

# Second language motivational self system of sixth graders in Turkey: A correlational study

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Investigating the foreign and second language (L2) motivational self system (L2MSS) of Turkish sixth graders, this study reports relationships among three components (ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience) of the L2MSS and the variables of school type (public and private), gender, and intended effort. Data were collected from 170 students in two public and two private secondary schools in northwestern Turkey through a questionnaire. The results of correlation analysis indicate a strong positive correlation between ideal L2 self and L2 learning experience, and the variables of school type and gender did not make a difference. Intended effort was found to have a strong positive correlation with these L2MSS components. The results of multiple regression analysis provide further evidence for especially intended effort as a significant predictor of L2MSS, whereas the school type and gender did not contribute to the system. The major implications of the study and future research possibilities are discussed.

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Motivation is one of the most salient key notions in foreign and second language (L2) contexts. Behind the learning continuum lie various factors, and motivation is one of the primary affective factors having influence on language acquisition (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Henry & Cliffordson, 2013; Thompson & Erdil-Moody, 2014). It is equally important to understand the notion of L2 motivation in sixth graders and its relationship with certain factors (e.g., school type, gender) in L2 contexts. This study contributes to this line of research by examining the relationship between the variables of school type, gender, intended effort, and the L2 motivational self system (L2MSS; Dörnyei, 2005, 2009) of sixth graders in Turkey. Although research in this strand has been done in various L2 contexts

before, exploring the L2MSS with sixth graders in the Turkish context seems to be unique, specifically because it involves public and private school contexts. This study also examines the relationship between gender and L2 motivation, given that gender is supposed to be one of the notable factors in language learning achievement and leading to a difference in language learners' levels of self-perception (Ghazvini & Khajepour, 2011; Polat, 2011; Sung & Padilla, 1998).

This study contributes to existing research on the L2MSS and its relationship to certain contextual factors in Turkey. By exploring the components of the L2MSS with sixth graders in a relatively less studied context and how these components are related to the school type, gender, and intended effort where the starting age and amount of instruction for L2 learning show variation, L2 instruction can be better designed for potential changes in English language instruction in alignment with the increasing importance of English as an international language. However, it is important to point out that motivation is a complex and dynamic construct that is also quite likely to interact with various contextual factors (Piniel & Csizér, 2013; Waninge, Dörnyei, & De Bot, 2014).

## 2 | BACKGROUND ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN TURKEY

In alignment with the increasing importance of English as an international language, several endeavours for improved language instruction have been pursued in Turkey, where K–12 education is executed by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). Especially in the past decade, there have been certain essential changes in the Turkish education system, with the adaptation of Primary Education Law #6287 (MoNE, 2012) along with new regulations and consequences in English language education. The two major attempts to increase the quality of English language education directly relate to the starting age and amount of instruction. For example, English language instruction starting from second grade onward has now been authorized rather than fourth grade, as it used to be (MoNE, 2013). Additionally, the amount of language instruction has been increased to 20 hours from 12 hours per week at fifth grade.

Such recent changes in English language instruction and the increasing role of English as a global language have also paved the way for an upsurge in the number of the private K–12 schools in Turkey. One specific reason for such a remarkable rise in the number of these schools is that being able to communicate in English has also become one of the strongest expectations of 21st-century parents who want to ensure that their children have sufficient opportunities to develop their English proficiencies (Iwaniec, 2018). However, because these private schools can go beyond the national curricula by adding more to it, it has become almost a common assumption among most parents in Turkey that these schools provide better language instruction than public schools. Even though it seems to be a rightful assumption that there is an observed discrepancy between several private and public K–12 schools in Turkey, empirical research in this strand is needed to make such claims with regard to the relationship between second, foreign, and additional language learning and school type.

