postulated by Gardner and Lambert, would apply to a foreign language learning environment where the learners are unlikely to have sufficient interactional opportunities with the target language community (e.g. Dörnyei, 1990; Schmidt et al, 1996). Dörnyei (1990), in a study of Hungarian learners of English as a foreign language, reported that instrumental orientation contributes significantly to the motivation of beginning and intermediate learners. In fact, in a critical appraisal of Gardner's Social-Psychological Theory of L2 Learning, Au (1988) concluded that studies by Gardner and other researchers failed to produce convincing evidence for the generality of Gardner's integrative motive hypothesis. The reviewed studies achieved a mix of positive, nil and negative relationships between integrative orientation and learning achievement. Lukmani (1972) found that Marathi-speaking Indian students' English proficiency was significantly related to instrumental and not integrative motivation, while Chihara and Oller (1978) did not find any significant correlations between either integrative or instrumental motivation and language proficiency. Numerous motivation researchers (Au, 1988; Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Ely, 1986; Oxford & Shearin, 1994;

Schmidt et al, 1996) thus asserted that Gardner's theory alone is insufficient to explain the highly complex construct of motivation, and some (e.g. Oxford & Shearin, 1994) called for the expansion of the theoretical basis for L2 motivation by considering and incorporating inputs from other motivational theories, including those from domains beyond language learning.

Alternative models which have since been considered include expectancy-value theories, which are based on the assumption that human motivation is greatly influenced by expected outcomes of their activities. Atkinson's (1964; Atkinson & Raynor, 1974) *achievement motivation theory* postulates that achievement-oriented individuals may be motivated to engage in activities with effort and persistence to satisfy their *need for achievement*. Dörnyei's (1990) study shows that need for achievement is a major factor in the motivation of his Hungarian subjects.

Another theoretical model which has been put forward to explain L2 motivation and has attracted much attention is built upon Deci and Ryan's (1985) *self-determination theory* and classifies L2 motivation according to two basic forms of motivation, *intrinsic* and *extrinsic motivation*. For Noels et al (2003), "intrinsic motivation (IM) generally refers to motivation to engage in an activity because that activity is enjoyable and satisfying to do" (p. 38), while "extrinsically motivated behaviours are those actions carried out to achieve some instrumental end, such as earning a reward or avoiding a punishment" (p. 39). Schmidt et al (1996) noted the proximity of the intrinsic-extrinsic dichotomy with that of Gardner's integrative-instrumental orientations, though both are not identical. They argued that both "integrative and instrumental motivation are properly seen as subtypes of extrinsic motivation, since both are concerned with goals and outcomes" (p. 14).

We would however like to put forward the argument that both the models advocated by Gardner and Noels et al are based on motivational scales which are inherently value-laden. Integrative orientation is characterised by positive attitudes towards the target language and target language community and is thus conceived as the more desirable orientation (and postulated to contribute more strongly to language achievement). And in arguing their case, Noels et al (2003) pointed to reports in the literature of positive associations between intrinsic motivation and achievements scores, proficiency, interest and persistence. Yet such models which imply the primacy of the integrative/intrinsic orientations over the instrumental/extrinsic orientations would appear not wholly compatible with communicative language teaching. Under this approach, a language is learned not just because of learners' interest and enjoyment, but primarily for its communicative value. In other words, learners learn a language essentially for pragmatic – and hence extrinsic or instrumental – reasons (minus the negative connotations).

In order to facilitate theory construction, the proponents of the above models of motivation have adopted a reductionist approach and sought to identify a very small number of basic orientations which are assumed to subsume a wide range of different and more specific learning goals. This allows for an easier examination of the interrelationship between these orientations and thus the development of coherent theories. In addition, it means that models can be more easily operationalised for empirical testing, for example, in testing for correlations between the orientations and other variables such as learning outcomes and motivational strength. However, as Dörnyei (2001) remarked, such reductionist models may prove to be inadequate in effectively analysing and solving complex problems in the real world. A more specific account of learners' learning goals and motivation would appear necessary to address the needs of curricular practice and reform, and to facilitate the design and implementation of motivational strategies in the classroom. Furthermore, empirical studies which employed an empirical bottom-up approach to study L2 motivation had identified motivational factors beyond the broad orientations defined by the models discussed above.

For instance, by using a factor analysis approach, Ely (1986) uncovered three main factors in the learning orientations of university students of Spanish. He reasoned that the first two factors display striking similarities with Gardner's integrative and instrumental orientations. However, the third extracted component, which he termed "requirement motivation cluster" (p. 32), represents an additional factor beyond the integrative-instrumental paradigm.

