STUDENTS' MOTIVATION IN ONLINE LEARNING DURING **COVID-19 PANDEMIC ERA: A CASE STUDY**

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to illuminate the motivation of the students at English Department of Sriwijaya Polytechnics toward their online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic era. Due to sudden transformation from traditional face-to-face learning approach to remotely digital learning, some present studies revealed that students' motivation in online learning was affected both intrinsically and extrinsically. Using snowball sampling, there were eight students participated in individual interviews and fourteen students in focus group interviews. The gained data from both interviews were analysed using thematic analysis. It was revealed that the students' motivation toward their online learning was intrinsically affected more by their ambition to learn new knowledge and enjoyment in experiencing new learning method. It was also influenced extrinsically by external regulation and environmental condition. However, amotivation or the state of lack motivation also happened due to poor external supporting facilities.

Keywords: case study, motivation in learning, motivation in online learning, students' motivation

The Covid-19 pandemic, or coronavirus pandemic has been declared by World Health Organization in March 2020. As the data in the world indicate the increasement of coverage and impacts of this contagious and lethal disease, many countries enact national emergency state. Indonesia as one of countries with high infected population has also implemented some policy reforms in many sectors. In education sector, a new policy has been regulated in teaching and learning system. The Government of Indonesia Republic through The Ministry of Education and Culture has stipulated online teaching and learning processes as one panacea with executing physical distancing program to depress the pandemic outbreak. Teachers and students are regulated to conduct the teaching and learning processes from face-to-face mode into online one (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020).

The online learning regulation is in force to all education institutions. It is undertaken the learning from traditionally face-to-face approaches to remotely digital platforms. This sudden transformation has been debatable due to the quality of education resulted. Some previous studies revealed that the online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic era in Indonesia has caused advantages while others has caused disadvantages. On one hand, online learning was reported beneficial for students because they had high interaction to rich learning materials regardless time and place as well as high opportunity to experience digital learning programs (Firman & Rahayu, 2020; Hidayat & Noeraida, 2020; Simamora, 2020). Moreover, the high interaction also occurred in the forms of virtual communication among teachers - students, and students - students which resulted vast capacity of sharing information and experience (Pakpahan & Fitriani, 2020; Rochman & Pertiwi, 2020). As the online teaching and learning processes used computer technology, it increased enthusiasm of both teachers and students to participate which, in turn, increased their computer skills too (Dasrun, 2020; Khasanah, Pramudibyanto, & Widuroyekti, 2020). On the other hand, online learning was also described bringing disadvantages. The students claimed that online learning has caused them some health problems like fatigue, headache, or fever because they had too many assignments to do in short time. Some also declared that they had impairment eyesight due to long duration starring at computers or phones screens. Students also faced hardship in financial because they had to buy big credit for online quota (Simamora, 2020). However, these advantages and disadvantages which determined the students' success in learning were closely related to students' motivation in online learning during the pandemic.

Interestingly, both advantages and disadvantages were influenced by students' motivation. The motivation regarding online learning during the coronavirus outbreak was reported contributing inconsistent effects in higher education, especially in Indonesian universities. The online learning has caused lack motivation for some students to learn whereas others were highly motivated. Cahyani, Listiana, & Larasati (2020), Rachmat (2020) and Simamora (2020) in their study reported that students with lack motivation were greatly affected by external factors like learning environment, learning time, and instrumental supports which in turn affected the achievement. As the online learning was conducted from home, many parents thought they still could ask help in doing households from their children in their online learning time. Improper internet connection and gadgets to access the distance learning were also caused frustration. On the contrary, Fitriyani, Fauzi, & Sari (2020) and Simamora (2020) argued that intrinsic factors highly motivated university students in online learning. The enthusiasm and ambition to understand and add new knowledge have driven them to study hard even via online. In addition, resilience and psychological condition also favorably assisted them to have success online learning.

