



Spirit, Speech, and Self-Perception: Spiritual Motivation and Second Language Willingness to Communicate (L2 WTC) as Correlates of Perceived English Proficiency Among Filipino Undergraduates

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship among spiritual motivation (SM), second language (English) willingness to communicate (L2 WTC), and perceived English language proficiency (PELP) among undergraduate students from two higher education institutions in Zamboanga City. Using a quantitative correlational and cross-sectional design, data were collected from 260 students through adopted self-report survey questionnaires administered online. Respondents were selected through convenience sampling. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Spearman rank-order correlation, and the Kruskal–Wallis H test. Findings revealed significant positive relationships among the three variables. Spiritual motivation showed a moderate correlation with willingness to communicate and a weak but significant correlation with perceived English language proficiency. The strongest relationship was observed between willingness to communicate and perceived proficiency. The findings suggest that spiritual motivation contributes to students' communication willingness and perceived language competence, although its influence on perceived proficiency is relatively limited.

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Introduction

The intersection of faith and academic inquiry has long been a subject of scholarly discussion, particularly in understanding how religious and spiritual dimensions of human experience influence behavior and development. In language learning, religion may constitute a salient dimension of students' identities and can influence their attitudes, motivations, and learning behaviors (Safitri et al., 2023). Despite this potential influence, research on second language (L2) motivation has, until relatively recently, been developed largely within secular Western frameworks. Foundational models, such as Gardner and Lambert's (1959) sociological model, Noels et al.'s (2000) application of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), and Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self System, have provided important explanations for learners' motivation and engagement. However, these frameworks do not explicitly account for religious belief as a source of motivation, leaving an important gap in understanding how spiritual commitments may shape learners' engagement in English language learning.

Evidence from educational research suggests that spirituality may be associated with positive academic and interpersonal outcomes. For example, Turi et al. (2020) examined the relationship between spiritual and emotional intelligence and academic performance among Pakistani university students



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and reported significant positive correlations between spiritual intelligence and academic outcomes. The authors further suggested that spiritually oriented students may demonstrate stronger academic engagement and interpersonal communication in classroom settings. Similarly, a longitudinal study of more than 14,000 college students in the United States found that spiritual engagement was positively associated with GPA, graduation rates, and honors completion (Astin et al., 2011). Students with higher levels of spiritual involvement were also more likely to persist in college and experience fewer academic setbacks. In addition, a theoretical review by Ma and Wang (2022) proposed that spiritual intelligence may enhance academic engagement by providing a sense of transcendent purpose that sustains motivation and reduces avoidance in challenging situations. However, the authors also noted the limited empirical attention given to these relationships in L2 education, highlighting the need for further research on whether spiritually oriented learning translates into measurable language-learning outcomes.

Despite these promising findings, the relationship between spirituality and academic achievement remains inconclusive. Some studies have reported weak, nonsignificant, or even negative associations between spiritual engagement and academic performance. Sapp (2017), for instance, found a negative relationship between students' levels of spirituality and religiosity and their academic GPAs. The study suggested that substantial involvement in religious activities and spiritual practices may compete with the time and cognitive resources required for academic pursuits. Likewise, Makki Abadi et al. (2015) found no significant relationship between spiritual well-being and academic achievement among students in engineering, fundamental science, and art and architecture programs. These findings indicate that spiritual or religious engagement does not necessarily translate directly into higher measurable academic achievement. A similar distinction can be observed in L2 research. Sarwari et al. (2024), for example, found that religiosity, mediated by spiritual motivation, positively predicted L2 willingness to communicate (WTC) among Afghan learners across classroom environment, motivation, and confidence. However, the same spiritual variables did not significantly predict objective English Language Achievement (ELA). Taken together, these findings suggest that spiritual and religious factors may be more closely associated with learners' willingness,



motivation, and affective engagement than with objective measures of language achievement.

This distinction provides an important basis for examining spiritual motivation as a more specific form of learner motivation. Pishghadam (2022) introduced the construct of spiritual motivation, referring to the inclination to engage in learning as an expression of alignment with God's will rather than primarily as a means of obtaining material rewards or social recognition. The construct is particularly relevant to educational settings in which religious beliefs are closely integrated into students' everyday lives. Theoretically grounded in the intrinsic–extrinsic motivational continuum of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), spiritual motivation offers a framework for examining how religious commitments may influence learners' reasons for engaging in academic activities.