Clément and Kruidenier (1983), in a study of Canadian Anglophone and Francophone high school students of Spanish, English and French, established the existence of four different learning

orientations. In addition to an instrumental orientation, travel, friendship and knowledge orientations were found for all groups of learners.

Schmidt et al (1996) conducted a study of the motivation of close to 1,500 adult learners of EFL at a university in Egypt and identified nine underlying factors in the respondents' learning motivation: 1) determination; 2) anxiety; 3) instrumental motivation; 4) sociability; 5) attitudes to culture; 6) foreign residence; 7) intrinsic motivation; 8) beliefs about failure; and 9) enjoyment. The study also showed that contextual factors play a vital role in determining learners' motivation and learning orientations and that motivation is a highly complex construct which is unlikely to be explained by a single theory of motivation.

In a factor analysis study conducted at the NUS on the motivation of learners of Japanese as a foreign language, Guo (2004) extracted six factors from the learning goals of students: 1) career; 2) enjoying of language learning; 3) self-esteem; 4) popular culture; 5) knowledge; and 6) further study. The results of Guo's study are in some respect similar to those achieved by Schmidt et al. The factors "career," "knowledge" and "further study" are probably best characterised as instrumental or extrinsic, while "enjoying of language learning" is an indication of intrinsic motivation and seems also to correspond to Schmidt et al's last factor of "enjoyment." Guo considered the factor of "popular culture" to be integrative. "Self-esteem" seems however to be better explained by Atkinson's achievement theory and is more closely related to a need for achievement. Once again, the results of this study illustrate that reductionist models of L2 motivation may be inadequate in explaining complex motivational relationships in specific contexts and for the planning of curricula to reflect or mediate learners' motivational orientations.

### 3 Study

#### 3.1 Background

##### 3.1.1 Hallyu and Korean language learning in Singapore

In recent years, Korean language learning in Singapore has seen tremendous growth in terms of student numbers. This is generally attributed to the influence of the so-called Korean Wave or *Hallyu*, which has generated much interest in Korean media and culture throughout the world. In a recent study of the Korean Wave, Dator and Seo (2004) wrote that "Asia is awash in a wave of popular culture products gushing out of South Korea. Youth in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and Japan, as well as Cambodia, Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia are agog at the sights and sounds of H.O.T., S.E.S., Shinhwa, god, and J.T.L" (p. 31).

There is anecdotal evidence of the importance of the Korean Wave as a motivational factor behind Singaporeans' desire to learn Korean (see Shim, 2006; Fu & Liew, 2008). Shim (2006) reported that the number of KFL learners at one private language school in Singapore had increased by 60 percent over a period of just two years from 2001 to 2003 because of the interest in Korean dramas. In addition, two surveys carried out at the continuing education arm of a Singapore university<sup>1</sup> also revealed that the majority of adult learners enrolled in their KFL courses attributed their decision to learn the language to their interest in K-pop, Korean movies, dramas and artistes (Chan & Chi, 2008). While these surveys may suggest that a link exists between the Korean Wave and learners' interest in KFL, they were nevertheless limited by small sample sizes and were not originally designed to meet scientific objectives. In fact, till date, there have been no research studies that investigated the motivation of KFL learners in Singapore and provided insightful empirical data on their learning goals and orientations.

##### 3.1.2 The Korean language programme at the National University of Singapore

The National University of Singapore (NUS) Korean Language Programme (KLP) was formed in January 2008. When fully developed, it is expected to offer seven language courses, Korean 1 to

6 and Korean for Academic Purposes. These elective courses are intended to build students' proficiency in Korean up to intermediate and advanced levels. They should enable students to engage in frequent and fluent interactions with speakers of Korean, to work in Korean or Korea-related companies as well as to gain an in-depth understanding of Korean society and culture. The launch of the programme was also seen as a means of supporting the university's strategic focus on Asian Studies. The KLP is thus intended to complement new courses at the university on the culture, society, literature, politics, history and economy of the Korean peninsula.

In addition, the KLP is also expected to make a significant contribution towards the university's internationalisation efforts and provides language preparation for students going on academic exchange to Korean universities. In line with this objective, the first four courses, Korean 1, 2, 3 and Korean for Academic Purposes, constitute the components of a 4-semester Korean Language Preparation Programme (KLPP) which will help students acquire the language proficiency and knowledge of Korean university life necessary for one to two semesters of academic exchange in South Korea.