Public and private K–12 schools in Turkey might vary considerably in implementing language instruction in many respects. First, whereas the number of hours dedicated to English lessons and other foreign languages is at least 2–4 hours a week in a public school, it can range from 8 to 12 hours in a private school depending on the grade and level. In many private schools, the students not only learn English but also are introduced to other foreign languages. This may not be case in public schools most of the time. Second, students in private schools start to learn English usually in kindergarten, whereas English language instruction starts at the second grade in public schools. Third, there is usually an obvious discrepancy in instructional materials used in the lessons and the size of the classes.

In public schools, it is more likely that teachers and students end up relying on a limited amount of resources for English language instruction. However, many private schools and their students could afford to use a relatively wider range of international textbooks and materials. Finally, differences between public and private K–12 schools might also be attributed to and reflect socioeconomic status or similar background of parents and students in these schools. Thus, given such potential differences between the two types of schools in Turkey, public and private secondary schools have become one focal dimension of the L2MSS of sixth graders in Turkey.

### 3 | THE L2MSS

Drawing on the notion of integrative motivation by Gardner (1985), the L2MSS (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009) has been proposed as a new theoretical framework to make it relevant to various language learning environments in the world. Initially, the concept of motivation was exclusively explained through integrativeness, as argued by Dörnyei (2007), referring to the interest or desire “to come closer to the other language community” or even identification with that community (Gardner, 2001, p. 5). In his follow-up research into L2 motivation, Gardner (2010) explicates that integrative orientation is not the only factor to define motivation, but also learners’ attitudes and perceptions that they carry into each classroom or language-learning experience. Yet reconceptualization of L2 motivation in Dörnyei’s (2005, 2009) model is mainly based on the earlier definition of Gardner’s theory (i.e., integrative aspect of motivation).

Dörnyei (2005, 2009) has proposed his oft-cited L2MSS to link theory and practice with these recent perspectives on learning English as a foreign or global language. Relying on motivational psychology (Higgins, 1987; Markus & Nurius, 1986), L2 motivation research (Ushioda, 2001), and his own empirical research, Dörnyei (2009) suggests the three components of this model: ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience. The ideal L2 self is the learner’s ideal self they aspire to be as an L2 speaker. It includes the qualities and ambitions one wants to possess. It may be associated with L2 learning motivation in a positive way, offering “the promotion of a hoped-for future self” (MacIntyre, Mackinnon, & Clément, 2009, p. 195), and includes both “integrative and internalized instrumental motives” (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 29). The ought-to L2 self is the qualifications that the learner thinks they should have in order to prevent possible negative outcomes or meet expectations (Dörnyei, 2009) and is mainly extrinsic and preventive in nature (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Islam, 2013). Some researchers (Kormos, Kiddle, & Csizér, 2011; Taguchi, Magid, & Papi, 2009) have discussed that the ought-to L2 self might be relatively remarkable in the Asian L2 context owing to the perceived role of the concept of family in Asian cultures. The third and last component is the L2 learning experience, which relates to learners’ attitudes toward the immediate learning environment and experience (Dörnyei, 2009)—that is, the L2 learning experience could be affected by teachers, the curriculum, the peer group, and/or the experience of success. In other words, positive learning experience seems to be influential in the learner’s motivated behaviour in a positive way (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

### 4 | PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON THE L2MSS

As a dynamic and complex construct, motivation is intertwined with a number of variables. One such crucial factor is obviously the context that influences an individual and their motivation (Ushioda, 2009). For instance, the L2MSS has been empirically tested in various L2 contexts including Japan, China, Iran (Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Papi, 2010; Ryan, 2009; Taguchi et al., 2009), Chile (Kormos

et al., 2011), and Indonesia (Lamb, 2012). In the Hungarian context, with middle school and college students, for instance, Csizér and Kormos (2009) indicate that the three main components of the L2MSS—ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience—are not at all related to each other and show weak correlations, and thus these three components are independent motivational variables and different from each other. In the Chilean context, Kormos et al. (2011) revealed an interaction of L2 learning goals, attitudes, self-related beliefs, and parental encouragement in shaping motivated behavior, and age difference was an effective factor during this process. All in all, research in this line has indicated that several factors might be influential in and related to the L2MSS; specifically, intended effort presents a considerably higher relationship with the ideal L2 self (Al-Hoorie, 2018).