This distinction was subsequently operationalized by Sarwari et al. (2024) through the development of the Spiritual Motivation Scale, which differentiates between Intrinsic Spiritual Motivation (Intrinsic SM) and Extrinsic Spiritual Motivation (Extrinsic SM). Intrinsic SM involves engaging in learning as an expression of worship, personal devotion, or alignment with one's relationship with God, whereas Extrinsic SM involves learning in response to the expectations of one's religious community, family, or religious upbringing. The present study focuses specifically on this religiously grounded motivational construct rather than on religious identity, general religiosity, or spirituality as a broader disposition, using the instrument Sarwari et al. (2024) developed.

This study investigated the relationships among three primary constructs—spiritual motivation (SM), L2 willingness to communicate (WTC), and perceived English language proficiency (PELP)—among Filipino undergraduate students in Zamboanga City. This setting provides an ideal socio-cultural landscape for this line of inquiry, as Zamboanga City stands as one of the most linguistically diverse and religiously pluralistic regions in Southeast Asia. Within this distinct locale, multi-faith communities—including Islamic, Catholic, and other Christian denominations—coexist and intersect across civic, academic, and professional domains (Eijansantos et al., 2024; Kunting, 2025).



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Given this richly diverse environment, it is especially important to explore whether students' spiritual motivation influences their communicative readiness to engage in English discourse, as well as their self-perception of their competence in the language. The results of this study may be beneficial for language educators in multi-faith communities by providing insight into whether socio-affective factors, such as spiritual motivation, can affect students' performance in English classes. This, in turn, can inform the factors teachers consider when designing inclusive and culturally responsive pedagogical approaches and practices. Finally, this study aims to contribute to the growing body of knowledge regarding language learning, especially when it is situated in religiously pluralistic societies where various religious affiliations can be examined, compared, and interrelated. In doing so, it enriches spiritual motivation research beyond homogeneously religious settings, which have historically been the primary contexts where such research is conducted.

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to investigate the relationships among spiritual motivation, second language willingness to communicate (L2 WTC), and perceived English language proficiency among undergraduate students in selected higher education institutions in Zamboanga City. While traditional Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research extensively focuses on secular socio-affective variables like anxiety, instrumental motivation, and integrative attitudes (Dörnyei, 2005; Gardner & Lambert, 1959; Noels et al., 2000), it historically leaves the spiritual dimension of language learning under-explored (Ma & Wang, 2022). By examining these variables, this study establishes a baseline of how spiritually motivated learning and communicative readiness interact with an undergraduate's self-assessment of their English language skills.

Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the levels of spiritual motivation, second language willingness to communicate (L2 WTC), and perceived English language proficiency among undergraduate students in selected higher education institutions in Zamboanga City?



2. Is there a significant relationship between the students' spiritual motivation and their L2 willingness to communicate (WTC)?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the students' spiritual motivation and their perceived English language proficiency?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the students' L2 willingness to communicate (WTC) and their perceived English language proficiency?
5. Is there a significant difference in the students' spiritual motivation, L2 willingness to communicate (WTC), and perceived English language proficiency when grouped according to their religious affiliation?

Hypotheses

1. H01: There is no significant relationship between the students' spiritual motivation and their second language willingness to communicate (L2 WTC).
2. H02: There is no significant relationship between the students' spiritual motivation and their perceived English language proficiency.
3. H03: There is no significant relationship between the students' second language willingness to communicate (L2 WTC) and their perceived English language proficiency.
4. H04: There is no significant difference in the students' spiritual motivation, second language willingness to communicate (L2 WTC), and perceived English language proficiency when grouped according to their religious affiliation.

Methods

Research Design



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quantitative correlational research design was utilized for this study, incorporating a cross-sectional approach, as data were collected at a single point in time through adopted self-report surveys administered by the researchers via Google Forms. This particular research design was employed to investigate the levels of the undergraduates' spiritual motivation (SM), willingness to communicate (WTC), and perceived English language proficiency (PELP), as well as their relations to one another (Curtis et al., 2016). Moreover, the unique features and practical limitations of non-probability sampling and ordinal-level Likert data, which must be analyzed using non-parametric methods, can be appropriately accommodated within this design framework (Faizi & Alvi, 2023; Mircioiu & Atkinson, 2017).

Research Locale

The study was conducted in selected higher education institutions in Zamboanga City, Philippines. With its distinct socio-cultural features such as diverse languages and multifarious faith practices among Catholics, Muslims, Protestants, and other religious denominations, Zamboanga City serves as an ideal setting for analyzing how the three constructs, SM, WTC, and PELP, interconnect.