To sum up, the targeted outcomes of the KLP are as follows:

- Intermediate or advanced proficiency in the Korean language after four to six semesters
- Ability to engage in frequent & fluent interactions with speakers of Korean
- Linguistic proficiency to support the acquisition of an in-depth understanding of Korean society, culture, literature, politics, history and economy
- Ability to participate in academic exchange at Korean universities
- Ability to work in/with Korean private sector or in a Korean linguistic context

Given the indications of the influence of the Korean Wave in Singapore, it may also be an important factor contributing to students' decision to enrol in the KFL courses at the NUS. This prompted the present exploratory study to determine – through a quantitative procedure – if there are consistent underlying factors in students' motivation for learning Korean and if the Korean Wave or Korean pop culture constitutes one of these factors. It will also help ascertain if this factor, if present, could potentially conflict with the curricular objectives of the KLP. The answers to these questions will contribute to an as yet highly limited body of literature on the effects of motivation in KFL learning. Findings from this study are also expected to have implications for the KLP's curriculum and classroom practice, including its instructional methods.

### **3.2 Research questions**

The research described in the following was intended as an exploratory study to investigate the learning goals of Korean language learners at the university level in Singapore. It will attempt to answer the following research questions:

1. What are major factors in university students' goals for learning Korean?
2. Do these goals match the curricular objectives of the Korean language programme at the NUS?

### **3.3 Participants**

The participants in this study were students enrolled in Korean 1, a beginning Korean as a foreign language course at the Centre for Language Studies of the National University of Singapore. They were asked to participate in the study on a voluntary basis. The 85 students enrolled in this course had little or no previous experience in learning Korean. Altogether, 81 students consented to participating and returned the questionnaire to us, but as one questionnaire was incomplete, it was excluded from the analysis. Hence, the sample size of the study was 80.

The sample consisted of 61 female and 19 male undergraduates (76.3 and 26.8 percent, respectively), and were from different faculties, with the majority (48 or 60 percent) studying Arts and Social Sciences, while the rest were from Science, Engineering, Design and Environment, Business, Law, and Computing. 51 participants (63.8 percent) were in their first year of university

study, 9 (11.3 percent) in the second year, and 10 each (12.5 percent) in the third and fourth year. Their ages ranged from 18 to 25, with the mean at 20.4.

As mentioned earlier in the article, the Korean 1 course constitutes a component of the 4-semester KLPP which is designed to prepare students for academic exchange in South Korea. Of the total enrolment of 85, 27 were registered for the KLPP. However, as the data were analysed anonymously, it is not known what percentage of the KLPP students participated in the study.

### 3.4 Method

Data for the study were collected in the third week of instruction in the Korean 1 course. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire (see Appendix 1), which was completed by participants during regular class.

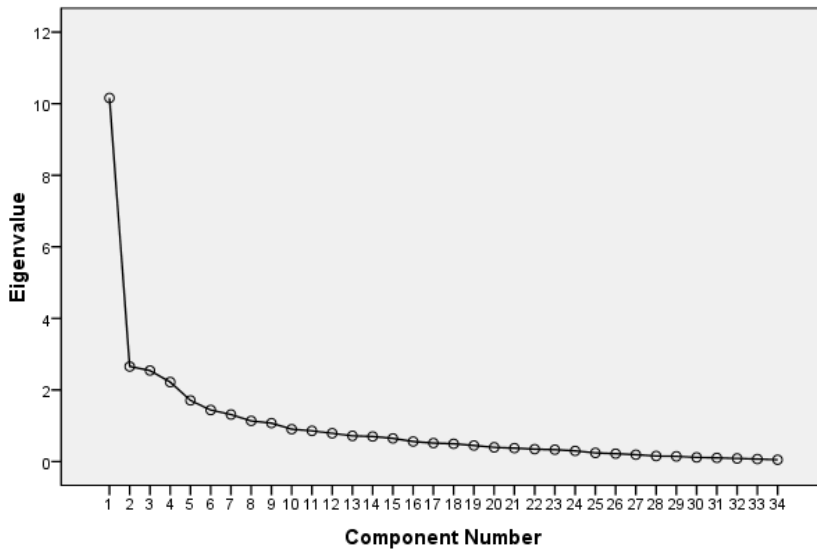
The participants were asked to provide the following demographic information in the questionnaire form: age, gender, year of study and faculty of study. In addition, the questionnaire contained 34 Likert-type items on a five-point scale – from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The items described goals students may be aiming for in learning the Korean language. As the study was meant to be exploratory, the items included in the questionnaire had to be broad enough to cover a wide range of possible learning goals. Some items were taken and adapted, where necessary, from Gardner's (1985b) Attitude/Motivation Test Battery, Schmidt et al. (1996) and Guo (2004), whose study was conducted at the same institution and was thus considered highly relevant for the current project. In constructing additional items, we were informed by anecdotal evidence about the influence of *Hallyu*, two surveys conducted on adult learners' reasons for learning Korean (see Chan & Chi, 2008) as well as 81 applications for admission into the KLPP, in which students wrote short essays detailing their interest in the Korean language and academic exchange in Korea.

