

STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AND INTERACTION BASED ON LOCAL CULTURE IN ONLINE LEARNING

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to analyze students' learning motivations and their interactions and collaborations in a virtual learning environment based on local culture at Universitas Terbuka. This study used a qualitative method with interviews from students with different cultural backgrounds in Indonesia. The findings indicated that motivation played an important role in participating in online learning. The cultural diversity of participants has a positive impact on multiethnic interactions and broadens the perspective of knowledge and enriches the diversity of the learning environment. Furthermore, the findings also suggested that interaction and collaboration between students and tutors could be in the form of feedback given by the tutors to students, also informal interactions among students on social media. However, interaction and collaboration rarely occurred because students only responded to discussions and assignments given individually, and did not respond to other students in the discussions.

Keywords: online learning, local culture, motivation, interaction

1 INTRODUCTION

Online pedagogy is a teaching philosophy, approach, or strategy designed to facilitate online education within a digital context. It encompasses a range of methods, techniques, and practices for delivering academic courses online (or in blended/hybrid formats), where students are physically separated from the instructor and their peers. Online pedagogy acknowledges the unique benefits and limitations of the digital learning environment. It focuses on how knowledge, skills, and professional practice are taught.

There is a noticeable distinction between socially active and inactive classroom members. The former are primarily interested in learning, while the latter are more focused on simply passing the course. As a result, more attention is given to understanding why inactiveness still exists in today's university classrooms (Omodan, 2022). One factor that influences student engagement in learning is motivation. This is especially important in online courses, where students tend to contribute less (Kyewski & Krämer in Meşe & Sevilen, 2021).

Encouraging students to be more active in online learning is one of the main responsibilities of educators. In distance education, where students come from diverse backgrounds, teachers must be adaptive to effectively engage them. Both educators and students are concerned about the impact of connecting teaching and learning more closely with society and the environment. Teaching and learning experiences that provide value in the form of meaningful learning outcomes are more likely to attract and retain students. Therefore, teachers need to consider students' cultural backgrounds. To employ culturally responsive pedagogies, teachers must incorporate the cultural knowledge, experiences, and frames of reference of ethnically diverse students to make learning outcomes more relevant and effective.

This approach requires a reflective, student-centered approach to teaching rather than adhering to a set curriculum or fixed guidelines. A further challenge lies in the fact that culturally responsive teaching requires educators to critically evaluate their own practices and institutional frameworks, while also extending their understanding of students beyond the classroom into their communities and homes (Ikukulksa-Hulme et al., 2022). Teachers often bring their own cultural backgrounds and expectations into their teaching, which may not align with those of their students. One way to address this issue is to actively listen to students in meaningful and systematic ways, making necessary adaptations to ensure their voices and lived experiences are embedded in their learning (Ikukulksa-Hulme et al., 2021).

Given this context, the purpose of this study is to analyze students' learning motivations, as well as their interactions and collaborations within a virtual learning environment, based on local culture at Universitas Terbuka.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of motivation in supporting the success of distance learners has become a focus of various studies in open, flexible, and distance learning. Most research findings agree that motivation plays a crucial role in determining learners' achievement and persistence. Furthermore, they argue that motivation is not only a necessary condition for success but also a sufficient one. Motivated learners will overcome situational and time barriers, find ways to develop appropriate skills, and handle the stress of learning with minimal additional external support (Simpson, 2008).

There are different types of motivation based on the different reasons or goals that give rise to action. The most basic distinction is between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation.

Intrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable, meanwhile, extrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome.

According to Social Development Theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2000a, 2000b), intrinsic motivation in learning focuses on three psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The first is the need for autonomy. Autonomous students choose to engage in learning because the subject and activities align with their interests, curiosity, and values (Guiffrida, 2006). For example, students are considered autonomous when they self-regulate the allocation of time and energy for their studies (Niemic & Ryan, 2009). The second need is competence, or the need to effectively interact with the environment (Guiffrida, 2006). For instance, students are deemed competent when they feel capable of meeting the challenges of their tasks. Satisfaction of both autonomy and competence needs is crucial for maintaining intrinsic motivation in learning (Niemic & Ryan, 2009). The third requirement is relatedness, or the need to establish close and secure relationships with others (Guiffrida, 2006). People tend to behave appropriately when they feel valued by important individuals to whom they want to feel connected, whether it is family, peer groups, or community (Ryan & Deci, 2000a, 2000b).

In the classroom context, motivation is closely related to students' perception that tutors genuinely like, respect, and value them. Previous studies have shown that students who report such relatedness are more likely to participate actively and engage in challenging tasks, while those who feel less valued by their instructors tend to be passive and unresponsive, requiring external control or coercion to learn (Niemic & Ryan, 2009).

