

Students' Motivation to Complete the Study in the Pandemic Time: Some Reflections for Post Pandemic Era

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ABSTRACT

Since it was announced by the World Health Organization in March 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic is still happening now. The impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic are also felt greatly in the world of education, especially as the teaching and learning processes at schools and universities are required to be carried out online during the pandemic. This condition affects final semester students who are working on their thesis as the thesis consultation is also done online. In the writers' department, some students were able to complete the thesis in the pandemic time but some others failed. This made the writers interested to investigate the students' motivations in completing their study. This article reports the writers' qualitative study which focused on revealing the students' motivation in finishing their study. The study was conducted in English Language Education Department at Pekalongan University, Indonesia in the even semester of the academic year 2021/2022. To get the data the writers used structured interviews. The data were then analysed by using content analysis. The findings suggest that students had various types and levels of motivations in completing their study during the pandemic. The writers also believe that it is necessary to reflect on these findings so that both theses writing and supervision in the post pandemic era can be conducted better.

Keywords: Covid-19, online learning, motivation

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization has announced a Covid-19 pandemic since March 2020, however the pandemic is still ongoing until now. According to Putranto et al.(2020) Corona

virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Corona virus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

In many cases, the corona virus causes mild respiratory infections such as the flu, but this virus can also cause severe respiratory infections such as lung infections (pneumonia) to cause death. Because of this, several countries in the world have imposed a lockdown policy.

Knowing the dangers of the corona virus, the Indonesian government prohibited schools and universities to conduct direct learning. The teaching and learning process must be replaced by online learning through gadgets or laptops using several platforms such as, Google classroom, Zoom, WhatsApp, Google Meet, Youtube, Edmodo, and many other platforms available.

In the process of online learning, there are several obstacles. Simamora et al. (2020) explained that not all students have facilities that support online learning, not all students have laptops equally, not all students are ready to buy online quota packages. In addition to obstacles, there are impacts caused by online learning, Irawan et al. (2020) found the impact of online learning, namely (1) students' boredom during online learning, (2) considerable anxiety in students who come from low-income families as they were unable to buy internet quota, (3) emotional disturbance because students have many assignments.

Seeing the impact caused by the corona virus, scientists are trying to make and find Covid-19 vaccines. Among the types of vaccines that have been found are Sinovac, AstraZeneca, Sinopharm, CanSino, Moderna, Pfizer-BioNTech, Janssen, and Sputnik V vaccines. In Indonesia the vaccination program began in January 2021. Until now the government has continued to carry out vaccination programs for all people to minimize the risks of the corona virus infection.

With the high vaccination rates in Indonesia, in the world of education, the government has started to allow face-to-face meetings and issued guidelines regarding the implementation of face-to-face learning during the COVID-19 period starting this odd semester. Among these regulations are MOEC Regulation No 03/KB/2021, No 384 of 2021, No HK.01.08/MENKES/4242/2021, and No 440-717 of 2021. In implementing learning, universities must continue to prioritize the health and safety of campus residents, namely students, lecturers, and education staff as well

as the surrounding community” (Minister of Education and Culture, Minister of Religion, Minister of Health, and Minister of domestic Affairs, 2021).

However, some universities still carry out the online learning process until now. This condition has an impact on final semester students who are working on their thesis. At first students feel excited to finish their thesis quickly, but this enthusiasm begins to decline along with the difficulties they face. Yusuf (2020) said that the difficulties experienced by students in doing their final assignments included lack of understanding of theory, limited references, and lack of interest in reading. These problems doubled during the current pandemic because the consultation is done online.

Online tutoring provides a more difficult challenge than offline tutoring. When having online tutorials, students must ensure a smooth internet network to ease the online consultation processes. If no stable internet connection is available, the online consultation and supervision activities will be hard to conduct. In the writers’ department, some students managed to complete their final project well, but some were unable to finish it on time. From this situation, the writers were interested to reveal what actually motivated students in completing their final projects in the pandemic time.

In the world of education motivation is one of the important things in completing the final project. According to Harmer (2007) motivation is some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something. When talking about motivation it will be related to motives. Brophy (2004) state that motives are hypothetical constructs used to explain why people are doing what they are doing, motives are distinguished from related constructs such as goals (the immediate objectives of particular sequences of behaviour) and strategies (the methods used to achieve goals). There are many kinds of motivation, some of which are intrinsic and extrinsic. According to Ryan and Deci (2000) intrinsically motivated person is moved to act for the fun or challenge entailed rather than because of external prods, pressures, or rewards. And extrinsic motivation is a construct that is related whenever an activity is carried out to achieve some separable results.