The role of school type in the L2MSS has been examined in only a few studies. Although there was a relationship between the private school context and the model, this was not the case in the public school context (Ghanizadeh & Rostami, 2015). It is also asserted that certain qualities of language learning in private contexts might be effective in developing learners' attitudes toward learning English in addition to having the subsequent L2 motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). As discussed earlier, several differences regarding L2 instruction in private and public school contexts, and expectations arising from these differences favoring the private context, are quite obvious in the Turkish context. Even though Bektaş-Çetinkaya and Oruç (2010) report that students at both public and private universities have a moderate level of L2 motivation in Turkey, the L2MSS has not been studied sufficiently in Turkey (Thompson & Erdil-Moody, 2014), specifically in the secondary school context considering the perceived understanding and roles of private and public schools.

Intended effort, another important component of this study, refers to learners' anticipated efforts in learning English. It is the criterion measure of learners' efforts given to learn English, because "motivated learners will demonstrate more effort and persistence in their task behaviour" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 201). So far, intended effort has been ubiquitously used as the criterion measure in a bulk of L2 motivation studies (Al-Hoorie, 2018). In three Asian countries—China, Iran, and Japan—Taguchi et al. (2009) demonstrated that the ideal L2 self is positively correlated with intended effort and detected as the strongest component of the system. Papi (2010) indicated that all three components in the L2MSS model influence intended effort in a positive way, but also found that the impact of the ideal L2 self on intended effort is much stronger than the impact of the ought-to L2 self on intended effort. In Turkey, Yetkin and Ekin (2018) asserted that secondary school students' intended effort for learning a language appears to be predicted mostly by their language learning experiences. Juxtaposing motivation to learn English in three different contexts, Lamb (2012) indicated that L2 learning experiences seem to have the most salient role in Indonesian junior high school pupils' motivation for learning English. Indeed, it is their positive attitudes toward their learning experiences that facilitates motivated learning behaviour rather than future users of English (the ideal L2 self) and their strong belief in the usefulness of English for their future (instrumentality) in all three groups of schools in a metropolitan city, provincial town, and rural context. Likewise, more studies argue that ideal L2 selves do not seem to be related to and/or result in students' actual motivated behaviour if certain conditions are not provided to promote the actualization of their ideal L2 selves and thus boost motivated behaviour (Dörnyei, 2008; Papi & Abdollahzadeh, 2012).

Gender is one of the most effective variables commonly investigated in L2 achievement and has displayed differences in L2 learning (Dörnyei, Csizér, & Németh, 2006). Many studies on gender difference along with other motivational factors indicate that female learners show higher motivation and more positive attitudes toward learning a foreign language than male learners (Bacon & Finnemann, 1992; Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; Sung & Padilla, 1998). Similarly, female students' scores are higher than male students in relation to cultural interest, integrativeness, vitality of L2 community, and instrumentality

(Dörnyei & Clement, 2001). In Turkey, two studies have presented the significant role of gender in the ideal L2 self with students at a state university (Doğan, 2017) and more positive attitudes of female students (Genç & Aydın, 2017). Although results commonly depict female superiority on L2 motivation and gender differences, a few studies report opposite results. Al-Bustan and Al-Bustan (2009), for instance, demonstrated that Kuwaiti learners' negative experiences of learning English at school are associated with female students' attitude toward learning English in a negative way. However, such negative attitudes were not depicted for male students. Again, research on L2 motivation in Turkey has not produced significant differences between genders for either the ideal L2 self or ought-to L2 self constructs (Thompson & Erdil-Moody, 2014) and other motivational factors (Altınır, 2018).