### 3.5 Data analysis

Exploratory factor analyses using SPSS Version 16 were conducted on the questionnaire data. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was computed for all 34 Likert-type items on students' learning goals to determine the internal consistency and reliability of the scale. A preliminary factor analysis was then carried out on the 80 participants' responses to these 34 items using principal component analysis and equamax rotation to extract all factors with a minimum eigenvalue of 1. The resulting factor matrix and scree plot were studied to obtain an estimation of the number of factors to be extracted. The items were subsequently re-analysed to extract the estimated number of factors, and the results of the re-analyses were then studied to select the factor solution which yields a simple structure<sup>2</sup> (i.e. where items have high loadings and load only on a single factor) and the most clearly interpretable factors. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity statistics were used to verify the acceptability of the selected factor solution, and Cronbach's alpha was computed for each identified factor as a measure of its internal consistency and reliability.

### 3.6 Results

The questionnaire items were found to be internally consistent, with Cronbach's alpha for all 34 items reaching .92. The preliminary factor analysis produced nine factors with an eigenvalue of at least 1, but several of the identified factors did not yield consistent or clearly interpretable patterns. The scree plot suggests that subsequent analyses should aim to extract five or six factors (see Fig. 1).



**Fig. 1: Scree plot of preliminary analysis**

The final chosen factor solution, obtained through principal component analysis and equamax rotation, accounts for 56.7 percent of the total variance and consists of five factors with strong factor loadings of .61<sup>3</sup> or higher for the constituent items. Both the KMO coefficient and Bartlett’s test (see Table 1) suggest that factor analysis is appropriate and the results are acceptable. Further analyses using maximum likelihood factoring and/or varimax and direct oblimin rotational methods produced near identical results, thus reinforcing our confidence in this factor model.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.725
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1617.528
	df	561.000
	Sig.	.000

**Table 1: KMO and Bartlett’s Test**

Table 2 shows the eigenvalues after rotation and the percentage of variance accounted for by each of the five extracted factors using the above-mentioned criteria.

Factor	Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Eigenvalue	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.087	14.961	14.961
2	4.252	12.505	27.466
3	4.148	12.200	39.666
4	3.185	9.367	49.033
5	2.617	7.696	56.729

**Table 2: Percentage of variance explained by factors after rotation**

In the following are the five factors, their constituent items and respective factor loadings, and the Cronbach’s alpha for each factor:

Factor 1 (Cronbach's alpha = 0.88)

Proposed label: Pop culture

Item 13	– Korean entertainment news interest me.	.724
Item 5	– I want to read Korean magazines, newspapers, and books.	.723
Item 15	– I want to watch Korean TV dramas and movies.	.702
Item 2	– I want to listen to and/or sing Korean pop music and pop songs.	.697
Item 26	– I am interested in Korean fashion.	.651
Item 31	– I am interested in Hallyu (Korean wave).	.610

Factor 2 (Cronbach's alpha = 0.77)

Proposed label: Career

Item 5	– Learning Korean will provide me with more job opportunities.	.798
Item 18	– It will be useful in my future career.	.750
Item 21	– I expect to travel to Korea on business in future.	.723

Factor 3 (Cronbach's alpha = 0.42)

Proposed label: Achievement

Item 28	– I hope to get a good grade for my Korean course.	.718
Item 4	– It will enable me to be a more knowledgeable person.	.666

Factor 4 (Cronbach's alpha = 0.93)

Proposed label: Academic exchange

Item 24	– I want to do an internship during my exchange semester in Korea.	.901
Item 27	– I want to spend an exchange semester at a Korean university.	.877

Factor 5 (Cronbach's alpha = 0.64)

Proposed label: Foreign languages and cultures

Item 23	– I just want to take up the challenge of studying another language.	.724
Item 12	– I want to learn more about other Asian cultures.	.712
Item 14	– I want to speak more Asian languages.	.706

### 3.7 Discussion

As the six items loading on Factor 1 are indicative of a consistent interest in things commonly associated with *Hallyu* and Korean pop culture (entertainment news, news media, TV dramas and movies, pop music, and fashion), we propose labelling this factor “pop culture.” It is obviously a major factor which explains the largest percentage of the total variance, namely 15 percent. In fact, all six items entered into the questionnaire on *Hallyu* and Korean pop culture have surfaced in this analysis and achieved high factor loadings ranging from .610 to .724. This would seem to confirm the anecdotal evidence cited earlier in this article that the interest in Korean pop culture and media generated by the Korean Wave is an important factor contributing to students’ decision to learn Korean. It is significant to note that a similar factor with the same label was uncovered by Guo (2004) in his study of the motivation of Japanese language learners at the NUS. The data for Guo’s study were collected in 2002 at a time when Japanese pop culture was still very much dominant



among young Singaporeans, just before or at the time when the Korean Wave began to sweep through Asia and Singapore.