Morris et al. (2005) researched predictors of retention in online learning at the University System of Georgia. Discriminant analysis revealed that locus of control significantly predicted student retention with 74.5% accuracy (measured using the internal-external locus of control scale or Rotter's I-E scale, 1966). Locus of control indicates the difference between internal and external motivation. Individuals with internal motivation believe that events occur due to their own interests, needs, and behaviors. Those with external motivation believe that events are determined by environmental factors, such as rewards and punishments.

Similarly, Parker (2003; 1999) also reported that students' internal locus of control was a positive indicator of persistence in online learning. On the other hand, Holder (2007) explained that students who completed online courses tended to have higher self-efficacy, emotional

support, and better time and study management. Perceived emotional support contributed significantly to the difference in environmental scales between those who persisted and those who did not. Having a supportive group of friends and family and knowing that they are not alone in the learning process is a key factor related to student perseverance. Those with high self-efficacy in learning and performance had higher expectations of success in their programs and a strong sense of their ability to succeed in their new learning environment. Additional key factors for student success included effective time and study management, good study habits, consistent reading, completing weekly assignments, and managing time and activities better than those who did not persist.

Meanwhile, according to Self Determination Theory (SDT), extrinsic motivation refers to various behaviors performed to achieve outcomes that are separate from the activity itself (Niemic & Ryan, 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2000a, 2000b; Vallerand & Bissonnette, 1992). There are four types of extrinsic motivation that can be arranged along a continuum of self-determination, based on the process of internalization, which transforms externally motivated behaviors into self-determined ones. Internalization involves assimilating and reorganizing external regulations into internal processes (Sungur & Senler, 2010). The four types of extrinsic motivation are: (a) external regulation, (b) introjected regulation, (c) identified regulation, and (d) integrated regulation (Niemic & Ryan, 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2000a, 2000b; Vallerand & Bissonnette, 1992).

External regulation is the least autonomous form of extrinsic motivation. This behavior occurs to meet external demands or to receive external rewards or avoid punishments (Ryan & Deci, 2000a, 2000b; Vallerand & Bissonnette, 1992). For example, a student might study for an exam to get a good grade but may not seek additional information on the topic once the exam is over (Niemic & Ryan, 2009). The next type of extrinsic motivation is introjected regulation, where students begin to internalize the reasons for learning. However, this form of internalization is not fully self-determined, as it is driven by personal rewards and constraints imposed by oneself rather than by others (Deci et al., 1991; Vallerand & Bissonnette, 1992). For example, a student who initially studied to perform well on an exam may now study to feel proud or to avoid feeling guilty for not studying enough. In this type of motivation, ego involvement, which refers to an individual's self-esteem being contingent on their performance, is internalized, causing the student to feel internal pressure to study to avoid shame or feel worthy (Niemic & Ryan,

2009). Both external regulation and introjected regulation are considered to have an external locus of causality and negative effects on learning (Guiffreda, 2006; Niemiec & Ryan, 2009).

Identified regulation involves motivation to engage in an activity because it is personally considered important or valuable. Through identification, the regulation process becomes more integrated into the self, making the individual engage in the activity more willingly and independently. For instance, a student might study anatomy and physiology because mastering this information is essential for future competency in the medical field (Deci et al., 1991; Niemiec & Ryan, 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2000a, 2000b; Sungur & Senler, 2010).

The final type of extrinsic motivation is the most autonomous form of extrinsic motivation, known as integrated regulation. Integrated regulation involves identifying the importance of a behavior and integrating it with other aspects of oneself (Sungur & Senler, 2010). For example, a student might plan to attend college because it aligns with other aspects of their self-concept and personal goals. Both identified regulation and integrated regulation are considered to originate from and align with the self, having an internal locus of causality (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009; Sungur & Senler, 2010). Integrated regulation is related to intrinsic motivation because both are forms of self-determined, autonomous regulation. However, intrinsic motivation and integrated regulation differ. Intrinsic motivation is characterized by interest in the activity itself, while integrated regulation is characterized by the personal importance of the activity for achieving a valuable outcome (Deci et al., 1991).

Meanwhile, culture generally encompasses how individuals think, behave, and act, which are distinctive characteristics of a particular nation or society (Ihromi, 1999). Elements of culture include language, knowledge, laws, beliefs, religion, food preferences, music, work habits, taboos, and more. It forms the unique identity of a nation or society. The relationship between cultural identity and learning motivation is further illustrated by several education experts. According to Samovar, Porter, & McDaniel (2010), culture influences how people interact, behave, and view the world. Fordham & Ogbu; Fryer & Torelli (as cited in the Center on Education Policy, 2012) stated that the desire to maintain a distinct cultural identity in opposition to the dominant group can negatively affect academic motivation, most notably when high-achieving African American students are accused by their peers of 'acting white.'