The current study is among preliminary studies conducted in Turkey as an L2 context in the framework of the L2MSS. Thus, the major goal of this study was to seek answers to the following questions:

1. Is there a significant relationship among the three components (ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience) of the L2MSS of Turkish sixth graders?
2. Is there a significant relationship between the three components of the L2MSS of Turkish sixth graders and the independent variables of school type, gender, and intended effort?
3. How much of the variance in the L2MSS of Turkish sixth graders can be predicted by the independent variables of school type, gender, and intended effort?

## 5 | METHODOLOGY

### 5.1 | Participants

A total of 170 Turkish learners of English participated in the main questionnaire study—85 students each from public and private secondary schools. A purposeful sampling method was employed. The participants were selected from two public and two private secondary schools in different districts in northwestern Turkey. These schools were chosen to represent a wide range of English language instruction within the Turkish educational system. Of these, 93 (54.7%) were males and 77 (45.3%) were females, in compliance with the purpose of the study. All of the participants were studying at the sixth grade, and most (83.5%) were 12 years old. The goal was to study sixth graders from the very beginning mainly because it is a critical age in the education system when members of this age group gradually start to develop their self-image. For all the students, Turkish was their first language.

### 5.2 | Data collection instrument

In this study, a structured questionnaire was used as the primary source of data. Because the purpose of the study was to examine the L2MSS of Turkish learners of English along with type of school, gender, and intended effort in Turkish context, a motivational factors questionnaire was adapted, drawing on the Hungarian study of Dörnyei et al. (2006). The items were adapted from the Japanese and Persian versions used by Taguchi et al. (2009) and by Ryan (2008). Several minor changes were made. It was translated into Turkish to make sure that students could understand the statements clearly, and the items were assessed on a 6-point Likert scale.

The questionnaire consisted of two main parts. The first part included 69 items measuring the learners' attitudes and motivation in relation to English learning, and the second part comprised questions about the learners' demographic and background information. The subscales in the questionnaire

measured each component of the L2MSS (ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience) and intended effort. For reliability and validity purposes, the Turkish version was first piloted with 40 participants, and internal consistency of all subscales was examined using Cronbach's alpha (.87 for intended effort, .88 for ideal L2 self, .81 for ought-to L2 self, and .87 for L2 learning experience).

### 5.3 | Data collection and analysis

The questionnaire was conducted in a total of eight classes during class time. It took 25–40 minutes on average for students to answer all the questions under the guidance of their English teachers. For data analysis purposes, descriptive and inferential quantitative data analysis procedures were employed using SPSS Statistics 21. As a correlational study, the purpose was to examine to what extent differences or variations in one variable or construct are related to those in one or more other variables or constructs (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, & Razavieh, 2010; Dörnyei, 2007). First, descriptive statistics (minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation) were calculated. The coefficient of internal consistency of each subscale was measured to check its reliability. Cronbach's alpha indexes and correlation of subscales were calculated for the main study (.89 for intended effort, .92 for ideal L2 self, .88 for ought-to L2 self, and .92 for L2 learning experience). The results were assessed at the 95% confidence interval and  $p < 0.05$  significance level.

Second, a factor analysis was conducted for the adapted Turkish version of the questionnaire as a data organization and reduction technique to indicate the underlying relationships between the variables in the study. To do so, each subscale (i.e., ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, L2 learning experience, and intended effort) was separately analyzed to confirm internal validity and construct validity. An exploratory factor analysis was carried out (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996) to decide whether the number of variables should be reduced, given that the same variables should be described by few factors.

Third, to test normality of the data, skewness and kurtosis statistics were run (Table 1). Skewness refers to a measure of the symmetry in the data and kurtosis to a measure of whether the data are heavy- or light-tailed. The results indicate that the variables in L2MSS (ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience) were skewed in this study. To check whether the variables in L2MSS had a normal distribution, a Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was applied. The results indicate that the variables do not follow a normal distribution in our population ( $p < 0.05$  for three variables).