The label “career” is proposed for Factor 2 because all three factor items clearly express the perceived value of the Korean language for one’s future career. It clearly represents a major factor, as it explains 12.5 percent of the total variance, with all three items loading heavily on the factor (loadings ranging from .723 to .798). This factor would certainly seem consistent with the prevalent thinking in Singapore that university education provides the key to a bright career and a high level of income. University education is in fact conceived by the government as an important contributing factor to the strength of the Singapore economy and its workforce, and thus has to fulfil a role in the professional training of its young elite as well<sup>4</sup>. The factor may also be linked with the perception of Korea as an Asian economic power, with item 21 suggesting that students expect to have future contact with Korean business and industry. The extraction of a career factor clearly replicates the results of a number of previous studies which all established the presence of a strong career-related motive. In Guo’s (2004) study, “career” was in fact the factor accounting for the highest proportion of the total variance. For Dörnyei (1990), Ely (1986) and Schmidt et al (1996), career-related items constituted a considerable part of the instrumental orientation factors uncovered in their respective studies.

Though Factor 3, consisting of two items, accounts for 12.2 percent of the total variance and should thus be considered a major factor, there may be cause to doubt its reliability. The Cronbach’s alpha of .42 for this factor is below the commonly assumed minimum acceptance level of .6 (see Dörnyei, 2001), implying that the factor may not be unidimensional. Nevertheless, statisticians do acknowledge that when items cluster together to form a factor, the internal consistency or reliability need not necessarily be high, especially when the number of items is low, which is the case here<sup>5</sup>. There is another reason why we would like to argue that this factor should be retained in the factor solution. The emergence of this factor is consistent with our observations that good grades and academic performance are key concerns of students at the NUS. A high level of personal achievement is considered desirable by NUS students and seems likely to boost their self-esteem. This is hardly surprising as the students represent the elite in a very selective educational system, in which they are accustomed to achieving strong academic results and view these as prerequisites for progress onto the next educational level or a successful career. The fact that item 28 received the highest mean score of 4.65 (indicating very strong agreement with this statement) among all questionnaire items would seem to corroborate our observations. Atkinson’s achievement theory provides theoretical support for Factor 3 as both items seem to suggest the presence of a very strong need for achievement among the participants. Dörnyei’s (1990) study of Hungarian students established a similar factor which he termed “need for achievement” and was dominated by exam-related motives. He asserted that the need for achievement can be considered to be a motivational factor typical of foreign language learning, as such learning usually takes place in academic contexts where students may be more “interested in excellence for its own sake” (p. 67) than in communicating with the target language community. Guo (2004) also identified a factor (“self-esteem”) which seems related to Factor 3. Given the apparent importance of this factor in light of previous research and the context of the current study, we propose retaining this factor and labelling it “achievement.”

Factor 4, which explains 9.4 percent of the total variance, is labelled “academic exchange” for the reason that both items loading on the factor relate to the participants’ wish to spend time on academic exchange in Korea or to do an internship there while on exchange. The emergence of this factor from the analysis was not unexpected, given that almost a third of the Korean 1 students were enrolled in this course through the KLPP which has the objective of preparing students for an exchange stint at Korean partner universities. While this factor matches one of KLP’s primary objectives, it accounts for a lower percentage of variance than the factor “pop culture.” As the same or a similar factor was not reported by the literature reviewed in this article, it would appear that the factor is specific to the current study and its participants’ background.

Three items load heavily on Factor 5, which explains 7.7 percent of the total variance, about half the amount for Factor 1. As all three items express a clear desire to acquire proficiency in for-

eign languages and to learn about foreign cultures, we propose labelling it “foreign languages and cultures.” As items 12 and 14 suggest, this interest seems to be primarily directed towards Asian languages and cultures, perhaps because the respondents are students of Korean, who presumably have a stronger interest in Asia. Similar motivational factors have been identified in previous studies. For instance, in Dörnyei’s (1990) study, this is one of three factors contributing to an integrative motivational subsystem. And of the seven items which form the integrative orientation factor found in Ely’s (1986) study, five seem related to an interest in foreign languages and cultures. Guo (2004) uncovered a related factor, which he termed “enjoyment of language learning,” though all the items in this factor are directly related to an interest in or enjoyment of Japanese language learning, rather than foreign languages in general.