Graham and Hudley (as cited in the Center on Education Policy, 2012) further explain, several studies have explored how social and cultural contexts can affect students' motivations or

aspirations. For example, some researchers assert that experiences with or perceptions of discrimination can damage the confidence of students of color and contribute to academic disengagement. Based on these viewpoints, the desire to maintain a unique cultural identity can impact students' motivation and aspirations.

Theories of education consider the interactions between students and teachers, between the state and the educational system, and between universities and the economic, technological, and social development of society (Lunevich, 2021). With one exception, open teaching and open pedagogy are identical to the previous ideas. Open pedagogy and open teaching place particular emphasis on the latter, whereas open scholarship covers a wide range of scholarly practices, including both research and teaching. Couros defines open teaching as the facilitation of learning experiences that are open, transparent, collaborative, and social. Open teachers are advocates of a free and open knowledge society, and support their students in the critical consumption, production, connection, and synthesis of knowledge through the shared development of learning networks (Veletsianos, 2016 p. 148). It has been discovered that encouraging social, collaborative, open, and transparent learning experiences is a key component of open teaching. Through the collaborative creation of learning networks, open teachers support their students in the critical consumption, production, connection, and synthesis of knowledge. They support a society that is open to all forms of knowledge. (Cronin, C., & MacLaren, I. (2018).

3 METHOD

This study used a qualitative method research design. We interviewed students from Kupang and Pontianak, intending to gather information about their perspectives of their learning motivation and interaction in the online tutorial. Data was collected from a semi structured individual interview with eight students.

We analyzed and interpreted the interviews using a bottom-up, inductive approach in which we conducted analysis of the data provided for emergent themes. We used an open coding approach (Quartaroli, 2009), by reading and re-reading interview transcripts, letting the codes and themes emerge from the words in the text. Codes were then categorically grouped, and finally, themes were developed that represent the content of each code grouping. This can also be described as axial coding or focus coding (Quartaroli, 2009). Through this process of reading, coding, and

focus coding, we created categories that could be used to respond to characterizations or themes and answer the research questions.

4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of qualitative research data, all informants indicated that they consider motivation to play a critical role in following the online tutorial process from start to finish. One opinion about the importance of motivation was expressed by student A. "...in my opinion, motivation ranks 9 out of 10..." (Student A, 2023). Additionally, student A also mentioned the aspects that motivate her to engage in independent learning, such as the necessity to study independently. However, the tutor's responsiveness in addressing discussions and assignments in the tutorial becomes a crucial factor in increasing her motivation, as she stated:

Independent learning motivates me to continue my studies at Universitas Terbuka because each discussion and assignment has a deadline. If I lack motivation, it's mostly due to the tutor's slow response in e-learning when students ask questions through the chat feature." (Student A, 2023).

In the classroom context, motivation is closely related to students' perception that tutors genuinely like, respect, and value them. Previous studies have shown that students who report such relatedness are more likely to participate actively and engage in challenging tasks, while those who feel less valued by their instructors tend to be passive and unresponsive, requiring external control or coercion to learn (Niemic & Ryan, 2009).

Research findings identified two types of learning motivation among Universitas Terbuka student, namely intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. According to the data, student's participation in an online tutorial was influenced by intrinsic factors, as expressed by student,

... online learning at UT is very helpful to me, and I am very satisfied because the learning system is different from other universities, and at UT, I can easily understand the material. (The online tutorial) enhances my independent learning, even though I only attended UT for three semesters (equivalent), everything I learned is in line with what is taught in the lectures and applicable to real-world needs (Student D, 2023).

Intrinsic motivation is driven by the satisfaction with the quality of the distance learning system and its relevance to daily life and workplace needs. Theoretically, learners who are intrinsically motivated engage in activities for the inherent pleasure and satisfaction derived from them. Thus, a student who is intrinsically motivated attends classes because they find it enjoyable and

rewarding to learn more about a particular subject, rather than being influenced by external reasons such as good grades, rewards, or avoiding negative consequences (Deci et al., 1991; Ryan & Deci, 2000a, 2000b; Sungur & Senler, 2010; Vallerand & Bissonnette, 1992; Vallerand et al., 1992).

Extrinsic motivation was also highlighted in the findings, as expressed by two students who stated that their participation in online tutorials was driven by the desire to achieve good grades, “I am motivated to participate in online tutorials to get good grades...” (Student C, 2023). The same response was also expressed by another student, “I am also motivated to achieve good grades” (Student D, 2023).