Research Participants and Sampling

The demographic distribution of participants by gender, institution, year level, college department, and religious affiliation (n=260) is displayed in Table 1. In terms of gender, the majority of respondents were female (66.9%, n = 174), while male participants comprised 33.1% (n = 86). The target population for this study consisted of undergraduate students actively enrolled in the selected public higher education institutions during the academic year 2025–2026. The final population consisted of 226 respondents from the first HEI and 34 from the second HEI. Based on college/department, 45.4% (n = 118) of the respondents came from the College of Liberal Arts (CLA), 30.8% (n = 80) from the College of Teacher Education (CTE), 14.2% (n = 37) from the College of Business and Management (CBM), and 9.6% (n = 25) from the College of Maritime Education (CME). By year level, the majority of respondents were 1st-year students (53.8%, n = 140), followed by 3rd-year students (33.1%, n = 86) and 2nd-year students (13.1%, n = 34). In terms of religious affiliation, most respondents identified as Roman Catholic



(59.2%, $n = 154$), while 30.4% ($n = 79$) identified as Muslim/Islam, and 10.4% ($n = 27$) identified as Protestant/Other Christian.

Table 1

Distribution of Participants by Gender, Institution, Year Level, and Religion ($n = 260$)

Characteristic	n	%
Gender		
Male	86	33.1
Female	174	66.9
University		
HEI 1	226	86.9
HEI 2	34	13.1
College Department		
College of Business and Management	37	14.2
College of Liberal Arts	118	45.4
College of Maritime Education	25	9.6
College of Teacher Education	80	30.8
Year Level		
1st Year	140	53.8
2nd Year	34	13.1
3rd Year	86	33.1
Religious Affiliation		
Muslim / Islam	79	30.4
Protestant / Other Christian	27	10.4



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Roman Catholic	154	59.2
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Convenience sampling was used in the selection of the schools and the 260 participants of this study. Convenience sampling is a way of selecting participants from the target population based on ease of access (Edgar & Manz, 2017). In this investigation, two schools were selected in Zamboanga City.

Pilot Testing

Prior to the primary data collection phase, 30 undergraduate students from the HEIs participated in the pilot test; all of these participants were explicitly excluded from the final main study population. The pilot testing was conducted to determine the internal consistency of the scales utilized for this study. With Cronbach's alpha (α) coefficients of .928 for the Spiritual Motivation (SM) scale, .914 for L2 WTC, and .987 for PELP, the analysis demonstrated the scales' strong internal consistency. The subscales for each construct were also revealed to have high internal consistency. For the SM scale, the subconstructs of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Spiritual Motivation scored .901 and .911, respectively. For L2 WTC, the Classroom Environment subscale yielded a score of .914, Motivation scored .915, and Confidence scored .885. The English Language Competence Questionnaire, which measures the perceived English language proficiency of the respondents, has five scales with coefficient scores of .931 for Reading, .956 for Writing, .951 for Speaking, .952 for Listening, and .953 for Comprehension. Following Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), the coefficient values were interpreted as follows: $\alpha \geq .90$ indicates Excellent; $\alpha = .80-.89$ suggests Good; and $\alpha = .70-.79$ indicates Acceptable.



Table 2

Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients of Study Instruments from Pilot Testing (N = 30)

Scale	No. of Items	Cronbach's α	Interpretation
Spiritual Motivation Scale			
Intrinsic Spiritual Motivation	5	.901	Excellent
Extrinsic Spiritual Motivation	5	.911	Excellent
Total	10	.928	Excellent
L2 Willingness to Communicate Scale			
Classroom Environment	5	.914	Excellent
Motivation	5	.915	Excellent
Confidence	5	.885	Good
Total	15	.957	Excellent
English Language Competence Questionnaire			
Reading	10	.931	Excellent
Writing	10	.956	Excellent
Speaking	10	.951	Excellent
Listening	10	.952	Excellent
Comprehension	10	.953	Excellent
Total	50	.987	Excellent

Note. Cronbach's α Interpretation: Good = .80–.89; Excellent $\geq$.90 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). All α values exceed the .70 acceptability threshold.