Gardner’s (1985a) integrative orientation expresses a desire in the learner to interact with, be similar to or even identify oneself fully with valued members of the target language community. Dörnyei (1990, 2001) argues that this implies positive attitudes on the part of the learner towards the target language, values associated with this language as well as other cultures and ways of life in general. Applying this broader definition, Factor 5, “foreign languages and cultures,” will have to be ascribed to integrative orientation. Guo (2004) considers the “pop culture” factor uncovered in his study to be a form of integrative motivation. However, all items which load heavily on the “pop culture” factor (Factor 1) in the current study are narrowly focused on the domain of Korean pop culture and media alone. Items related to a more general interest in the Korean language or in traditional culture, society and way of life in Korea did not load or load sufficiently strongly on this factor. In view of this, there remains some doubt as to whether this factor can be taken to be a constituent of a broader integrative orientation among the participants. Could the students be interested in Korean pop culture because it is the currently fashionable thing to do? Are they thus subscribing themselves to the Korean language and culture in order to remain ‘hip’ and in tune with the interests of their peers? If this is indeed the case, one might, in applying the intrinsic/extrinsic paradigm, be more inclined to describe this factor as extrinsic.

Factor 2, “career,” and Factor 4, “academic exchange,” both represent forms of instrumental as well as extrinsic orientations, as the language and the language course are clearly means towards the attainment of pragmatic goals beyond a simple interest in the target language or enjoyment of the language learning process. Factor 3, “achievement,” would appear to be more ambivalent. Though both items would appear to be related to an urge to achieve and thus enhance one’s self-esteem, the first item (Item 28 – “I hope to get a good grade”) would appear to be more strongly instrumental and extrinsic than the second (Item 4 – “It will enable me to be a more knowledgeable person”). We would suggest that this factor is better explained by Atkinson’s achievement theory and best seen as an expression of the students’ need for achievement, especially in consideration of the study’s highly competitive academic context.

These difficult and not wholly satisfactory attempts to ascribe some of the extracted factors to specific motivational paradigms demonstrate the inability of the reductionist model behind these paradigms to provide a comprehensive account of the highly complex construct of language learning motivation. Even if it were possible to fit these factors to the broad learning orientations described by these models, the more specific nature of the factors, rather than the broad orientations, should prove to be more beneficial and constructive for pedagogical planning and curriculum design at a more micro-level.

The results of the factor analysis procedure in the current study have shown the existence of a strong interest in Korean pop culture and media, generated by *Hallyu*, among the surveyed university students. This suggests that students are strongly motivated to learn Korean to gain greater exposure to Korean pop culture and media. While this does not run wholly contrary to the KLP’s objective to equip students with the proficiency to gain an in-depth understanding of the Korean nation and society, students’ interest seems to focus on a very limited subset of these areas. Such a *Hallyu*-inspired motivation may prove to be a transient interest which may wane dramatically once the hype generated by *Hallyu* has subsided.

The factor “achievement” describes goals which seem to be considered important in foreign language learning in an academic context (cf. Dörnyei, 1990) and would certainly be consistent with the competitive university context in Singapore and the students’ concern about their academic performance.

On the other hand, the factors “career,” “academic exchange” and “foreign languages and cultures” are more congruent with the intended objectives of the KLP, as stated in an earlier section of this article (see section 1.2). The Korean language courses are intended to develop the necessary language proficiency to work in the Korean private sector or a Korean linguistic context, to go on academic exchange to Korea, and to gain an understanding of a broad range of aspects pertaining to the Korean nation and society. However, it should be noted that these three factors explain less of the total variance than the “pop culture” factor.

## **4 Implications**

### ***4.1 Implications for the practice***

Some issues arising from the findings bear implications for the design and methodology of the courses of the KLP at the NUS. It would appear that there is some agreement between some of the motivational factors identified and the KLP’s curricular objectives. Nevertheless, potential conflicts may arise, in particular with regard to their strong interest in Korean pop culture. If this is so, can these conflicts be reconciled and gaps between the students’ and the university’s expectations be bridged? What adjustments or changes should be contemplated to achieve the KLP’s objectives in spite of these possible conflicts? In the following are some possible implications for the KLP’s curricular practice.