Having interesting facts regarding inconsistency effects of motivation in online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic era in higher education context, this study is intended to know the motivation of students in higher vocational institution/polytechnics, in this case students of English Department (ED) at Sriwijaya Polytechnics (Polsri) toward their online learning. Therefore, this study is trying to reveal the answer of the following question: what are the students' motivation in ED at Polsri in online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic era?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Motivation to Learn

Motivation is defined as 'a theorical construct to explain the initiation, direction, intensity, persistence, and quality of behaviour, especially goal-directed behaviour' (Brophy, 2010:3). It is associated with individual cognitive and affective processes on situated and interactive interaction between learners and their learning environment in accordance to the contextual and social factors as enablers or barriers (Schuck et al., 2014). Motivation which is described as an 'engine of learning' (Paris & Turner, 1994) affects in *what, how,* and *when* of learners' learning (Schunk & Usher, 2012). In their studies, Ryan and Deci (2000a, 2000b) argued that motivated learners are able to do challenging learning activities which engage them actively in finding out appropriate strategies to facilitate their learning, enjoying them and indicating better, persistence, and creative learning.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation in Learning

Ryan and Deci (2000a, p.56) state that 'Intrinsic motivation is defined as the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfactions rather than for some separable consequence'. It is associated with internal factors like interest, fun or challenge an individual develops in doing activities, for the joy or satisfaction integrated in the activities. Furthermore, they also defined extrinsic motivation as 'a construct that pertains whenever an activity done in order to attain some separable outcome' (Ryan & Deci, 2000a, p.60). It is related to external factors in doing activities such as reward or recognition from others (Hartnett, 2016).

Intrinsic Motivation

As motivation in learning reflects on Self-Determination Theory by Deci and Ryan (1985), the intrinsic motivation is related to: (1) motivation to learn and gain new knowledge such as happiness in learning new things; (2) motivation to experience the

encouragement and physical joy like enjoyment in learning interesting learning materials; and (3) motivation to undertake challenging learning activity, for example accomplishing challenging assignment. The intrinsic motivation is influenced by interest, ambition, aspiration, awareness, competency, physical and psychological conditions.

Extrinsic Motivation

Extrinsic motivation, in contrast, is associated with (1) motivation to get rewarded or prevent punished (external regulation), like to have good score in finishing a difficult project; (2) motivation to avoid bad situation or being guilty (introjected regulation), such as to prove its capability in performing tough tasks; and (3) motivation to gain benefit and necessity after completing a learning activity (identified regulation), for instance learning a specific subject would be beneficial for a certain job in the future (as cited in Erten, 2014, p.174). The extrinsic motivation is influenced by studying condition, social condition, family condition, and supporting facilities.

Amotivation

In fact, the absence of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is called *amotivation*. It generates when learners have unwillingness or lack motivation in learning. They have low self-efficacy and feel incapable because the learning will result no desired outcome and doing the tasks have no value as well (Harnet, 2016). The Figure 1 illustrates the taxonomy of human motivation types from Deci & Ryan (1985).

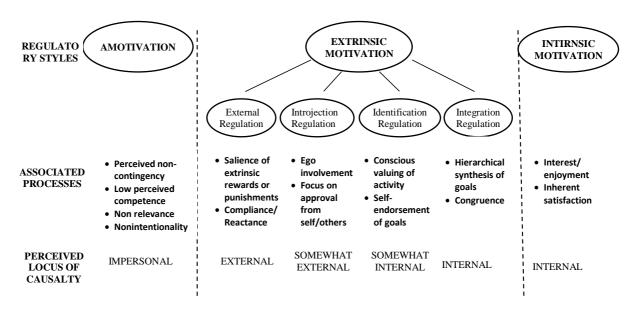


Figure 1. The Taxonomy of Human Motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985)

Online Learning

Some scholars made definitions for *online learning*. Bates (2005) argued that *online learning* is the use of web and internet in learning. According to Ally (2008, p.5), it is defined as:

... the use of internet to access materials; to interact with the content, instructor, and other learners; and to obtain support during the learning process, in order to acquire knowledge, to construct personal meaning, and to grow from the learning experience.

Nevertheless, Hartnett (2016) in her book pointed out the term of *online learning* as the combination of Bates and Ally's terminology. She defined it as 'distance education mediated by technological tools where learners are geographically separated from the instructor and the main institution'.