Research Instrument



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Data were collected using a multi-part, self-report survey questionnaire with a demographic pre-screening sheet to track the gender, university, year level, department, and religious affiliation of the respondents, while preserving their confidentiality through anonymous user codes. There were three scales used in this study, starting with the Spiritual Motivation Scale (SMS) and the Second Language Willingness to Communicate (L2 WTC) Scale, both of which were adopted from the study of Sarwari et al. (2024). The SMS measures the spiritual motivation of the respondents across the subconstructs of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Spiritual Motivation, while the L2 WTC Scale assesses the level of the participants' readiness to engage in English classroom discourse across three subconstructs: classroom environment, motivation, and confidence. Both of these scales were structured as 6-point Likert scales with values ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 6 (Strongly Agree). For the third instrument, the English Language Competence Questionnaire (ELCQ), originally developed by Eslit (2023), was utilized to measure the perceived English language proficiency of the respondents across five constructs, namely reading, writing, speaking, listening, and comprehension, using a 5-point Likert scale with 1 corresponding to "Strongly Disagree" and 5 to "Strongly Agree". All three instruments were adopted from their original studies, and reliability tests—including both pilot testing and final-stage checks—were conducted using Cronbach's alpha to ensure the internal consistency of the scales.

Instrument Reliability Validation

Table 3 presents the internal consistency reliability of the research instruments using Cronbach's alpha (α) for the Spiritual Motivation Scale (SMS), L2 Willingness to Communicate (L2 WTC) Scale, and the English Language Competence Questionnaire (ELCQ) among 260 respondents. The Spiritual Motivation Scale (SMS) showed excellent overall reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of .954. Similarly, its subscales, Intrinsic Spiritual Motivation ($\alpha = .929$) and Extrinsic Spiritual Motivation ($\alpha = .939$), also have excellent reliability. The L2 WTC Scale likewise exhibited excellent internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of .961. Looking at its subscales, Motivation ($\alpha = .938$) and Confidence ($\alpha = .907$) were deemed excellent. Meanwhile, the Classroom Environment subscale obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .894, interpreted as good. For the English Language Competence Questionnaire (ELCQ), the instrument achieved a very high overall



reliability coefficient ($\alpha = .987$). Furthermore, all subscales, namely Reading ($\alpha = .952$), Writing ($\alpha = .964$), Speaking ($\alpha = .968$), Listening ($\alpha = .962$), and Comprehension ($\alpha = .959$) were deemed excellent.

Table 3

Internal Consistency Reliability (Cronbach's α) for All Instruments (n = 260)

Scale / Subscale	Items	Cronbach's α	Scale	Interpretation
Spiritual Motivation Scale (SMS)				
Overall	10	.954	1–6	Excellent
Intrinsic SM	5	.929	1–6	Excellent
Extrinsic SM	5	.939	1–6	Excellent
L2 WTC Scale				
Overall	15	.961	1–6	Excellent
Classroom Environment	5	.894	1–6	Good
Motivation	5	.938	1–6	Excellent
Confidence	5	.907	1–6	Excellent
English Lang. Competence Questionnaire (ELCQ)				
Overall	50	.987	1–5	Excellent
Reading	10	.952	1–5	Excellent
Writing	10	.964	1–5	Excellent
Speaking	10	.968	1–5	Excellent
Listening	10	.962	1–5	Excellent
Comprehension	10	.959	1–5	Excellent

Note. Cronbach's α Interpretation: Good = .80–.89; Excellent $\geq .90$ (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Data Gathering Procedure

Data were gathered through an online survey administered via Google Forms. Prior to the main data collection, a pilot study was conducted with 30 undergraduate students (25 from HEI 1 and 5 from HEI 2) to assess the internal consistency of the three instruments in the target institutional



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context. Participants in the pilot testing were explicitly excluded from the final study sample. For the main study, the survey was distributed to 260 undergraduate students from both the local and state colleges during the second semester of Academic Year 2025–2026. Informed consent was obtained from the respondents before they answered the survey questions, and participation was entirely voluntary. Self-generated codes were utilized to preserve the anonymity of the respondents. Lastly, only fully completed surveys were used for final analysis.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 20) was used, undergoing a five-stage non-parametric analysis. First, the dataset was tested for its internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha coefficients to verify the pilot testing results (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Second, to address RQ1, descriptive statistics were employed to determine the levels of spiritual motivation, L2 WTC, and PELP of the respondents using the equal interval method (SMS and L2 WTC = 0.83; PELP = 0.80) to establish descriptor bands. Third, to determine the normality of the data, the Shapiro-Wilk test was utilized over the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, which is appropriate for sample sizes below 300 (George & Mallery, 2010). Fourth, to address RQ2, RQ3, and RQ4, Spearman rank-order correlation (r_s) was employed for analyzing the relationships between the variables. The study's use of convenience sampling, ordinal Likert-scale data, and the verified non-normal distribution of the scales necessitated the use of this non-parametric statistical technique. A Bonferroni correction was also utilized to adjust the standard significance level to avoid yielding false positive results (Zhang et al., 2015). Additionally, the effect sizes of the data were interpreted as per Cohen (1988) with the following values: (q = .10–.29), moderate (q = .30–.49), large (q ≥ .50). Finally, to address RQ5, the Kruskal-Wallis H test was administered to evaluate the data when analyzing the group differences across the variables based on the respondents' religious affiliations.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers do not render the slight mean rank differences in SM, L2 WTC, and PELP among the religious groups involved in the study as a conclusion or manifestation of the groups' inherent characteristics in the