Following this, a Spearman correlation and multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between L2MSS and various potential predictors (school type, gender, and intended effort). The model consisted of the predictor variables that were used to predict the outcome variables (ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience). In the analysis, the independent variables of school type, gender, and intended effort were the three predictor variables in the multiple regression model. Before statistical analyses were done, assumptions for the multiple regression

**TABLE 1** Skewness, kurtosis, and normality test results

	Skewness	Std. Error	Kurtosis	Std. Error	Test of Normality		
					Kolmogorov-Smirnov	df	Sig.
Ideal L2 self	−.68	.19	−.29	.39	.12	151	.00
Ought-to L2 self	−.65	.19	−.46	.39	.11	151	.00
L2 learning experience	−.88	.19	.08	.39	.12	151	.00

model were checked. If two of the independent variables are highly related, this leads to a problem called multicollinearity, which is problematic for the data analysis and interpretation. To investigate possible multicollinearity, the correlation coefficients for each pair of variables were examined; no multicollinearity was found. The scatterplot of standardized predicted values versus standardized residuals showed that the data met the assumptions of homogeneity of variance.

## 6 | RESULTS

### 6.1 | Descriptive statistics

The minimum, maximum, mean scores, and standard deviations for ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience are presented in Table 2. The mean scores of ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, L2 learning experience, and intended effort on a 6-point Likert scale were 4.87 ( $SD = .83$ ), 4.52 ( $SD = .95$ ), 4.75 ( $SD = .93$ ), and 4.56 ( $SD = .75$ ), respectively. Thus, the mean ideal L2 self scores were higher than other variables in the research. Considering the maximum score that a participant could reach, the mean scores in all variables (ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, L2 learning experience, intended effort) represented a relatively high level of L2MSS in this study because the mean scores were closer to the *agree* option in the questionnaire. The minimum values for ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, L2 learning experience, and intended effort on a 6-point Likert scale were 2.62, 2.00, 2.44, and 2.50, respectively, which were closer to the *disagree* option or *slightly disagree* on the 6-point Likert scale. The maximum value for all components of L2MSS was 6.00.

### 6.2 | Factor analysis

To check the factorability of the data through Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO), the KMO value was interpreted as mediocre at 0.5–0.7, good at 0.7–0.8, and very good at 0.8–0.9 (Field, 2009). The KMO values for the subscales of the questionnaire were .89 for ideal L2 self, .89 for ought-to L2 self, and .91 for both L2 learning experience and intended effort, representing a very good factorability of the data (Field, 2009). Bartlett's Test of Sphericity indicates that a factor analysis for all subscales in the questionnaire can be useful (.00 for all). Maintaining a very good sampling adequacy based on KMO values and proved significance of items through Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, another set of analysis was conducted. To decide the number of factors, a principal components analysis was conducted on each subscale with varimax rotation so that the factors could be extracted through the Eigenvalue of 1.0 as the cut-off point (Field, 2009) as well as the scree plots to see the sharp descents and leveling off in each subscale. Whereas the scree plots indicated the number of factors to be extracted for each subscale, the factor matrices based on maximum likelihood method displayed the correlation between

**TABLE 2** Descriptive statistics

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean ( <i>M</i> )	Std. Deviation ( <i>SD</i> )
Ideal L2 self	2.62	6.00	4.87	.83
Ought-to L2 self	2.00	6.00	4.52	.95
L2 learning experience	2.44	6.00	4.75	.93
Intended effort	2.50	6.00	4.56	.75

variables and factors. Thus, the results revealed that two factors had Eigenvalues over Kaiser's criterion of 1.0 in the subscales of ideal L2 self out of 13 items, accounting for 63% of all variances in this construct; ought-to L2 self out of 10 items, accounting for 60% of all variances in this construct; and intended effort out of 12 items, accounting for 55% of all variances in this construct. Only one component had Eigenvalues over Kaiser's criterion of 1.0 in the subscale of the L2 learning experience out of 9 items, accounting for 62% of all variances in this construct.