We would argue against any curricular measures to deliberately ‘wean’ students from their strong interest in Korean pop culture and media. Not only would this be difficult to accomplish, it could even turn out to be counterproductive, as such measures may weaken students’ learning motivation, including their effort and persistence. We would recommend exploiting this interest and harnessing it to help attain the KLP’s objectives. This could be achieved, for instance, by introducing some media-based materials such as Korean songs, movies and TV dramas in the courses to provide students with a graphic insight into aspects of Korean culture and society, as intended through the curriculum. For instance, it is possible to use scenes from Korean TV dramas to help students better appreciate traditional customs practised during main Korean festivals such as the Lunar New Year, which is introduced to students as part of the Korean language curriculum. Such scenes can be sourced from the Internet. Even TV advertisements could be used to expose students to facets of Korean culture. An example is the use of a TV advertisement for a Korean telecommunications firm, which shows a couple debating the correct manner in which Koreans bow to their elders and using the phone’s Wi-Fi function to access the Internet to verify their respective beliefs. Obviously, this has much pedagogical value in teaching culture – in this case, the traditional bow – in the language classroom. In both these examples, the teacher can take an intercultural approach and guide students through suitable activities to recognize similarities and differences between the Korean and their own culture. By using carefully selected media materials, it makes for a more active classroom as this will appeal more strongly to students’ interest. Yet at the same time, this move will actually expose students to salient aspects of broader Korean society – beyond the narrow domain of popular culture – and help mediate students’ learning motivation.

If suitable media resources can be found, media-based materials could also be used to inform students about student and campus life as well as communicative situations in Korean university contexts, as preparing students for academic exchange in Korea is another objective of the KLP. An interest in academic exchange was uncovered in the study. This shows that the students do have an interest in academic exchange and in acquiring the necessary contextual and linguistic knowledge necessary for a stint at Korean universities. This motivational factor is not unexpected and is consistent with the background of the Korean 1 enrolment, which included 27 potential ex-

change students registered through the KLPP. However, one must bear in mind that this factor explains considerably less variance than the “pop culture” factor and can be further reinforced.

The key to achieving this may lie in providing a language immersion programme after two semesters of language study to give students a first-hand look at Korean campus culture and student life. This will in turn cultivate a stronger interest in academic exchange. In addition, the immersion programme can be designed to provide students with enriching experiences in the target language and culture, and thus allow students to see that the pop culture propagated by *Hallyu* represents but one narrow facet of Korean society and culture.

Another possible implication is related to the finding that students are also learning Korean to advance their career interests. While the factor “career” is essentially instrumental or extrinsic in nature, it is not incongruent with the communicative approach to language teaching, which in fact recognizes – rather than censures – the pragmatic nature of foreign language learning. It also matches one of the curricular objectives of the KLP. To satisfy students’ career orientation, the KLP may consider introducing Korean business courses at the intermediate and/or advanced levels to help students develop the proficiency to handle communicative tasks in career- and business-related situations such as attending job interviews or writing CVs in Korean.

#### **4.2 Implications for research**

While the current study has produced findings that seem to confirm anecdotal evidence of the role of *Hallyu* as an important motivational factor among university Korean language students, it is the first and thus far only study to have investigated the effect of *Hallyu* as well as Singapore students’ learning goals in general. As this study was restricted to just one institution and a relatively small sample size of 80, more studies are necessary in and beyond Singapore to see if the results can be replicated or if they are applicable only to its specific context. A longitudinal approach can also be applied in future studies to ascertain possible shifts over time in students’ motivation and learning goals which may result from the mediating influence of teaching objectives and teaching approaches adopted in line with these objectives.

Motivation is a complex construct, of which learning goals constitute but one of several components. Other important components of motivation are, for instance, the effort and persistence one displays in learning a language (Dörnyei, 2001). Further research will be necessary to investigate if any of the factors identified in this study are predictors of learners’ effort and persistence as well as their language learning achievement. If these factors do indeed have a predictive value, would they impact these variables positively or negatively? Such research is as yet scarce in the field of Korean language education, but will undoubtedly yield results which will be of significance not just for this domain, but also for second and foreign language education in general.

### **5 Conclusion**

This article reported on a study that set out to identify major factors in the learning goals of Korean language students at the university level in Singapore. Using a factor analysis procedure, five factors were extracted from the data provided by students on their learning goals. We propose the following descriptors for these factors (listed in order of the percentage of total variance they explain): “pop culture,” “career,” “achievement,” “academic exchange” and “foreign languages and cultures.” The presence of the first factor seems to confirm our observation and anecdotal evidence from different sources that *Hallyu* or the Korean Wave has contributed substantially to a strong interest in Korean language learning in Singapore. However, this factor does not seem fully congruent with the objectives of the KLP at the NUS. Of the other factors, “career,” “academic exchange” and “foreign languages and cultures” seem to correspond to the KLP’s objectives. The factor “achievement” appears to be consistent with the highly competitive environment of the NUS and the students’ concern about their academic performance. The study was the first of its kind on KFL students’ learning goals in Singapore and will hopefully provide the platform for further re-

search into possible shifts in students' motivation and learning goals as well as the possible impact of these goals on their learning achievement, effort and persistence.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The National University of Singapore Extension.