The previous study that are in line with this research is the research conducted by Ramadhani (2021) with the title of Research on Student Motivation in Completing Thesis during the Covid-19 Pandemic Period. The results of the research conducted by Ramadhani include (1) in completing the thesis, students of the Islamic guidance and counselling study program class of 2017 during this pandemic had various motivation, one of which was from parents and friends; (2) the factors that influenced motivation in completing the thesis during the covid-19 pandemic were internal factors including interests and desires, and also external factors including parents, friends, and the environment; (3) barriers that affected student motivation in completing their thesis were laziness, difficulty in meeting and communicating with supervisors, the lack of experience in writing the thesis, and the closure of campuses and libraries.

The previous study has the relevance to this research, namely about student motivation in completing the final project. The previous study, however, only discussed student motivation, influencing factors, and problems in completing the final project. To fill the gaps in previous research, in this study, apart from discussing the factors and obstacles in completing the final project, the writers will add the information on the level of student motivation when they were completing the final project. This research is important to do to provide actual information in the field, regarding factors which motivated students when completing their final project in the post-pandemic era.

METHOD

The method used in this research was a qualitative method. According to Creswell (2013) qualitative research is a research which begins from assumptions and the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that give information about the research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups. Furthermore Hancock (1998) stated that qualitative research describes social phenomena as they occur naturally. No attempt is made to manipulate the situation under study as is the case with experimental quantitative research.

In this study the writers used the qualitative method with the case study design because the study explained about students' motivation to complete their study. According to Hancock (1998) case study research is used to describe an entity that forms a

single unit such as a person, organization or institution. The data were usually collected using structured interviews. According to Hancock (1998) structured interviews consist of the interviewer asking each respondent the same questions in the same way. A tightly structured schedule of questions is used, very much like a questionnaire.

The main data in this study were interviews with 12 students in the English Language Education Department of Pekalongan University (final semester students). Because of the pandemic, the activities in the campus environment were limited and therefore the writers collected the data by giving interviews through the WhatsApp application. After interviewing the respondents, the data were analysed through the use of content analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The interviews that have been conducted with 12 students were analyzed using content analysis. First, all answers from each respondent were transcribed and then coded. In this study there were three main findings, namely (1) The student's motivation (2) the level of student motivation (3) difficulties in maintaining motivation.

The student's motivation

In the results of interviews conducted by researchers, there are various types of motivation that students have when completing their final project, some of the motivations of students are presented below.

Parents and career

Some students said that their motivation came from their parents and their desire to work. These two factors motivated them to complete the final project and to graduate:

"First, because of my parents, because my parents are still paying for college, the biggest motivation to graduate is my parents so that my parents don't have to pay for college anymore. I want to get into the world of work as soon as possible, because most companies, the requirement for entering work is a bachelor's degree." (R1)

"The motivation to graduate is of course to be able to make my parents happy and achieve my goals for a career."(R4)

"The thing that motivated me to graduate was that the first thing was to make my parents proud, and the second thing that I had a lot of plans to do after graduation such as work and others."(R10)

From the answers above, it can be seen that parents are the main reason why students wanted to complete their final project. Secondly, the expectation of the student after graduating from college is to get a good job and thus the desire to work became another motivation.

Good supervisor

Lecturers are the parents of both students when they are on campus, so the lecturers were very influential in the process of completing the final project, this is in accordance with the opinions of students.

"The first is myself, then my parents so they can see me graduate, then the supervisor who has issued knowledge and time for me because he is very kind, so there is no reason for me to ask for his guidance."(R11)

The kindness of the supervisors who are willing to take their time and to provide their knowledge, to provide guidance to students becomes one of the motivations for students to complete their studies in English Department of Pekalongan University.

Responsibility

Responsibility is one of the reasons of the students to complete their studies.

"Responsibility is my motivation to complete my studies, so what I have started I have to finish."(R5)

"From the start I was determined to take a bachelor's degree, so it's useless if in the middle of my education journey I suddenly gave up, because I had intended to get a bachelor's degree, no matter how difficult it was, I would not give up."(R3)

From the answers above, the sense of responsibility that students had has become strong motivation for students to complete their studies.

Get a bachelor's degree

Getting a degree is also another motivation that students had to complete their studies.

"The main thing that motivated me to graduate was to get a diploma."(R2)

"My motivation to graduate is because I can get a diploma."(R6)

The answers above had shown that the degree pursued affected their motivation in completing the final project and studies.

Based on the results of the respondents' answers above, it can be seen that there are several types of student motivation to complete the study, namely intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The intrinsic motivation of students to complete their studies based on answers from respondents is the sense of responsibility of students to be able to complete their studies. While the extrinsic motivations of students to complete their studies are their parents, careers, supervisors and diplomas.

Level of student motivation

When working on the final project students had different levels of motivation. This can be explained as follows:

Increasing Motivation

"Motivation when completing the final project or thesis is the increasing motivation so that the thesis can be completed." (R7)

"Motivation from going down to up, the beginning of working on my thesis was lacking in motivation, too relaxed even though my friends already had progress, at that time there was no progress, then I had the motivation when I was short on the new semester so I was hopeless to graduate in September, I pursued my work minimum thesis can be a proposal test (UP) before the new semester, after seeing my friends graduating in September it started to increase my motivation, my motivation is to be able to graduate in March, plus I don't want to add to my parents burden." (R11)

The results of the respondents' answers show that students' motivation increased when doing the final project because they had several reasons behind it.