### 6.3 | Correlation analysis

Pertaining to the first research question, analysis of relationship among the three components of the L2MSS (ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience), as can be seen in Table 3, indicated a strong positive relationship between ideal L2 self and L2 learning experience ( $r = .62, p = .00$ ) and a weak positive relationship between ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self ( $r = .36, p = .00$ ). The results demonstrate a weak positive relationship between ought-to L2 self and L2 learning experience ( $r = .32, p = .00$ ).

In relation to the second research question, analysis of the relationship between the three components of the L2MSS of Turkish learners of English and type of school (public vs. private), as seen in Table 4, showed a strong positive relationship between ideal L2 self and L2 learning experience in both public ( $r = .63, p = .00$ ) and private ( $r = .66, p = .00$ ) schools. However, a weak positive relationship was observed between ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self in public schools ( $r = .27, p = .00$ ), whereas there was a moderate positive relationship in private schools ( $r = .49, p = .00$ ). Finally, a weak positive relationship was observed between ought-to L2 self and L2 learning experience in both public ( $r = .33, p = .00$ ) and private ( $r = .30, p = .00$ ) schools.

**TABLE 3** Correlation analysis

		Ideal L2 self	Ought-to L2 self	L2 learning experience
Ought-to L2 self	Correlation coefficient	.36	1	
	sig. (2-tailed)	.00	–	
L2 learning experience	Correlation coefficient	.62	.32	1
	sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00	–
Intended effort	Correlation coefficient	.65	.49	.64
	sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00	.00

**TABLE 4** Correlation analysis regarding school type

		Ideal L2 self		Ought-to L2 self	
		Public	Private	Public	Private
Ought-to L2 self	Correlation coefficient	.27	.49	1	1
	sig. (2-tailed)	.01	.00	–	–
L2 learning experience	Correlation coefficient	.63	.66	.33	.30
	sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00	.00	.01

Correlational analysis of the relationship between the three components of the L2MSS of Turkish learners of English and gender (see Table 5) showed a strong positive relationship between ideal L2 self and L2 learning experience in males ( $r = .68, p = .00$ ) but a moderate positive relationship in females ( $r = .55, p = .00$ ). Similarly, the positive relationship between ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self was weak for both males ( $r = .36, p = .00$ ) and females ( $r = .35, p = .00$ ). The results also indicate a weak positive relationship between ought-to L2 self and L2 learning experience for males ( $r = .33, p = .00$ ) and females ( $r = .29, p = .01$ ).

The second research question also investigated the relationship between the three components of the L2MSS and intended effort (see Table 3). The correlational results show a strong positive relationship between ideal L2 self and intended effort ( $r = .65, p = .00$ ) as well as L2 learning experience and intended effort ( $r = .64, p = .00$ ). Finally, the analysis revealed a moderate positive relationship between ought-to L2 self and intended effort ( $r = .49, p = .00$ ).

## 6.4 | Multiple regression analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine whether school type, gender, and intended effort predicted L2MSS. First, analysis of variance results were examined to see whether the overall model was a significant predictor of the outcome variables. Because the significance values were less than  $p = .05$ , the multiple regression model significantly predicted the variables of ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience. Table 6 presents multiple regression model results.

The multiple regression model with all three predictors produced  $R^2 = .41$  ( $F(3,147) = 34.34, p < .05$ ) for ideal L2 self, indicating that 41% of the variation in ideal L2 self can be explained by the variables of school type, gender, and intended effort. As for ought-to L2 self, the multiple regression model with all three predictors produced  $R^2 = .24$  ( $F(3,147) = 15.61, p < .05$ ). Thus, 24% of the variation in ought-to L2 self scores can be explained by the model containing school type, gender, and intended effort. Finally, the multiple regression model with all three predictors produced  $R^2 = .44$  ( $F(3,147) = 38.21, p < .05$ ) for L2 learning experience. The  $R^2$  value was .44, so 44% of the variation in L2 learning experience scores can be explained by the model containing school type, gender, and intended effort. The predictor variable of intended effort had significant positive regression weights for all outcome variables. This shows that sixth graders with higher scores on intended effort were expected to have higher ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience after controlling for the other variables in the model. However, school type and gender did not contribute to the multiple