measured constructs. Further, the study does not suggest nor imply that the differences are driven by the participants' religious affiliations and should therefore not be treated as such.

Results and Discussion

Levels of Spiritual Motivation, L2 WTC, and Perceived ELP

To address the first research question, Table 4 shows the descriptive summary for the respondents' spiritual motivation (SM), L2 willingness to communicate (L2 WTC), and perceived English language proficiency (ELP). For the Spiritual Motivation (SM), the overall mean score was 3.49 (SD = 1.34), interpreted as moderately low, which implies that the respondents have a moderate to low level of spiritual motivation. Looking at its facets, intrinsic spiritual motivation obtained a mean of 3.55 (SD = 1.45), interpreted as moderately high, which indicates that the respondents were, to a certain extent, internally spiritually motivated. On the contrary, extrinsic spiritual motivation recorded a mean of 3.42 (SD = 1.38), interpreted as moderately low, which implies that the respondents were somehow less likely to be extrinsically motivated. Regarding the L2 Willingness to Communicate (L2 WTC), the respondents obtained an overall mean score of 4.16 (SD = 1.07), interpreted as moderately high, which tells us that the respondents generally demonstrate a willingness to communicate in English as a second language. Looking at its constructs, motivation had the highest mean score (M = 4.34, SD = 1.21), interpreted as high, which, therefore, suggests that the respondents possess a strong motivational drive to use English. Similarly, the environment construct (M = 4.08, SD = 1.09) and the confidence construct (M = 4.05, SD = 1.14) were both interpreted as moderately high, which suggests that the respondents' classroom environment was ideal and encouraging for L2 WTC and that their self-confidence moderately drives their L2 WTC. For the Perceived ELP, which was measured through the ELCQ, the overall mean score was 3.55 (SD = 0.71), interpreted as high, which indicates that the respondents generally perceive themselves as proficient in the English language. Looking at the constructs of Perceived ELP, reading obtained the highest mean (M = 3.75, SD = 0.77), which affirms



that the respondents perceive reading as their strongest English language skill. Next to this were comprehension ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 0.78$) and listening ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 0.77$), and both were interpreted as high. Meanwhile, writing ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 0.77$) and speaking ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.80$) had lower means, though also interpreted as high, and still indicate that the respondents perceive themselves as proficient in the aforementioned productive skills, though slightly lower than their perceived receptive English language skills.

Table 4

Descriptive Summary for Spiritual Motivation, L2 WTC, and Perceived English Language Proficiency

Variable	M	SD	Min	Max	Interpretation
Spiritual Motivation (SM)					
Total	3.49	1.34	1.00	6.00	Moderately Low
Intrinsic	3.55	1.45	1.00	6.00	Moderately High
Extrinsic	3.42	1.38	1.00	6.00	Moderately Low
L2 WTC					
Total	4.16	1.07	1.00	6.00	Moderately High
Environment	4.08	1.09	1.00	6.00	Moderately High
Motivation	4.34	1.21	1.00	6.00	High
Confidence	4.05	1.14	1.00	6.00	Moderately High
Perceived ELP (ELCQ)					
Total	3.55	0.71	1.00	5.00	High
Reading	3.75	0.77	1.00	5.00	High
Writing	3.44	0.77	1.00	5.00	High
Speaking	3.42	0.80	1.00	5.00	High
Listening	3.53	0.77	1.00	5.00	High
Comprehension	3.60	0.78	1.00	5.00	High

Note. M = mean; Mdn = median; SD = standard deviation; SM and WTC scale range = 1–6; ELCQ range = 1–5. Interpretation descriptors used the equal interval method (SMS and L2 WTC = 0.83; PELP = 0.80)

Preliminary Analysis: Test of Normality

The Shapiro-Wilk test was performed to assess the normality of the variables in the study. Results revealed that all three variables, such as SM, L2 WTC,



and PELP, contradict a normal distribution, with p -values $<.001$ for each variable, and W statistics ranging from .942 to .973. All variables violated the normality assumption, as p -value below .05 implies non-normality; therefore, non-parametric statistical procedures were used for analyses.