<sup>2</sup> This is a common measure recommended by motivation researchers and statisticians alike to enhance the interpretability of factor solutions (cf. Darlington, 1997; Dörnyei, 2001; Kinnear & Gray, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> There is no hard and fast rule for determining the cutoff for factor items, though it is clear that the higher the factor loading of an item is, the more likely it is to be a defining constituent of that factor. Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black (1998) describe loadings of .6 and above as high and those of .4 and below as low, while Garson (2008) believes that for Likert-type items, a minimum factor loading of .6 may be necessary. Stevens (2002) proposes as rules of thumb factor loadings of .772 and .512 for samples of size 50 and 100, respectively. As the sample size of 80 for the current study falls between these two values, a cutoff of .61 would seem appropriate.

<sup>4</sup> In a report entitled "Restructuring the University Sector – More Opportunities, Better Quality," Dr Ng Eng Hen, Minister of State for Education and Manpower, outlined the importance of university education in Singapore for manpower training and thus the need for a review of university education with the following words: "Given that our universities will play a key role in transforming and supporting the economy, it was timely to launch a fundamental review of the structure of our university sector so as to train and produce the appropriate graduate manpower to support the new economy." (Committee to review the university sector, 2003, p. 7).

<sup>5</sup> One should bear in mind that a factor analysis is a statistical procedure which is based on correlations between the items entered into the analysis and thus extracts items which seem to cluster together on the basis of these correlations. Cronbach's alpha provides in essence an additional measure of the unidimensionality, and as Robert Cudeck clarifies, "... Even if a group of items had been identified as unifactorial, the internal consistency of the collection may not be high. Test reliability is a function of the number of items. Therefore, if only a few items have been identified as homogeneous by a factor analysis, their reliability may not be high" (quoted in "Measurement," 2001, p. 59). Furthermore, one should "keep in mind that sometimes scales that are not unidimensional can nevertheless be extremely useful" ("Measurement," 2001, p. 62).

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## Appendix

### Questionnaire 1

*This survey is designed to investigate the motivation of students learning the Korean language. Your support will be very much appreciated, and the results of this survey will support our re-*

*search. It will also help us in improving the Korean language programme's modules. The information you provide will be kept confidential and will in no way affect your course assessment. We urge you to be truthful in responding to the items in this questionnaire.*

Please provide the following information about yourself.

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Sex: M / F (Please circle the appropriate option)
3. Year of Study: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Faculty: \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle one of the five possible responses for each statement according to the amount of your agreement or disagreement with that item.

Strongly Disagree (1)	Moderately Disagree (2)	Neither Disagree nor Agree (3)	Moderately Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
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**I am studying Korean, because:**

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1. Learning a foreign language is a hobby for me.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I want to listen to and/or sing Korean pop music and pop songs.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I want to know about Korean cultural traditions and customs.	1	2	3	4	5
4. It will enable me to be a more knowledgeable person.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Learning Korean will provide me with more job opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5
6. It will enable me to make Korean friends more easily.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I want to tour Korea.	1	2	3	4	5
8. It will be useful for my research and study.	1	2	3	4	5
9. It will be convenient to communicate with local Koreans when I travel in Korea.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I am interested in working in Korea after graduation.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I can gain the respect of other people if I know a foreign language.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I want to learn more about other Asian cultures.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Korean entertainment news interests me.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I want to speak more Asian languages.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I want to watch Korean TV dramas and movies.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I want to find out more about Korean society.	1	2	3	4	5
17. It will help me gain new ideas and broaden my outlook.	1	2	3	4	5
18. It will be useful in my future career.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Studying Korean is important because I will be able to interact more easily with Koreans.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I want to pursue graduate studies in Korea later.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I expect to travel to Korea on business in the future.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Korea is an economic powerhouse.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I just want to take up the challenge of studying another language.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I want to do an internship during my exchange semester in Korea.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I want to read Korean magazines, newspapers, and books.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I am interested in Korean fashion.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I want to spend an exchange semester at a Korean university.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I hope to get a good grade for my Korean course.	1	2	3	4	5
29. I want to study the Korean language in Korea	1	2	3	4	5

30. I enjoy learning the Korean language very much.	1	2	3	4	5
31. I am interested in Hallyu (Korean Wave).	1	2	3	4	5
32. I want to know about Korean people and their way of life.	1	2	3	4	5
33. The Korean language is very interesting.	1	2	3	4	5
34. Korean universities have good academic reputations.	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you.