



SNAP TO READ

FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENTS' MOTIVATION IN ONLINE CLASS

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Abstract:

Some components of learning environment might affect learner behaviors during the teaching and learning process in both face-to-face and virtual learning environments. One of those components is students' motivation which is the best variable that affects students' learning. Research literature consistently suggests that EFL (English as a foreign language) students' motivation is affected by some teaching factors (Lamb, 2017). This study aims at determining the factors that increase students' motivation in their online courses at higher education levels. In this framework, the students who were in the fourth and sixth semesters were asked to explain their opinions about the factors increasing their motivation and what can be done to increase their motivation. The students have been having online classrooms for almost four semesters. The writer employs qualitative research as the method to conduct this study. To collect the data, an interview guide is designed. Then, the research results show that the teaching- learning process, teacher's competency, students' engagement, online learning environment/technical infrastructure and time management could affect students' motivation in their online courses. Besides, it is also stated that interactive assessment and evaluation would increase their motivation.

Keywords: *Online course, e-learning, virtual classroom, students' motivation*

INTRODUCTION

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the online course in this context has been implemented slightly. 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). Many questions appeared as to its effectiveness. As the learning environment changes, it impacts the teaching-learning processes. It is known that some of the components of the learning environment affect learner behaviors during the learning-teaching process in both face-to-face and virtual learning environments.

There are some aspects of the learning environment that might affect learner behaviors during the teaching and learning process in both face-to-face and virtual learning environments. One of those aspects is students' motivation which is the best variable that affects students' learning. Research literature consistently suggests that EFL (English as a foreign language) students' motivation is affected by some teaching factors (Lamb, 2017).

Motivation takes a crucial role in people's life because it may influence human actions. Lucas et al (2010) simply defined motivation as the individual's attitudes, desires, and efforts. In educational psychology, individual motivation is specifically integrated as a function of a person's thoughts that is encoding and transferring information into a belief; which later becomes the source of action (Dornyei, 1994). In this context, motivation is related to how an individual thinks about his/her abilities, possibilities, and potential could affect his/her future goal expectancy. In foreign language learning, motivation could be the main factor relating to the student's ability as well as their performance. As Dornyei (2005) stated that one of the key factors that influence the rate, continuity, and success of learning is motivation.

First, motivation supports the primary force to initiate foreign

language learning then it becomes a sustaining force to the continued series and long process of learning to acquire the target language. In learning activities, “motivation can influence what, when, and how we learn (Schunk, 2008). By having motivation in learning, students are likely to engage in activities they believe will help their learning. By being motivated, the student may achieve their long-term goals. Here, Dornyei (2005) mentioned that students who have motivation can accomplish long-term goals, and appropriate curricula and good teaching may also be taken to ensure student achievement.

Further, Madrid and Canado (2001) defined motivation as one’s internal state which is influenced by certain which generate favorable attitudes and interest toward a goal. This attitude could later create continued effort. In terms of language learning, especially for foreign language learners, once they meet their needs in learning a foreign language either intrinsically or extrinsically, they tend to be more motivated to learn. With sufficient motivation in learning a foreign language, students in Online classrooms would be delighted to practice more in the target language they learn. Thus, the students are likely to participate in classroom activities conducted in the virtual class.

In this research, the writer focuses on measuring motivation by considering the students’ motivational states within the classroom. Students’ motivational states are one of the various aspects of language learning context which may have a motivational impact on students (Dornyei, 1994). These aspects are including course-specific motivational components and teacher-specific motivational components. Other aspects which may also affect students’ motivation are students’ interests related to the target language, which include integrative and instrumental motivational subsystems. Students’ personal traits may also be considered as having motivational impacts on their motivation. These traits are including students’ need for achievement.

Further, motivation can be both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation comes from internal pressure such as interest in language learning, self-requirement, self-determination, self-regulation, and learning autonomy. While extrinsic motivation can be defined as external factors that may stimulate learners. It can be from teachers' behaviors, learning topics, teaching-learning strategies, and students' classroom interaction.

In online learning, distance education became a widespread phenomenon. It derives many benefits, including broader access to educational activities and learning opportunities. Indeed, it also concerns students' and instructors' skills (Campbell & Sarac, 2018). Online learning can be mean as a form of distance education made possible by technological devices used by isolated learners in their own settings away from the main education source (Hartnett, 2016). At this point, it has been implemented for almost two years in every field of education. Then, it takes some consideration of what might influence students' learning. Motivation is another question that calls for in-depth analysis when it comes to online learning environments (Burston, 2003).

Motivation in online courses has been getting attention in recent years (Hartnett et al., 2011; Richardson et al., 2015; Li & Tsai, 2017; Özhan & Kocadere, 2020). Moreover, Hartnett et al. (2011) describe motivation in online learning a complex phenomenon that is mostly affected by individual traits and specific contexts.