Principles of Online Learning

Summarized from some studies (Alabbasi, 2017; Archhambault et all., 2010; Bakia, 2012; Huang et al. 2020; Powell et al., 2015; Watson & Gemin, 2008; Wick, 2010), online learning can be characterized into its two main points: content and instructions. Firstly, the content of online course greatly influences the learners' learning outcome. It needs to engage learners remotely based on technology via internet with various interactive content from audio, video, animation, and simulation. The content can be adaptable and customized based on learners' requirement in order to reveal their competency to understand the learning material and ready to continue to new one. Secondly, the instructions are conducting over the internet in which leaners can have comment about their assignment directly. Similar to the content in which it can be flexible and individualized, the instructions can also be adjusted on the pedagogy demands, interaction rules, and gadgets' availability on the basis of the hosting education institution's policy. The instructions are provided by teachers through interaction in the same time-space communication like video conferencing such as using Zoom or Google Meet, and through separate time-space communication like email or chat texting applications. Those forms of communication must be accessible from any places.

Online Learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic

The increase of the Covid-19 coverage and impacts has caused abolishment of teaching and learning processes in class. Li and Lalani (2020) in their study reported that

totally 12.2 billion students are studying out of classroom all across the world. As the replacement of face-to-face learning in the classroom, schools are conducting online learning remotely using digital platforms. United Nations Sustainable Development Group (2020) in its report stated that although online learning has been apart of learning system in most higher education institution, some universities still meet barriers to apply fully online learning system due to inadequate infrastructure in information technology for teachers and students. Especially education institutions in many developing countries in which face-to-face approach is still dominant. The massive sudden shift of this learning system brings unplanned curriculum changing. Students are exposed to various learning application in digital platforms. Lecturing is carried out via various digital conference media like *Zoom Cloud Meeting, Google Meet, Cisco WebEx,* and *Mikogo*. Students have online learning materials, textbooks, and modules with supplement learning materials given in the forms of audios or videos of lecturing. The assignments, exercise, assessment or examination are implemented by computer-based system (Khalil et al, 2020).

In Indonesia, online learning is mandated by Ministry of Education and Culture as one prevention of Covid-19 deployment. However, it is reported that many schools have barriers to transfer their curriculum into online version due to lack of supporting information technology infrastructure (Azzahra, 2020). Teachers also face difficulties in switching the face-to-face pedagogy into online one due to lack of knowledge for online teaching. They did not have information and knowledge regarding online mastering during in-service training, in which, they lacked the necessary computer savvy. Although some schools and teachers are able to run online learning, many students have their respective problems. They might have incapability in following the online learning due to lack of computer skills. This situation happened especially for those who have no proper instrument to facilitate the online learning like computers, laptops or smart phones, and insufficient internet access and quotas (Simamora, 2020).

Sriwijaya Polytechnic Context

Online learning has been implemented in Sriwijaya Polytechnic (Polsri) since 2013 as learning innovation, in form of *blended learning*, for higher vocational education. It was intended to facilitate the needs of technology integration in vocational education system. Using the *Learning Management System (LMS)* under *Moodle* platform, unfortunately, this blended learning system was unpopular among lecturers at that time.

It happened due to the limitation of knowledge and skills as well as infrastructures in using this 'technology-rich' learning system. In fact, the lecturers did not have knowledge of instructions related to online mastering during their pre-service training. Later, in respond to the globalization changes especially to Education in Industry 4.0 era, in which learning is based on digital technology, Poslri prepared its lectures to respond the global demand by optimizing the blended learning. Education 4.0 uses new experience-based system, in which digital technology pedagogy replaces traditional face-to-face approach. The system is planned to train and prepare the students with technology savvy as global generation to meet the needs of the Industry 4.0. All lectures from all departments were equipped with online learning knowledge and practices via some workshops and trainings regarding the use of *Moodle* system. In addition, supporting infrastructures were also improved to support the learning transformation. Though, the lecturers are not limited to use other digital technology platforms like Edmodo, Google Room, Instagram, or Ruangguru. During the Covid-19 pandemic era, the existing blended learning is switched into full online learning. Judging from the recent learning system at Polsri, it supposed to be no serious internal obstacles in running the learning transformation. Nevertheless, the success of this online learning is not only measured by the institution readiness and performance but also from student's participation as the main users. Indeed, students' motivation is the biggest driven factor for participating in provided online learning.