Table 5

Shapiro–Wilk Normality Results

Variables	W Statistic	df	p
Spiritual Motivation	.973	260	$<.001$
L2 Willingness to Communicate	.942	260	
Perceived English Language Proficiency	.087	260	

Note. W = Shapiro-Wilk statistic. All W values were significant ($p < .001$), confirming the non-normal distribution of data.

Correlational Analyses: Relationships among Spiritual Motivation (SM), Second Language Willingness to Communicate (L2 WTC), and Perceived English Language Proficiency (PELP)

To explore the relationships proposed in research questions 2, 3, and 4, Spearman rank-order correlation coefficients were calculated. As presented in Table 6, the correlation matrix reveals the strength and direction of the relationships among the three primary constructs and their respective subscales. All examined relationships were positive and statistically significant at the $p < .01$ level, indicating a high degree of interconnection among the variables. The strongest relationship observed between the primary variables in the matrix was between L2 WTC and PELP ($r_s = .588$, $p < .01$), suggesting that higher self-perceived English language proficiency is associated with a greater willingness to engage in L2 discourse. This finding aligns with Ghonsooly et al. (2013), who demonstrated that L2 WTC was positively correlated with perceived communicative competence, reinforcing the principle that students who view themselves as competent language users exhibit a higher willingness to communicate.

Granular analysis of the subscales provides deeper insight into these dynamics. The strong correlation between the WTC–Confidence subscale and PELP ($r_s = .652$) indicates that higher self-perceived language



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competence not only fosters a willingness to communicate but directly reinforces communicative confidence. Conversely, students who doubt their language proficiency are susceptible to low communicative confidence, which functions as a prominent psychological barrier to oral production (Darasawang & Reinders, 2021). Interestingly, Extrinsic SM yielded a stronger correlation with L2 WTC ($r_s = .459$) than did Intrinsic SM ($r_s = .402$). This suggests that interpersonal social dimensions, such as active participation in religious services or faith-based peer groups, exert a more pronounced influence on L2 WTC than solitary devotional practices. This finding stands in contrast to the traditional framework of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which posits that intrinsic compliance yields more robust behavioral outcomes than extrinsic motivators. Within the tight-knit community context of this study, collective social expectations may carry overriding weight, thereby shaping student communicative behavior and motivation more than private spiritual orientations.

Table 6



Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. SM- Intrinsic	—												
2. SM Extrinsic	.779**	—											
3. SM Total	.945**	.938**	—										
4. WTC Environment	.398**	.403**	.420**	—									
5. WTC Motivation	.333**	.401**	.382**	.792*	—								
6. WTC Confidence	.380**	.455**	.437**	.745*	.732**	—							
7. L2 WTC Total	.402**	.459**	.450**	.916*	.924**	.890**	—						
8. Reading	.299**	.309**	.317**	.509*	.504**	.633**	.580*	—					
9. Writing	.305**	.316**	.322**	.448*	.413**	.611**	.517*	.693*	—				
10. Speaking	.273**	.319**	.308**	.486*	.461**	.628**	.555*	.653*	.804**	—			
11. Listening	.291**	.284**	.298**	.420*	.418**	.509**	.469*	.672*	.777**	.808*	—		
12. Comprehension	.307**	.285**	.307**	.462*	.459**	.550**	.521*	.684*	.758**	.793*	.834*	—	
13. PELP Total	.327**	.335**	.345**	.516*	.503**	.652**	.588*	.826*	.897**	.906*	.912*	.899*	—