**TABLE 5** Correlation analysis regarding gender

		Ideal L2 self		Ought-to L2 self		L2 learning experience	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Ideal L2 self	Correlation coefficient	1	1				
	sig. (2-tailed)	-	-				
Ought-to L2 self	Correlation coefficient	.36	.35	1	1		
	sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00	-	-		
L2 learning experience	Correlation coefficient	.68	.55	.33	.29	1	1
	sig. (2-tailed)	.00	.00	.00	.01	-	-

**TABLE 6** Multiple regression model results

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> square	Adjusted <i>R</i> square	Std. error of the estimate
Ideal L2 self	.64	.41	.40	.64
Ought-to L2 self	.49	.24	.22	.84
L2 learning experience	.66	.44	.42	.70

regression model. The correlation coefficients for multiple regression are presented in Tables 7, 8, and 9.

## 7 | DISCUSSION

This study investigated the L2MSS of sixth graders in the Turkish context, focusing on the relationship among the components of the L2MSS and between these components and the type of school (public and private), gender, and intended effort. One outstanding result in this study was the strong positive relationship between ideal L2 self and L2 learning experience of the sixth graders. This can be interpreted to indicate that, if these learners have positive attitudes and learning experiences in English, they also have a positive L2 self-image or vivid ideal L2 self. This strong positive correlation between ideal L2 self and attitudes toward learning English parallels earlier studies conducted in different contexts (Alshahrani, 2016; Csizér & Kormos, 2009; Kormos & Csizér, 2008; Kormos et al., 2011; Lamb, 2012; Papi, 2010; Taguchi et al., 2009). Additionally, intended effort presented a strong positive correlation with ideal L2 self and L2 learning experience. Thus, if sixth-grade learners have clear future selves, image of qualities, and positive attitudes, and if these are increased, the learners will put more effort into learning English. This also highlights the possible importance of the immediate learning environment for students' tendency to study English, and it seems that their attitudes or learning experiences are associated with their efforts to learn English.

As one of the focal aspects of this study, school type did not lead to much change in the correlation among three components of the L2MSS. Unlike our initial assumption and previous research (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009; Ghanizadeh & Rostami, 2015) asserting that certain qualities at private schools might facilitate positive attitudes toward learning English and subsequently L2 motivation, this study shows that the correlation among the components of the L2MSS did not change much regarding the type of school. Relying on this, it could be proposed that despite the supposed differences between public and private school contexts, students' awareness and clear vision of their ideal L2 selves did not necessarily relate to such contextual differences; however, the changing status of English might be

**TABLE 7** Standardized and unstandardized coefficients for ideal L2 self

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	
	<i>B</i>	Std. error	Beta	Sig.
Constant	1.88	.35		.00
Intended effort	.68	.07	.61	.00
Gender	-.09	.10	-.05	.41
School type	-.16	.10	-.09	.12

**TABLE 8** Standardized and unstandardized coefficients for ought-to L2 self

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	
	<i>B</i>	Std. error	Beta	Sig.
Constant	1.45	.46		.00
Intended effort	.64	.09	.50	.00
Gender	.22	.14	.11	.12
School type	.03	.13	.01	.79

**TABLE 9** Standardized and unstandardized coefficients L2 for learning experience

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	
	<i>B</i>	Std. error	Beta	Sig.
Constant	.83	.38		.03
Intended effort	.83	.07	.67	.00
Gender	.13	.11	.07	.26
School type	.10	.11	.05	.34

relevant here. Along with globalization, the role of English has shifted from a relatively limited context of use to a lingua franca (Seidlhofer, 2011). There are now more opportunities to reach different countries and people from different cultures through mass media, social media, travelling, and so on. Therefore, such considerations can support and motivate students to learn English in order to imagine themselves as ideal L2 speakers. Yet no matter how much these environments in private and public schools are assumed to differ in language learning qualities, these do not seem to relate to the strong positive association between ideal L2 self and L2 learning experience.