Motivation in Online Learning

As online learning requires students' participation on their own responsibility for their own learning, they are unable to just join along the class with other students. The requirement forces them to participate in the online class with their own awareness, to gain new knowledge and information while interacting with teacher and other students (Knowles & Kerkman, 2007). Schunk et al (2014) argued that the success of the students' learning was related to their motivation. Furthermore, Nayakama et al (2014) also argued that the students was differently affected by their extrinsic motivation like learning environment and intrinsic one such as personalities.

Some studies reported that students were mostly influenced by their internal driven motivation rather than the external one. Internal factors have been identified as stable personal characteristics of successful online learners. In addition, comparative studies between online and face-to-face learners indicated that online learners were more

motivated by their intrinsic motivation than their face-to-face counterpart (Artino, 2008; Keller, 2008; Wighting et al. 2008; Yukselturk and Bulut 2007). Interestingly, internal motivation: namely isolated feelings; failure in technology; and poor time management skill have been proofed as influence for unsuccessful online learners (Hara & Kling, 2003; Keller, 1999; Paulus & Scherff, 2008). Hence, the more the unsuccessful online learners get used to technology, the lesser those barriers and fade eventually (Keller & Suzuki, 2004). Additionally, *amotivation* or the state of being absence for both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is the biggest factor for unsuccessful online learners (Artino, 2008; Keller, 2008). Therefore, motivation plays crucial roles for learners in online learning and become an enormous factor needs to be considered in conducting online learning. Hereafter, it is worthy to investigate the motivation of students in their online learning as a measurement for the success of online learning at Polsri.

METHODS

Research Design

This study adopted a case study using qualitative approach. The case study was intended to investigate phenomena in a 'real-life' setting (Cousin, 2005). The complex phenomena were about the motivation of students of English Department (ED) at Polsri toward their online learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic era. The qualitative design was implemented to explore the phenomena using words, stories, and pictures (Creswell, 2012). It facilitated the understanding of the meaning from the gained phenomena, the explanation of the existing issues, and offering solution (Gillham, 2000).

Research Site and Participants

The site was purposively chosen based on the purpose of the study (Bryman, 2012). Hence, the study was conducted in ED at Polsri in order to explore the motivation of the students there. It was to know either intrinsic or extrinsic motivation play important role in their online learning.

Taking into account the condition of physical distancing during the Covid-19 Pandemic when the study was conducting, the participants were approach using snowball sampling. It was done because the population was hard to locate during the study (Creswell, 2012). All students of ED at Polsri during the pandemic were stayed home, and located in various areas with diverse technological problems, e.g.: internet access,

improper gadgets, limited quota. Thus, only students (regardless their semester and gender) who were able to participate taken as participants. There were eight participants for individual in-depth interview and fourteen participants for focus group interview (FGI). All the participants were identified as Participant (P) followed with number (1, 2, 3...) for number identification, meaning Participant 1 will be named as P1, and so on.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data were collected using two methods of interview: (1) individual in-depth interview with semi-structured interview questions; and (2) focus group interview. The interview questions were intended and focussed on the students' motivation in their online learning during the pandemic era. Regarding the physical distancing during the pandemic, the individual interviews were conducted in distance using WhatsApp video or voice call, and the focus group interview conducted using Google Meet conference. As Creswell (2012) argued that the ways of interviews conducted by the researcher to its participants need to meet comfortable situation during the interviews for the best results. The interview questions were developed and adapted from theory of motivation in learning reflects on Self-Determination Theory by Deci and Ryan (1985). In individual in-dept interview, the semi-structured interview questions were designed to allow the participants answer the questions using their own language in their own way (Matthew & Ross, 2010). It was to revealed the eight participants' perspectives about their motivation in online learning during the pandemic. In the FGI there were fourteen students (all participants in individual interview were included). It was conducted to gain more information and views which might not be in individual interviews (Barbour & Schostak, 2005).