Spearman Rank-Order Correlation Matrix for All Study Variables

Note. ** $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

Table 7 shows the summary of the null hypotheses and bivariate effect sizes for the three primary research constructs, namely Spiritual Motivation (SM), L2 Willingness to Communicate (L2 WTC), and Perceived English Language Proficiency (PELP). The table shows the Spearman's rho correlation coefficients (r_s), significance values (p), effect sizes, and adjusted alpha level. To avoid the Type I error (false positive), we utilized Bonferroni-adjusted alpha level (.017) (Zhang et al., 2015). Cohen's (1988) effect size benchmarks, as used in the study of Ivarsson et al. (2012), were also utilized as descriptors for effect sizes (.10 = small; .30 = medium; .50 = large). The findings reveal that all three variable pairs, as stated above, demonstrated statistically significant positive relationships, as all p -values were $< .001$, which is apparently lower than the Bonferroni-adjusted alpha level of .017. Therefore, all null hypotheses (H01, H02, and H03) were rejected. For H01, which directly answers the second research question, the correlation between SM



WTC was medium to large ($r_s = .450$). This tells us that a high level of SM correlates with L2 WTC. This, therefore, suggests that learners with high SM are inclined to communicate in an L2 environment, and vice versa. In testing H02, which corresponds to the third research question, the relationship between SM and PELP showed small to medium effect size ($r_s = .345$), yet the correlation is still interpreted as significantly positive. This, then, also implies that students with high spiritual motivation somehow likely perceive themselves as proficient in the English language, and vice versa. Lastly, to address the fourth research question (H03), the strongest relationship was observed between L2 WTC and PELP ($r_s = .588$), which was deemed a large positive effect. This finding affirms that students who are more willing to communicate in English are more likely to perceive themselves as proficient in the English language, and vice versa.

Table 7

Summary of Null Hypotheses and Bivariate Effect Sizes for the Primary Research Constructs

H0	Variable pair	r_s	p	Effect	Adj. α	Decision	Interpretation
H01	SM ↔ L2 WTC	.450	< .001	Medium-large	.017	Rejected	Significant positive
H02	SM ↔ PELP	.345	< .001	Small-medium	.017	Rejected	Significant positive
H03	L2 WTC ↔ PELP	.588	< .001	Large	.017	Rejected	Significant positive

Note. r_s = Spearman's rank correlation coefficient. Adj. α = Bonferroni-corrected significance threshold ($.05 \div 3 = .017$). Effect size benchmarks (Cohen, 1988): $r_s = .10$ = small; $.30$ = medium; $.50$ = large.

Differences in Spiritual Motivation (SM), Willingness to Communicate (L2 WTC), and Perceived English Language Proficiency by Religious Affiliation

To examine the fifth research question (H04), which investigates whether there are statistically significant variations between the three research constructs—Spiritual Motivation, L2 WTC, and Perceived ELP—when categorized by religious affiliations, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used. The findings showed that for all three constructs, there were no statistically significant differences between the three religious groups (Muslim/Islam $n = 79$; Protestant/Other Christian $n = 27$; Roman Catholic $n = 154$).



The mean rank column portrayed some variation for the three religious affiliation groups with regard to the three research constructs. For SM, the mean ranks were 126.56 for Muslims, 114.09 for Protestants and other Christian denominations, and 135.40 for Roman Catholics. As for the construct of L2 WTC, the mean ranks were the following: 126.56 for Muslims, 109.00 for Protestants and other Christians, and 133.51 for Roman Catholics. For the PELP, the mean ranks were 134.72 for Muslims, 111.85 for Protestants and other Christians, and 131.61 for Catholics.

Even though there were slight mean rank differences between each group, these variations were not statistically significant. For the research constructs of Spiritual Motivation ($H = 2.156$, $p = .340$), L2 WTC ($H = 2.487$, $p = .288$), and PELP ($H = 1.942$, $p = .379$), all three p -values were greater than the .05 value. This suggests that religious affiliation did not function as a significant grouping variable for any of the three constructs.

Table 8

Kruskal-Wallis Test Results Across Religious Groups

Variable	Religion Group	N	Mean Rank	H	df	p	η^2
Spiritual Motivation	Roman Catholic	154	135.40	2.156	2	.340	.0083
	Muslim/Islam	79	126.56				
	Protestant/Other Christian	27	114.09				
L2 Willingness to Communicate	Roman Catholic	154	133.51	2.487	2	.288	.0096
	Muslim/Islam	79	131.97				
	Protestant/Other Christian	27	109.00				
Perceived English Language Proficiency	Roman Catholic	154	131.61	1.942	2	.379	.0075
	Muslim/Islam	79	134.72				
	Protestant/Other Christian	27	111.85				

Note. N = number of participants. H = Kruskal-Wallis H statistic. df = degrees of freedom (number of groups - 1). p = asymptotic significance (two-tailed). η^2 = eta-squared effect size.