The main question for in this study was about students' motivation in a virtual platform which was new for all stakeholders. Understanding the factors that have an impact on students' perceptions could also help teachers to make informed decisions about the course and organization as well. By understanding their own motivation, the students can be more focused to achieve their goal in learning the target language. Besides, the finding can also be helpful for lecturers

to develop their teaching material which can encourage students' motivation to communicate in English fluently.

This could be an indication that online learning leads to crucial questions related to learners' motivation and such studies will gain greater popularity in the future. Based on the above overviews, this present study conducted with L2 learners from the fourth and sixth semesters aims to expand the understanding of how virtual classrooms influence L2 learning motivation and what kind of practical implications might be recommended to increase learner motivation. To this end, this study purposed to answer the question: What are the factors affecting L2 learning motivation in online classes?

METHOD

This present study used the qualitative research method. Qualitative research focuses on understanding people's beliefs, experiences, attitudes, and behaviors (Creswell, 2007). It used the descriptive method which is a procedure which to describe a factual phenomenon or characteristics of a certain individual, situation, or group in an area of population or a certain time in a systematic and accurate way (Danim; 2002).

This qualitative study aimed to explore the impact of online education on students' motivation using semi-structured interviews to understand their ideas about the motivating factors in online courses.

Data and Data Collection

The participants in this study were fourth and sixth-semester students of English Education Program who have been taking online classrooms for four semesters. In collecting the data, the researcher used a questionnaire and semi-structured interview on the topic of the advantages and disadvantages of online learning. It took place at the end of the semester.

The interview was conducted to L2 randomly chosen participants

who had filled out students' questionnaires to gain detailed and more in-depth information on factors affecting students' motivation in participating in their online classes.

Data Analysis

A thematic analysis was conducted from an inductive perspective, which lets the data lead the researcher to the coding and thematization process (Creswell, 2007). First, a line-by-line coding was carried out in order to document the thought flow of each participant in the semi-structured interview. Initial codes formed the themes. Then, the codes and themes were refined. Further, they were later organized under two major categories intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Then the data were categorized under subtheme of each category that are learning-teaching process, teacher roles, teacher-students engagement, online learning environment, time management, assessment and evaluation.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data derived from questionnaires and interview, it was revealed that the factors that significantly influence them to participate in the online classroom were generated into two themes both internal and external factors which have sub-theme covering learning-teaching process, roles of instructors, participation and attention, online learning environment, and time management.

The result shows that students referred to the external factors and internal factors as they elaborated on their motivation in an online L2 learning classroom. For the internal factor, the participants agreed that affective factors had an impact on their online L2 learning motivation. Students 3, 8 (S3, S8) mentioned that their motivation lied on his desire to keep studying even from distance learning. It is shown on this following interview.

(S3) I need to learn in online learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic is my ambition to gain knowledge. During this pandemic I need to adapt this situation in which it requires to have distance learning. Even, it is online, I need to study more.

(S8) being unable to study offline... it doesn't mean we need to stop learning because learning can be done everywhere as long as we have desire to learn

Since online learning requires learners' own awareness (Knowles & Kerkman, 2007), the students' participation in online learning was the result of their personal interest, belief, and ambition in form of intrinsic motivation. In addition, facing online learning, they need to be familiar with the platform. At this point, some of the participants were excited to experience and learn new technological for their distance learning.

In relation to the external factor, the data revealed that participants in general believed that face-to face classroom interaction was better than online classroom due to the external reasons. Some participants stated that they think that a face-to-face classroom, especially for classroom environment is more motivating than online environment. The results shows that the external factors are the teachers, their classmates, organizational and situational problems came out.

Regarding both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, the result of the questionnaire has been presented in the following table.

Table 1. Result questionnaire

| Theme | Sub-Theme | |
|---------------------------|--|----|
| Teaching-learning process | Giving feedback and correction directly | 32 |
| | Effective use form of platform discussion | 28 |
| | Providing courses discussions and question-answer method | 12 |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|-----|
| | Attractive and meaningful virtual classroom environment | 30 |
| | Relevant to everyday life using authentic material | 22 |
| | Systematic course plan | 11 |
| | Interactive class by comprising more discussions | 20 |
| | | 155 |
| Teacher roles | Able to be effective managing online class | 37 |
| | Facilitate students to learn effectively | 23 |
| | Give clear assessment on students' comprehensive | 18 |
| | The instructors being enthusiastic to the course | 20 |
| | | 98 |
| Teacher-students engagement | Encourage students to actively participate in online class | 40 |
| | Use different activity to encourage students' participation | 25 |
| | Consistently taking the students' opinions about the lesson | 20 |
| | | 84 |
| Online learning environment | Easy access to get the lesson from everywhere | 54 |
| | Written and oral communication in online class | 22 |
| | Get easy to participate in online classroom discussion | 19 |
| | Sustainable Internet | 23 |
| | | 118 |
| Time management | Well time management in the lesson | 23 |
| | Effective time for online classroom | 55 |
| | | 78 |

| | | |
|---------------------------|--|----|
| Assessment and evaluation | Alternative assessment and evaluation | 18 |
| | Providing questions as the examples for offline class | 25 |
| | Giving exams and quizzes in line to the online environment at the end of the class | 11 |
| | | 54 |

From the table 1, 86% of the participants mentioned teaching-learning process as the factor influencing students' motivation. The most significant factors of this aspect are giving feedback and correction directly, effective use form of Discussion Platform and attractive and meaningful virtual classroom.