This study used thematic analysis for analysing the gained data. The procedures were adopted from Matthew & Ross (2010) in four phases: segmentizing primary themes; categorizing them; relinking the aspects of the themes; and presenting as final data.

FINDINGS

The data from the interviews revealed both internal and external motivation of the students of ED at Polsri as the participants of this study in online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. Their participation in this sudden emerge of distance learning

experience, somehow, was influenced by their motivation. The findings are explored and categorised under the internal and external factors.

Internal Motivation

All participants agreed that they intrinsically motivated in their online learning. They greatly influenced by their intrinsic motivation. Their online learning was driven by their (1) ambition or belief to learn and gain new knowledge; and (2) enjoyment in experiencing new learning method. Each factor will be explained as follow. First, they claimed that they were motivated to online learning because their ambition to learn and gain new knowledge. Participant 3 (P3) mentioned that his motivation was lied on his ambition to keep studying even from distance learning.

My motivation in online learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic is my ambition to gain knowledge. As long as I live and I think... although we are facing pandemic now that resulting us being unable to study offline like we used to... it cannot be an excuse for us to stop learning because learning can be done everywhere as long as we have that willingness to learn (P3).

Additionally, twelve of fourteen participants in FGI (P1, P2, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14) stated that their joining the online learning because they realised it is important to keep updating the knowledge. Only two participants (P3 and P6) indicated that they did not affected by their internal motivation in online learning. P8 in FGI mentioned her opinion as follow.

I study online because of self-awareness. Even though now we are all in a difficult situation, this does not mean that it can delay us from learning and gaining knowledge. Maybe [it is] not as effective as the usual learning time, but it is a challenge for us. Therefore, even though via online learning activities, I still follow it because I don't want to get nothing from my study, I don't want to be missing knowledge (P8-FGI).

Second, the participants also gave comments that they felt enjoyment when joining the online learning due to technological activities. P1 and P4 in individual interviews said that the new approach in learning (using digital platforms) always motivated them to attend the classes. P1 and P4 from individual interview supported by P14 from FGI explained it as follow.

...although we have LMS [Learning Management System] from Polsri, it is more enjoyable and fun because some lecturers using *Gmeet* [*Googlemeet*], *Zoom, Webex* to explain the lesson (P1).

Online studying has grown me [my technology savvy] in a way... it motivates me to learn to use some app [applications] that I thought I would never use in my life, for example *Corel draw* and *adobe illustration*. I would try designing [project assignment] in other classes (P4).

... because by learning online, I can sharpen [my] skills in the field of technology that I have not been good at, especially video editing and the ability to operate *Microsoft* which is very useful during and after online learning (P14-FGI).

External Motivation

Five of eight participants (P1, P3, P4, P6, P7) agreed that their motivation in online learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic era was influenced by (1) external regulation in which they attended the online classes due to avoiding compensation of being absent; and (2) environmental condition namely proper supporting facilities. Firstly, they stated that they tried their best to always participate in online learning regardless bad signals or other domestic obstacles. Some participants in FGI (P1, P3, P6, P9, P10, P13) also mentioned that they avoided working at their workshop during semester break or having extra assignments as absent compensation. P4 form individual interview and P9 from FGI clarify as follow.

Personally, online learning is a kind of boring activity...delay voice...unstable picture...bad signals... however, I prefer to join it rather than being absent from class and get compensation at the end of semester (P4).

I tried to manage my time to join the online class...you know, at home, my parents asked me to do cooking and cleaning house... unless you like doing remedial [additional assignments] when you are absent (P9-FGI).

Secondly, P2, P3, P7, P8 and some participants form FGI (P2, P4, P5, P7, P8, P11, P14) also confirmed that their environmental circumstances supported them significantly in the process of technological distance learning. The supports came in the forms of conducive learning situation, availability of proper learning facilities and parents' encouragement.

Being able to study in my room is what I've been wanted to do...quiet, relax. Studying online does not waste my time. I don't have to spend an hour to go to campus and another hour to go home...safe money, time and energy (P5).

