

Analyzing the students' motivation to learn English

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Abstract

Identifying motivational factors in every field is always important. Likewise, identifying the student's motivation to learn English is important so that the teachers or the other relevant education stakeholders can take more specific action regarding their students' motivation. Especially, since motivation is a driving force affecting human's life, the attempt to analyze the factors affecting the students' motivation is always important.

The present study was conducted in a private telecommunication college. The research method employed was a survey research with additional limited interview. The number of the participants recruited for the study was 40 students. The students recruited were the active students who are currently studying in their fourth/fifth semester.

Of the whole factors questioned to the students, the lecturers were found to be the most significant factors affecting the students' motivation. The other factors affecting the students' motivation were the teaching media, such as internet and library.

The finding also confirms the previous studies suggesting the important role of teachers/lecturers in serving the students. The students also indicated that the role of lecturers in facilitating their learning process, which was getting more complicated during the pandemic, as the most important factor leading to better motivation. Lastly, in terms of relationship, parents were found to be important as they could possibly support the students' spirit to learn English regardless of their learning context.

Keywords: Analyzing, the students' motivation, learn, English

I. INTRODUCTION

Motivation is the driving force enabling someone to do more than others. The concept of motivation as the one which can trigger a person's effort to do much harder than others has been widely accepted by lots of scholars [1], [2]. The need to analyze the students' motivation is important since it can possibly provide the related stakeholders with more information on factors affecting their students' English learning intensity.

Unfortunately, whatsoever, the studies focusing on motivational factors are pretty scarce to find. Most of the studies tend to focus on specific but limited factors affecting the students' learning process, such as the use of teaching media in EFL [3, p. 71], the role of teacher in EFL [4, p. 30], and the role of parents in their children's learning process [5, p. 17], [6, p. 1]. Even though the above studies can possibly highlight the issue of motivation partially, the findings indicated are limited in terms of the number of variables analyzed.

In fact, the variables such as parents, teachers, media, are all closely related to the students' motivation. The present study aimed to incorporate the above variables simultaneously, thus highlighting more factors compared with the previous studies. With more analyzed factors, it is expected that that the more comprehensive findings on motivational drives affecting the students' motivation can be figured out.

The research questions are formulated as the followings:

- 1) What are the students' perceptions toward motivational learning process when learning English?
- 2) What are the most influential determinants affecting the students' motivation in learning English?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The role of English in today's world

The role of English has been dominating the world due to its importance [7], [8]. The perceived importance of English in the world, in some instances, is due to the existence of English as lingua franca or the language which is used by those having different linguistic differences [7].

Harmer defines that Lingua Franca is a language which is used by the two interacting speakers whose languages or one of the languages is not English [7]. The other term indicating the importance of English is "The global language". A global language is the term given to the language which is widely accepted in the world, apart from the different formal recognition given to the language [8]. For instance, despite being recognized as the foreign language, the use of English in Indonesia has been commonly accepted as the language of business or travelling [8], thus confirming its existence as the global language. Further, despite its recognition as a mere foreign language, there are many schools or colleges which accommodate English as one of the mandatory subjects to be learned by the students.

2.2 The use of English in supporting Technology and Research

The use of English in the field of technology and research has been recognized by the scholars [9], [10]. The use of English in ICT is undoubtedly due to the role of English as the most commonly communicated means of communication [8]. The main reason for the use of English is also because the researchers are in need for having much wider exposure in order to gain more recognition from the scientific communities.

With reference to the above importance, one privately funded ICT college in Jakarta has also adopted the extensive English syllabus requiring the students to learn English with more learning hours compared with the other colleges. Despite the extensive syllabus and more rigorous teaching methods, the students' motivations tended to indicate different degrees. Some of the students were identified to have high motivation to learn, while the rest tended to show passive behaviors indicating their relatively low motivation in learning English. The present study attempted to highlight the issue of the students' motivation to learn English by accommodating some important variables (e.g., media, teacher, parents, etc.). The above mentioned privately

funded college was chosen as the venue of the present study. Some of its actively learning students were recruited as the participants in the present study.

2.3 Motivational factors in learning English

Motivation has been recognized as one of the most important factors affecting humans' behavior [2]. Motivation is generally considered as a driving factor which enables the bearer to do much more intensively [2], [11], [12]. Some of the motivating factors generally vary, such as external reward, recognition, and so forth.