These results are consistent with Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2020), which frames psychological desires for competence and autonomy as the main motivators for language learning rather than demographic background factors. This suggests that rather than their religious identity, their motivation to participate in language learning is anchored by their confidence and sense of competence. This is in agreement with the findings of Yoon and Maeng (2024), who found that self-efficacy was a stronger predictor of language learning motivation than religious membership, as well as Khany and Nejad's (2016) study, which found that personality traits such as extraversion, openness, and perceived competence were more likely



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predict communicative willingness than religion. This further cements the findings of Wong and Mahboob (2018), which suggest that although SM may influence the affective elements of the classroom, it cannot be a dependable factor to rely on in order to generate meaningful differences in the English competency levels of students from various religious groups. Effect sizes were calculated using epsilon square. The values range from .0075 to .0096, all of which fall below the threshold for a small effect ($\epsilon^2 = .01$) (Peres, 2025). The results signify that effects are negligible and have no practical significance.

When taken together, these results give an overarching implication in educational contexts, in which religious affiliation may not be the primary consideration in revamping teaching strategies and practices. The study's stronger correlations between L2 WTC and perceived competence variables may be a valuable focus to consider when allocating resources and revising educational approaches to enhance learners' motivation to actively engage in English discourse. Nevertheless, it is important to exercise prudence when extrapolating these implications in light of the sample composition and context of this study.

Conclusion

The investigation highlighted crucial findings on undergraduates, specifically in the relationship between spiritual motivation, perceived English proficiency, and L2 willingness to communicate. Despite the promising affective results, there is still no clear academic agreement on whether spiritual motivation has a direct impact on students' actual English language proficiency.

The results revealed that undergraduate students demonstrated high perceived English language proficiency, moderately high willingness to communicate, and somewhat low spiritual motivation. Moreover, the results of the correlation analysis revealed a positive relationship among the three variables. Spiritual motivation showed a medium-to-large relationship with L2 WTC and a small-to-medium relationship with perceived proficiency, while L2 WTC exhibited the strongest association with perceived proficiency. These results indicate that students who are more spiritually motivated tend to be more communicatively willing and more confident in



their English abilities, and that willingness to communicate is closely tied to how proficient students believe themselves to be.

In addition, when students were categorized by religion, the study did not find any significant relationship in spiritual motivation, L2 WTC, or perceived proficiency. This signifies that views toward language acquisition and self-perceived competence are not significantly predicted by religious affiliation. Rather, the results support the Self-Determination Theory, which holds that internalized values, competence, and autonomy have a greater influence on motivation than demographic traits like religion. The findings also corroborate previous studies that indicate situational circumstances, communicative confidence, and personality qualities are more powerful predictors of L2 WTC than membership in a particular religious community.

Overall, by understanding such connections, language instructors in various religious communities can gain insight into motivational factors that influence students' performance in English language studies and how pedagogical strategies might be created to recognize and effectively utilize these resources. For educators and policymakers, the results highlight the significance of creating language-learning environments that foster self-assurance, independence, and communicative proficiency rather than solely depending on presumptions about students' religious backgrounds. And so, opportunities for self-directed learning, meaningful communicative activities, and supportive classroom environments should be given top priority in instructional methods, as these factors have been demonstrated to have a greater impact on motivation and proficiency. In conclusion, the study highlights that while spirituality can play a subtle but meaningful role in shaping learners' L2 WTC, religious affiliation might not be a strong predictor of language-learning outcomes.

Recommendation

The study's findings provide a better understanding of the study's limitations as well as how future researchers might advance this specific field of study. As stated by Ma and Wang (2022), the majority of studies that looked into the relationship between spiritual intelligence and academic engagement used a correlational research design; as such, the use of longitudinal or cross-lagged panel designs is one of the recommendations



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that could serve as a guide for future academics following this field of study. This would enable a more thorough examination of the many factors that affect the dynamic interaction of socio-affective variables, giving a clearer picture of whether spiritual motivation actively and consistently affects language competency and communicative readiness across time. Employing a larger pool of respondents, such as collecting data from other regions of the Philippines, will also help to improve the statistical generalizability of the study's findings, as the study only focused on one location and mostly used respondents from one academic institution. Finally, the study's findings revealed that WTC and perceived language competence are inextricably linked; thus, cultivating classroom environments that allow students to experience higher levels of WTC is recommended as a factor for academic departments to consider in their pedagogical practices. This could help students develop a greater sense of self-efficacy throughout their language learning process, which could result in fluency in English discourse

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