These interview results indicated the presence of a lack of motivation or apathy. Apathy occurs when there is a lack of appreciation for an activity, a sense of incompetence in performing it, or disbelief that the activity will produce the desired outcomes. Apathy is associated with learned helplessness and poor academic service performance. Self Determination Theory is believed to address this state of lacking intrinsic or extrinsic motivation, which is defined as 'a-motivation' (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 61). SDT emphasizes the intrinsic human need to learn and grow. Therefore, the most meaningful and successful learning occurs when students are intrinsically motivated (Guiffreda, 2006; Niemiec & Ryan, 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2000a, 2000b; Sungur & Senler, 2010).

The findings identified a-motivation (a decrease in motivation) due to the lack of active engagement from tutors, system issues, and peer behaviour during the online learning process, as stated by student B and student C: “My motivation decreases because my peers are also less active. (Motivation) can be hindered because the server often goes down, and when the tutor is not active”.

This study found a significant link between motivation and cultural background. The findings revealed that participants felt their cultural background influenced their online learning experience, as described by student D, who stated,

Cultural background greatly influences online learning because students have distinct learning goals and respect each other’s perspectives. The diversity of learners in an online tutorial environment is an essential factor to consider. Various cultural, social, economic, and skill backgrounds bring a wealth of experiences and perspectives to the class. Engaging

diverse learners can enhance discussions, broaden viewpoints, and create a richer learning environment.

These interview results indicated that the cultural diversity of online tutorial participants positively impacts multiethnic interactions, broadens knowledge perspectives, and enriches the learning environment.

In an online learning environment, interactions and collaborations occur through various digital tools and platforms. For example, online discussions allow students and tutors to engage in forums, ask questions, and debate topics. Tutors provide feedback on student discussions and assignments, while students can give feedback on each other's work during tutorials, promoting peer collaboration and learning. The interviews showed that tutors play an essential role in supporting students and creating a warm and interactive online class environment. This encourages students not only to focus on their answers but also to engage with their peers, exchange comments, and collaborate more effectively.

Other forms of interaction and collaboration in online learning include social learning, where students can engage informally through social media or group messaging, fostering a sense of community and shared learning experiences. This was evident from interviews with students in Kupang, as expressed below: "...We have a group. In this group, we discuss and share with each other. The group is just for us in East Nusa Tenggara, not yet with those outside [the province]" (Student E). A similar opinion was shared by another student: "...We have formed a smaller group among those of us who have known each other since the early semesters" (Student F).

Moreover, interactions and collaborations can occur through asynchronous learning. Students access course materials, discussions, and assignments at their own pace, interacting with the content without the need for simultaneous participation. However, some students indicated that there was still a lack of interaction and collaboration in online tutorials. Students still conducted tutorial activities individually and in a one-way manner, as described by the following students, "In the tutorial, we join the live session according to the tutor's schedule. Because we access it individually, it's a solitary experience" (Student H). Similar response was said from another student "...It's still passive because it's one-way" (Student E).

Students suggested several ways to increase interaction and collaboration in online tutorials. One suggestion was to alternate online tutorial classes with webinars, allowing for synchronous

interactions and collaborations. They also recommended practices such as video introductions to get to know each other and requiring students and tutors to provide feedback and responses during discussions, as suggested by a student: “In the future, it would be better to improve online tutorials, whether in terms of discussions, assignments, responses, or feedback between students and tutors” (Student F).

Furthermore, students suggested grouping learners based on regions and cultural backgrounds to encourage interaction and collaboration, as argued by another student: “...If grouped according to our area... like asking specific questions for students from Kupang... it might motivate us to respond and explore more. For example, we could be given a specific case relevant to our region. That way, we can interact among ourselves, because interaction is already lacking within the Kupang group, let alone with those outside Kupang or with different cultural backgrounds” (Student H).

The challenges faced by students include a lack of collaboration and interaction within the online tutorial learning mode, which prevents students from understanding the cultural diversity of their peers. They can only communicate through the discussion forums, and even then, it’s just to respond to the discussion topics without any real interaction with one another. Overall, the nature of interactions in an online learning environment is diverse, aiming to facilitate active participation, engagement, and collaboration despite the physical distance.

5 CONCLUSION

Motivation played a crucial role in maintaining student engagement throughout the entire process of online tutorials. The cultural diversity of online tutorial participants positively influences multiethnic interactions, broadens knowledge perspectives, and enriches the learning environment. In the context of online learning, interactions and collaborations did not always occur between tutors and students. Interaction could take the form of feedback provided by tutors to students, or informal exchanges among students through social media platforms such as WhatsApp. However, in many cases, these interactions and collaborations were limited because students tended to respond individually to discussions and assignments without engaging with their peers in the discussion forums.

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