Motivation generally has three kinds of elements, such as energy, direction, and persistence. Energy is related to the intensity, or the spirit that someone has. Further, direction is the way the motivated person will direct their effort to do. Lastly, persistence is related to the continuation of someone's effort to accomplish the goal [1 pp. 430-431].

In sum, motivation can be generated by either internal or external drive [12]. The internal drive is generally caused by the need that someone has, such as the need to learn English in order to be accepted in much more rewarding jobs [1], [2]. On the other hand, the external drive is usually generated by certain factors outside of the person making person do something based on the external influence [1], [2]. Pedagogically, being internally motivated is much better in that the bearer will not commonly expect any external reward [12].

The present study aimed to identify the students' motivational drives so that the reasons or the factors affecting the students' motivation can be found. Pedagogically, scholars have admitted that there are some factors which may affect the students' accomplishment such as parental support, reward, teachers, and so forth. Identifying the student's motivational factors can provide education stakeholders with useful information in that it can possibly allow the teachers or administrators to anticipate the potential disruption affecting the students' learning process.

As one of the most learned languages in the world, learning English has been considered mandatory for student in every college in Indonesia. Learning English has been recognized as one of the prerequisites in higher curriculums of all universities in Indonesia. Despite its importance, whatsoever, the students' accomplishments in English have resulted in varying degrees. As one of the predictors of the students' learning success, analyzing motivation can provide the researchers, teachers, or administrators with more complete information regarding the students' driving forces in learning English.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

Basically, the present study was not an experiment. The present study merely focused on identifying the students' motivational factors in order to provide more natural information on the students' psychological condition when learning English. By having relatively natural pictures on the students' motivation, the teachers/lecturers or the other related parties can possibly get more data on the possibility of the students' academic tendency as well as potential cure in dealing with the students' degrading morale due to the students' declining motivation when learning English.

More specifically, the present study was conducted in survey research [13], [14]. Survey research was considered as the simple research enabling the researcher to identify factors which are considered important. Further, the use of Likert scale options can also provide the respondents with much more convenient options to choose their opinion on their motivational factors [15]. The questions directed to the students were delivered in a Like scale so that it can provide the students with more convenient time to express their mind.

Despite being limited in the choices, the use of scales allows the researcher to identify important factors which may be useful to support the research findings. Based on the factors offered by various scholars [7], [12], [16], the researcher listed some of the factors to be administered and questioned to the students. In this

case, the possible factors/variables affecting their learning intensity were simultaneously presented so that the students can figure out the most important factors affecting their motivational drive.

3.1 Data collection Procedure

3.1.1 The participants were recruited purposively. The term purposive is related to the researcher's consideration that the participants recruited could provide more relevant information for the researcher [14]. The main factors being considered as the purposive factors were the students' willingness to accept the role as the participants and their willingness to have their perceptions exposed on the survey study.

3.1.2 The number of the students recruited was 40 students from two telecommunication classes. The students recruited are active students and currently studying in semester IV-V.

3.1.3 Except for the students' willingness to join the study, the other variables, such as age, interest, intelligence, and gender were not specifically analyzed. Further study may cover these factors as the students' interest or intelligence in English might also affect the students' motivation.

3.1.4 Prior to the administration of the survey research, the would-be participants were given sufficient information regarding the study and its potential benefit for the lecturers and the institution if they were able to fill the survey honestly.

3.1.5 The instruments of the present study were of two kinds: a) The simplified survey was made in Google form to be shared through WA, and b) Limited interview conducted to the selected participants whose answers were relevant or important to the findings of the study.

3.1.6 The participants were also informed on their right to remain anonymous.

The survey research administered to the students was specifically presented below:

NO	FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENTS' MOTIVATION	CHOICES			
		SD	D	A	SA
Students' perceptions toward motivational learning process					
1.	Learning independently (e.g., through on-line means, learning in library) improves my motivation.				
2.	Learning in a team/group (e.g., discussing with friends, cooperating in a project) improves my motivation.				
3.	Learning with technology (e.g., using learning web, language laboratory) improves my motivation.				
4.	Learning under teacher's guidance improves my motivation				
Students' perceptions toward some influential factors affecting their motivation					
5.	The purpose of learning in this college is the most important factor affecting my motivation.				
6.	The most important factor affecting my motivation is my parents.				
7.	The most important factor affecting my motivation is my teachers.				
8.	The most important factor affecting my motivation is teaching media.				
9.	The most important factor affecting my motivation is my classmates.				