Similarly, a strong positive relationship between ideal L2 self and L2 learning experience was evident for male students but was only moderate for female students. In contrast to previous research in Turkey (Altınar, 2018; Genç & Aydın, 2017; Thompson & Erdil-Moody, 2014) and other L2 contexts (Bacon & Finnemann, 1992; Baker & MacIntyre, 2000; Dörnyei & Clement, 2001; Dörnyei et al., 2006; Ghazvini & Khajepour, 2011; Sung & Padilla, 1998; Williams, Burden, & Lanvers, 2002), such a strong positive relationship between ideal L2 self and L2 learning experience for male Turkish sixth graders might suggest that these students seem to be more aware of their experiences in learning English because the role of gender in the L2MSS might also relate to the socially and culturally situated understanding of these roles in Turkey. From a mostly collectivist and patriarchal society compared to more Western societies, many Turkish families might tend to have higher expectations of males. However, it needs to be highlighted that such gender-based expectations should yield a stronger association with ought-to L2 self with Turkish students, which is not the case in this study. Indeed, unlike earlier research with secondary school students in Turkey (Yetkin & Ekin, 2018), in this study the dominant component of the L2MSS for Turkish sixth graders was ideal L2 self. Thus, we suggest that it is more likely for younger Turkish students to shift toward a more individualistic lifestyle and understanding given that most of the previous studies in L2 motivation in Turkey were conducted with university students (Altınar, 2018; Bektaş-Çetinkaya & Oruç, 2010; Genç & Aydın, 2017; Şakiroğlu & Dikilitaş, 2012; Thompson & Erdil-Moody, 2014).

In line with correlation analysis, the results of multiple regression provided further support for the predictive role of school type, gender, and intended effort, especially for ideal L2 self and L2 learning experience in L2MSS of sixth graders in Turkey. However, it was intended effort that provided a significant contribution to prediction of ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 self, and L2 learning experience, whereas the predictive roles of school type and gender were not important for L2MSS. Thus, this study highlights the potential, and relatively stronger, associations between ideal L2 self, L2 learning experience, and intended effort for sixth grade students.

## 8 | CONCLUSION

This study has several implications for language pedagogy and future research possibilities on L2MSS. First, the interrelated nature of ideal L2 self, L2 learning experience, and intended effort points out the important role of instructional setting for language learners in L2 contexts; positive learning experiences or attitudes will most probably boost students' ability to imagine themselves as language users and thus put increased effort into learning English in such settings. It is highly possible for teachers or practitioners to create a positive language learning environment through careful selection and planning of relevant classroom activities, textbooks, and materials. Second, the remarkable role of intended effort for ideal L2 self and L2 learning experience implies that language pedagogy should be meaningful, authentic, and engaging so that students would be willing to remain persistent in their efforts to learn a language and thus develop positive attitudes. Additionally, even though school type and gender made important contributions to the L2MSS of sixth graders in this study, such variables should be further examined in other L2 contexts and with various age groups because social expectations and sociolinguistic factors might function differently in various L2 contexts.

Although this study was limited to a small sample of participants in sixth grade in two public and two private school contexts, it contributes to understanding of L2MSS in a specific context. Thus, replications are needed in similar contexts for more conclusive understanding of L2MSS. Finally, the present study is limited in terms of data collection instruments, because L2MSS was assessed only through a questionnaire and it is a correlational study. However, further research is recommended to use and apply the benefits of qualitative instruments and longitudinal studies to obtain deeper insights into each component of the L2MSS.

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