In relation to the teaching roles, 56% of the participants agree that teacher roles may influence students' motivation. Two factors regarding to the teacher roles are managing online class effectively and facilitate students to learn. These are the instructors' characteristics related to their roles in the lesson. Further, the third important motivating factor of the online course is teacher-students engagement with 54%. As the lecturers encourage students to actively participate in online class and use different activity to encourage students' participation would then increase students' motivation in online courses.

Besides, related to online learning environment which deals with Online learning environment with the 65%. Easy access to get the lesson from everywhere, and sustainable Internet are indicated as the factors regarding to the Online learning environment. Further, related to "time management, it comprises two ideas like well time management in the lesson and effective time use for the virtual classroom. At last, 30% regarding to assessment and evaluation, the data shows that it comprises into two aspects that are alternative assessment and evaluation and providing questions as the examples for offline class.

In summary, the data shows that five important motivating factors of online courses are the learning-teaching process, teacher

roles, teacher-students engagement, Online learning environment, time management, assessment and evaluation are very important in motivating students during the online course studies. All of these factors can be defined as extrinsic motivation factors for the students in the online learning environment.

Then, this research also figured out the description on how to support the development of online courses so that learners will be motivated more in the future online course. E-learning system should be more flexible, and being aware of learning autonomy would be beneficial for students' independent learning as it supports online learning environments. In this context, flexibility means the accessibility of e-learning which can be accessed from any circumstance, its time and location.

Another point is related to students' learning autonomy. The research results clearly point out that learning independence can create motivation in the online learning environment. Styer (2007) stated that factors such as teacher's enthusiasm, the relevance of course materials, well planned and organized class sessions, instructor's expectations at an appropriate difficulty level, students' active involvement in classroom learning, use of various instructional techniques used, warm and friendly teachers, use of real, concrete, and clear examples to motivate students.

Further, in terms of teaching and learning process, the process of assessment and evaluation should be considered as another key points in online class. As classroom has been changed online, the assessment should come along regarding to the classroom setting.

In summary, it is known that motivation is a central aspect in the learning-teaching process. It is obvious that the higher the motivation level is, the better the attention, engagement and learning will be. For this reason, analysis of the motivation factors is very important to improve the learning-teaching process in online courses.

Results of this research show that some factors increase the students' motivation in an online learning environment. Thus, motivation factors that affect students' success in e-learning need to be investigated and understood better. The results of this research will also help educators, who intend to plan, organize and deliver qualified e-learning instruction aimed at improving students' learning.

CONCLUSION

Language learning environments both online and offline should take into consideration as one factor that could influence students' motivation. As it is clearly mentioned by Dörnyei (2020) suggests the concept of motivation is closely associated with engagement and motivation must be ensured in order to achieve student engagement. In online learning, Hartnett et al. (2011) describe motivation in online learning a complex phenomenon that is mostly affected by individual traits and specific contexts. It is important to understand students' motivation in having online learning. Considering what motivates online learners is needed since they get motivated, they are more likely to engage in activities that might help them to learn.

From the result, it can be concluded that the role of lecturers is the most important factor for creating students' motivation in online courses including teacher's engagement, being attractive and interactive teachers would help them to learn online. Besides, it also points out that if the teacher can boost students' autonomous learning, it might build up their independency in learning which may affect them to have a long-life learning. As it is proposed by Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) that student autonomy improves the quality of language learning, and helps students to prepare individuals for life-long learning.

Further, providing students with relevant course materials, well-planned and organized class sessions, also motivates them to learn. Thus, designing authentic material would be beneficial for their

learning as it helps them to be more motivated in learning English. As Pinter (2006) states authentic material is the way to motivate students to learn English. It is stated that authentic material is more interesting because it places more emphasis on delivering messages and not merely teaching language (Gilmore; 2007). Along with using authentic material, the use of various instructional techniques can also motivate them. Hence, they can be more actively involved in classroom learning, The most interesting result is that providing more communication and collaboration between students would increase students' motivation since they would not get bored. Hence, they want to take more responsibilities in the online environment. Besides, three important factors such as the online learning environment/ technical infrastructure, process of the course and measurement and evaluation are very important to motivate students during online course studies.

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