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Students' perceptions toward motivational learning process

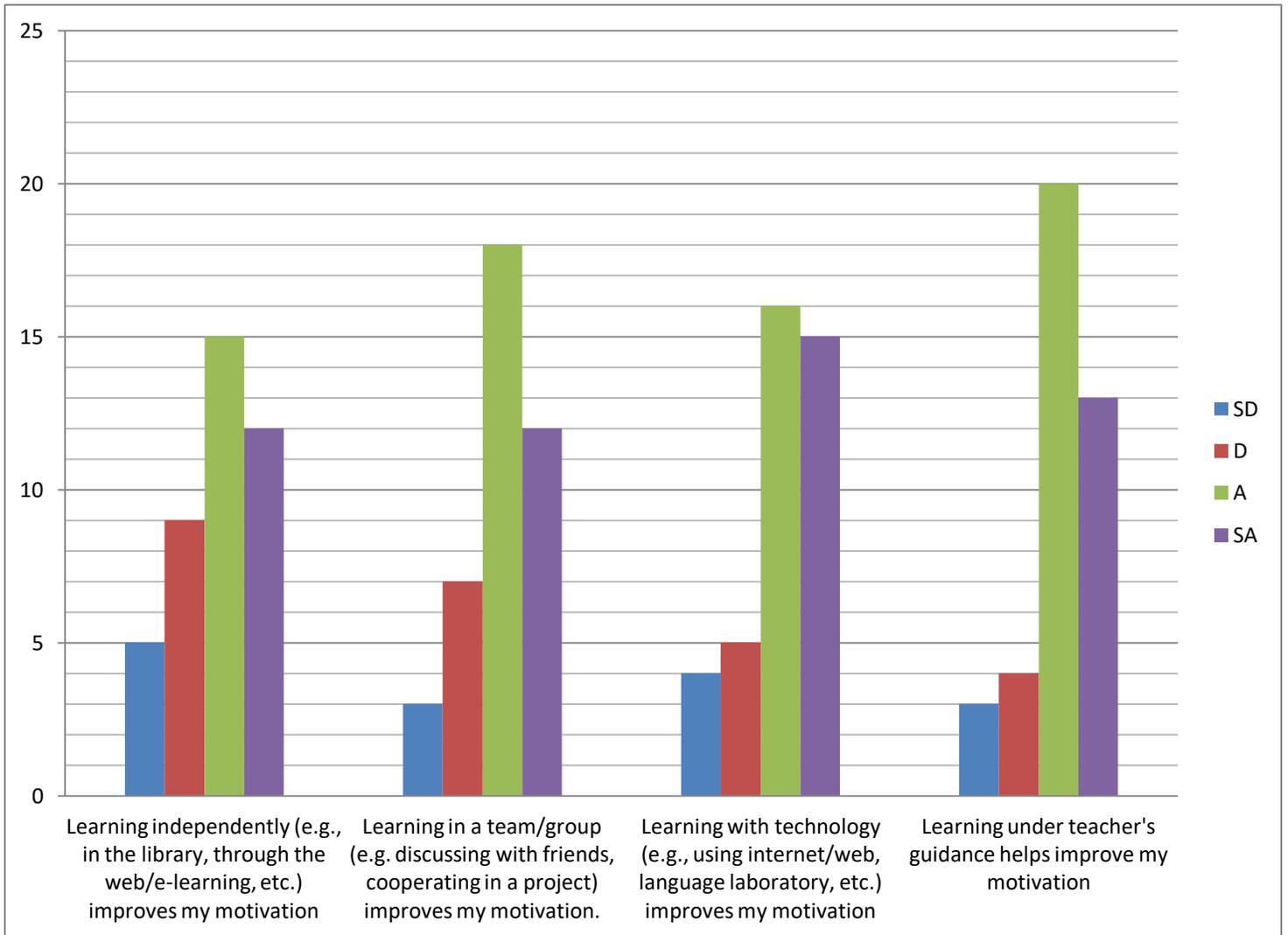