Our lecturers have good communication when studying online as well... also good interactions with my friends.... I also learned from this pandemic that we should appreciate a [direct] meeting more, because if we are far away, only longing remains (P11-FGI).

Alhamdulillah, I have *wifi* facilities and a good enough laptop and smartphone for online learning...really support my learning (P7).

My parents and my younger brother support my online learning during this pandemic. The simplest example is they will turn down the volume of television or even turn it off when I am making a video or doing meeting in a platform of *Zoom* or *Gmeet*, so that I can study well (P7-FGI).

I have a good interaction with my classmates and teacher, it makes me feel so excited to see them even only in the online meeting (P3).

Amotivation

Interestingly, 2 participants (P2 and P5) from individual interviews and 2 participants (P3 and P6) from FGI indicated that they sat either in intrinsic nor extrinsic motivations. They assumed that the frustration in technology like electricity problem, bad signals, delay voice and blur pictures really give impacts to their belief and ability to understand the delivered learning materials. However, this condition was indicated as a demotivated or amotivation due to their lack of contribution in their online learning. They gave their sights as follow.

Many times, we could not hear what the lecturers said because of bad connection, and the screen frozen as well...after some seconds, when we hear voice and moving pictures again, the lesson already continue and... you know... we couldn't ask repetition...lazy to keep studying (P3-FGI).

... I felt that because I live in area where electricity is on and off, I can't online properly and sometimes absent from class... decrease my motivation to study more and I belief I already left behind my friends (P5).

The gained data from both individual and focus group interviews show that the participants where the study conducting were highly influenced by their external motivation. Table 1 is developed to illustrate the findings. The discussion of this phenomena is discussed in the discussion section

Table 1. Students' Motivation in Online Learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic Era.

Motivation	Factors
Internal	ambition to learn and gain new knowledge: belief education is important; and enjoyment in experiencing new learning method: using some digital platforms
External	external regulation: avoiding compensation of being absent; and environmental condition: proper supporting learning facilities.
Amotivation	Problems with outsources: electricity and internet connection decrease their belief and ability.

DISCUSSION

The findings have discovered that students' motivation in ED at Polsri were highly motivated by internal factors. This is in line with studies conducted by Artino (2008), Keller (2008), Wighting et al. (2008), and Yukselturk and Bulut (2007) in which they argued that successful online learners had constant personalities to drive their learning activities. Since online learning requires learners' own awareness (Knowles & Kerkman, 2007), the students' participation in online learning was the result of their self-determination, their personal interest, belief, ambition in form of intrinsic motivation. Moreover, their excitement feelings to experience and learn new technological distance integrated learning were associated with the situational interest. They were engendered in response to the condition of the availability of sufficient digitals platforms in their online learning process (Hara & Kling, 2003; Keller, 1999; Paulus & Scherff, 2008).

Furthermore, the presence of punishment or compensation for being absent from the online class and proper learning facilities were identified as external regulation in form of extrinsic motivation for the students in ED at Polsri. Due to the punishment, the students' goals in online learning were separated from the learning activities themselves (Ryan & Deci, 2000a; 2000b). They passively participated in the online learning as they took the learning only as obligation instead of necessity. Nevertheless, sufficient supporting learning facilities have leaded to self-determined form of motivation for the students. This situation is described as *co-exist motivation*. It is a state when the students felt self-determined by experiencing positive external motivation for their online learning (Lepper et al. 2005). Obviously, the students' internal motivation degree was positively impacted.

Finally, the demotivated students felt lack intention to their online learning due to their external factors. In line with Lepper et al. (2005), the condition of *co-exist* in this case happened because the poor condition of student's external factors impacted to their belief and self-determination level. They felt incompetence and had low value in their online learning.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Motivation has been identified giving influence in students' online learning in ED at Polsri. It was affected either intrinsically or/and extrinsically. However, the intrinsic motivation was indicated impacting more than its counterpart for the students in their online learning participation due to the co-exist case. Hence, it is recommended for the lecturers and institution to put more attention on external factors as they also integrated to students' self-determination in online learning. In addition, it is recommended for further research to conduct this study in quantitative method with more students from various department.

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