Unstable motivation (up and down)

From the 12 respondents who were successfully interviewed, they said that their motivation went up and down when working on the final project. The results are explained below:

"There is no up and down option, motivation when completing the final task slightly increases when compiling chapter 1 then goes down, then goes up again."(R1)

"I'm classified as a moody person so whatever I do, for example a thesis or other assignments, the motivation will definitely not be stable, sometimes it goes up sometimes it goes down, when my motivation is down I try to raise my motivation."(R3)

"The motivation when completing the thesis goes up and down, because besides me as a student, I also work so it's still difficult to focus on 2 different things."(R5)

"Motivation when completing the thesis of course goes up and down, because the surrounding environment also affects so that my motivation goes up and down."(R6)

"motivation when working on the final task goes up and down because obstacles sometimes occur, such as when asking respondents for data there are several obstacles, for example because the signal does not support, the quota runs out and others."(R12)

From the respondents' answers above, it was clear that they had unstable motivation during the completion of their final project.

Stable motivation

Some students acknowledged that they had stable motivation. They said:

"In my opinion, my motivation while completing the thesis is stable."(R4)

"Always stable because always making a schedule."(R8)

From all the answers above, it can be seen that the level of student motivation when working on a final project or thesis as a condition for graduating varies, some of which are up, unstable (sometimes up and down), and some mentioned that the motivation was always stable.

Difficulties in maintaining motivation

In maintaining motivation to graduate students have several obstacles including:

Job (Career)

"Because my position is already working as a tutor even though it's not fixed, when I come home from work I'm tired so I'm lazy to do thesis, so dividing time between doing thesis and work is sometimes messy"(R1)

"The difficulty is more seduced by a job to make money, because even though I have graduated I think I will continue to do the job I am currently doing."(R5)

From the description of the answers above, it can be seen that students who were already working had difficulty in maintaining their motivation to do their final project because they had issue with the time management and they did not see any need to rush and find a new job.

Laziness

Laziness becomes difficulty in maintaining motivation to complete their study.

"There are no significant difficulties, just feeling lazy by myself, sometimes revision feedback has been given by the supervisor but very lazy to do revisions." (R3)

"The difficulty in maintaining motivation is feeling lazy, feeling lazy to do and touch the thesis." (R7)

From the results of the answers above, it can be seen that laziness contributed to the difficulty in maintaining motivation apart from work factors.

From the findings and discussion above, it is clear that student motivation in completing studies consisted of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation in this study came from the students' sense of responsibility, and the extrinsic motivation came from parents, career, good supervisors, and the degree. The student level when working on the final project also varied. Some students had increasing motivation level, some had unstable (up and down) motivation and the rest had stable motivation. Finally, in maintaining their motivation, students had several difficulties, including work (career) and laziness.

This finding agrees with the findings of Mbato and Cendra(2019) who finds "money" and "avoiding parental disappointment" to be the biggest initial motivation for students to complete their thesis. In addition, this study also agrees with the findings of

Diasti and Mbato (2020) who argue that, the factors that can influence students to be motivated come from internal and external. Internal factors can be in the form of curiosity to explore the topic because the topic is interesting for students and thinks that writing a thesis will be beneficial for their future. Motivation that comes from outside can be in the form of support from parents, friends, and lecturers.

This study is also in line with the findings of Widianoro et al. (2019) which also found that students' high motivation to complete thesis was influenced by high social support from lecturers. In addition, this finding is very similar to the findings obtained by Oktavia (2021), namely Student motivation to do the thesis came from the closest people, including friends, family, parents, or the environment. Problems faced by students in doing the thesis, including financial problems and feeling lazy from within the student in completing the thesis. And the motivated factors for students in completing theses were parents and students themselves, while the inhibiting factors for students in completing these were excessive laziness.

From some of the findings above, it can be seen the motivation of students in doing the final project, the level of the motivation of students and the difficulties faced by students when doing the final project especially in the pandemic time. These findings provide useful information for both students and supervisors as they need to know the factors motivating the students, the dynamics in the motivation levels, along with the students' struggle in maintaining their motivation.

CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to determine the motivation of students to complete their study during a pandemic. The findings revealed that the types, levels and difficulties of student motivation in completing studies varied. The overall findings contribute to the literature on how the pandemic affects the students' study completion. The findings are also useful in depicting the students' motivation and the dynamics during the completion of their final projects. The writers believe that the supervisors need this kind of information so that they can provide better support to students who deal with online supervision during the pandemic time. The findings can also be a reference for

the future researchers who have the interest in researching students' motivation.

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