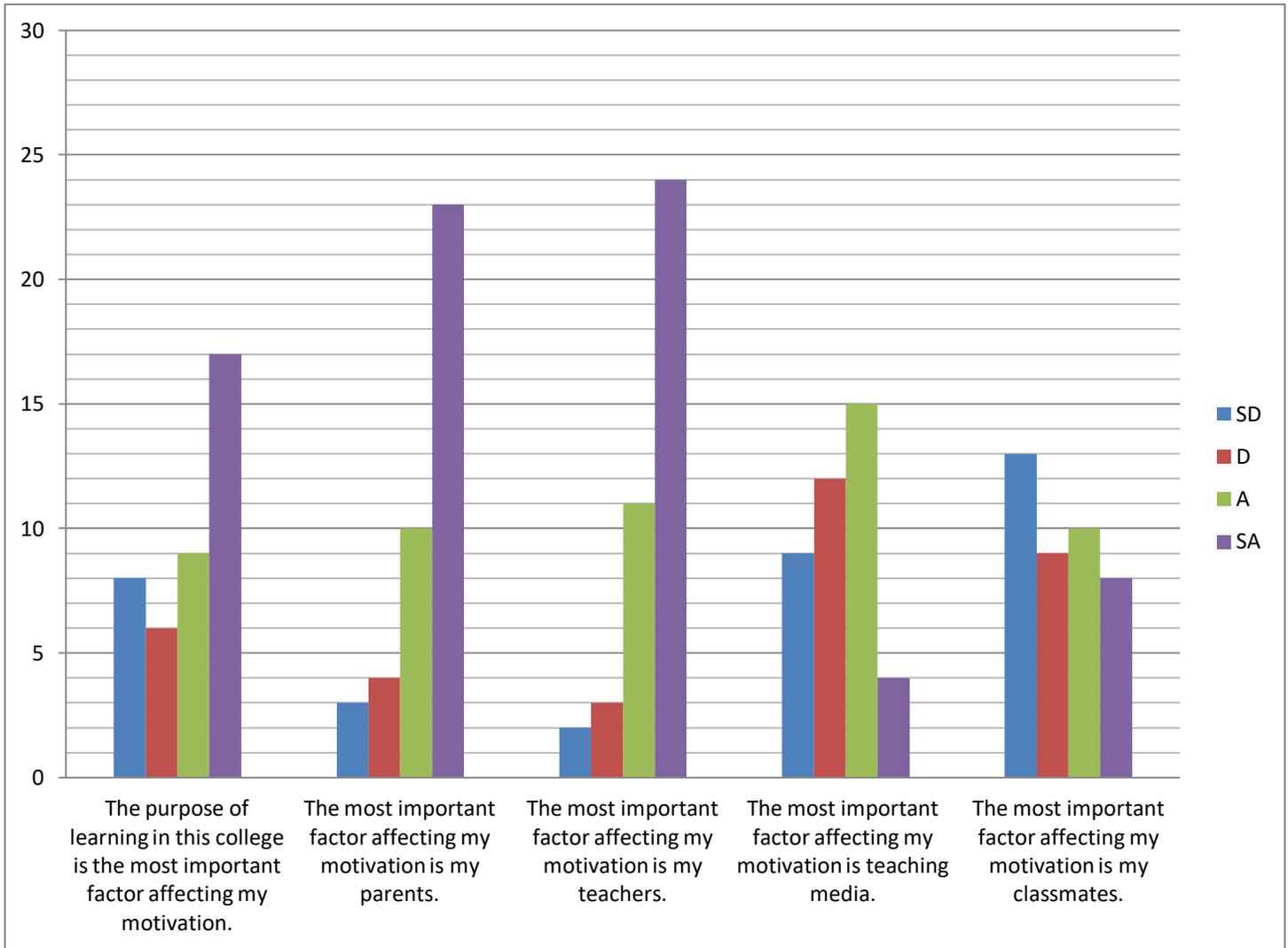


Table 2. Students' perceptions toward the most influential determinants affecting their motivations



4.1 Discussion

4.1.1 Independent learning vs. cooperative learning

The first table indicates the facts that basically, cooperative learning is perceived more useful by the students. This finding confirms what Johnson and Johnson [17, p.70] have suggested before in that there are some factors which make cooperative learning effective in the classroom. The first factor is positive interdependence among the students who are working together. The second is verbal, face to face interaction among the students when doing their task together. The third element is individual accountability. In this case, being in the group does not necessary mean to reduce personal responsibility, in fact, the students will probably be more driven to be more responsible for their work. The last element is “group processing” [17 p. 70] which refers to how well the group is getting along together

Empirically, Meier [18] found that cooperative learning was proven much better than individual learning. One of the advantages that he identified, for instance, the role of the higher achievers could not only perform better but also mentor those having lower achievement during the cooperative learning.

4.1.2 Technology vs. teachers

Despite the students’ positive responses toward technology as the important media to learn English, they indicated the greater emphasis on the role of the teachers as the ones who were able to facilitate their learning process. This finding confirms the previous studies indicating the role of the teacher as the one who is in charge in supporting the learning success, regardless of the learning material/media used for the students.

Firwana’s study [19], for instance, indicated that the role of teacher was proven influential in affecting students’ attitudes. Likewise, Harmer [7], Brown [12] have also confirmed that teacher’s role which embraces several respects as an important factor in supporting the students’ learning activity. Lastly, Murtiningsih [20, p. 19] ensured that teachers belong to one of the most important factors affecting teaching and learning process. The important role of the teacher is mainly due to the fact that teacher is the one who is in charge with the planning of the learning process in terms of curriculum or syllabus and its application.

4.1.3 Parents as inseparable factors affecting the students’ motivation

Despite having varied responses, most of the participants placed high importance on their parental role to support them. In short, the finding of the present study confirms Lin’s study [21]. With reference to the foreign language learning context, for instance, Lin’s finding indicated that strong support from parents was highly critical to allow their children to choose certain foreign language to learn. Specifically, Lin’s finding on students’ attitudes and motivation to learn mandarin in American context revealed that most of the participants generally did not have a concrete idea of what Mandarin learning was. Therefore, their parents became the most important determinants who could affect the participants’ behaviors in learning Mandarin [21]. In the case of one participant that he interviewed, for instance, Lin [21, pp. 78-79] found that the interviewed participant was externally motivated by her parents who introduced Mandarin lesson directly to his house. This interesting introduction made his participant convinced to choose mandarin as the foreign language to learn in the future.

The present study also confirms Arshad, Shahzadi, and Mahmood’s research [22, pp. 301-302] indicating that most master students of NUML Islamabad, Pakistan preferred to have parental support with them while attending their college learning process. They also perceived that there were many things that their parents could do to support their children academic life, such as attending their children’s college’s extra activities or participating in certain conferences for the students’ parents.

V. Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that basically the students considered the teachers as the most important factors in supporting their motivation to learn English. Besides, the role of parents in supporting the student's motivation is also considered significant. The students also considered that learning in group is considered more helpful for them. Despite the increasingly important role of technology in the modern world, the role of teacher is proven inseparable in supporting the students' learning process. Further, the important role of teacher is also relevant to the student's preference on group work/cooperative learning; this indicates that such learning process should be conducted under the teacher's guidance, instead of being done independently. The claim that indicated their disagreement with independent learning model/on-line is also relevant to the claims indicating their need on the role model when learning English. This finding confirms the role of teachers which is continuously needed regardless of the changes of the learning method or model, particularly during the pandemic. Last but not least, the finding indicates the students' emphasis on their learning objective in the future. It is certainly important that the students be aware of their purpose in learning English. The teacher should, therefore, incorporate some important matters related to their learning goals so that they are always motivated to learn English, thus helping the teachers/lecturers in performing their duties as well.

The present study was conducted in survey research with very limited interviews to the participants. Further study can be done by providing the participants with more varied choices so that the more data can be analyzed and interpreted. Further, the interview can be applied to more participants so that the verbal data can strengthen the validity of the finding. Further study can be done in mixed method so that the data taken can be more varied and meaningful. It is also important to specifically analyze the students' interest, job, or intelligence as these variables can possibly affect the students' motivation.

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