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Assignment title: Final Paper ETIC  
Submission title: 26. Motivation Factors  
File name: 26.\_MOTIVATIONAL\_FACTORS.pdf  
File size: 817.15K  
Page count: 13  
Word count: 5,682  
Character count: 32,328  
Submission date: 31-Jul-2020 10:25AM (UTC+0700)  
Submission ID: 1364250123

1 | ELT-Echo, Volume 5, Number 2, June 2020

ISSN: 2549-5089 e-ISSN: 2579-8170

### MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING INDONESIAN STUDENTS IN UNDERTAKING A MASTER'S DEGREE

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**Abstract:** Education is one of the necessities for cultivating people and the country. It cannot be separated from human life since it is considered as a life-long learning process without limitation. Students have different reasons, factors, and motivations to study a Master's Degree. This study aimed at investigating motivational factors that impact Indonesian students to undertake a Master's Degree in English Education. Mixed methods research design was employed to identify and understand the specific information focusing on students' motivation. The data were collected through questionnaires and in-depth interviews. Graduate students studying in the first semester of the English Education Master's Program at Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, participated in this study. The obtained data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and displayed in the mean score and the level of motivation. The findings indicated that, in general, students were intrinsically motivated in embarking on their Master's Degree ( $n=3.99$ ), with a high level of intrinsic motivation. The data from the interviews revealed that at least three motivational factors were influencing students in pursuing a Master's Degree, namely personal, environmental, and profession-oriented factors. This study provides suggestions for future research.

**Keywords:** intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, motivational factors, higher education

#### BACKGROUND

In today's world, almost all nations are competing in developing their countries to be advanced, peaceful, and prosperous (Arcebo, 2018). The authorities of each country invest a considerable budget every year to solve the social, economic, and environmental problems encountered by the people in the country to increase the population's higher life quality. Education is one of the necessities for cultivating people and the state (Uka, 2012). As a result, higher educational competitions among the universities have emerged. In other words, each university continually develops its institution for attracting students' interest to study in their university (Workman, 2011) including its appearance (reputation), quality, environment, and the facilities to support students in active learning. However, each student has different reasons, factors, and motivations to study. For instance, some students want to

# 26. Motivation Factors

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### BACKGROUND

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gain more knowledge and experience in education, while others may want to be accepted by society through fame and honor.

When exploring the motivation of students to pursue post-graduate study, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are considered as powerful dynamics that influence the choices students made. Students intrinsically motivated are likely to choose to study because they want to flourish their academic competency and to fulfill their desire goals without any other external rewards as extrinsically motivated students do (Dakhi & Damanik, 2018). Nevertheless, both groups appreciate education as a foundation of life, which bridges the gap between people and their brighter future (Yousapronpaiboon, 2014). In other words, students who further their study recognize education as one of the essential things which lead them to meet a better life. Hence, education is the crucial key to build a better world by creating equality in society and developing human knowledge through a good education. Besides, education cannot be separated from human life since it is considered as a life-long learning process without initiation.

Several studies investigated the relationship between motivation and students' learning in higher education, but few studies examined in Indonesian student's contexts. For example, Connor (2012) examines the students' motivations to pursue post-graduate study and choices they made to enroll certain master's courses at Trinity College Dublin. The results indicate that students' motivation is vitally connected to their perception of what kind of personal, professional, cultural, and career needs they want to meet. Further, Durso, Da Cunha, Neves, and Teixeira (2016) investigate the significant impacts of motivation towards students' decision to pursue the master's program at public institutions in Minas Gerais, Brazil. Research consequences show that the degree of motivation between students studying in Accounting and Economics are similar. Also, they find out that higher self-determined motivation can be found more in students who are given scholarships, poor students, adult students, and women.

In Indonesian students' contexts, Werang (2018), for example, explores the learning motivation of students perceived by their lecturers in Papua, Indonesia. He finds out that lecturers recognize their students' learning motivation lowly and suggests that teachers are required to be able to create specific strategies to increase students' motivation in their learning process. Moreover, the second-grade students' motivation in learning English is investigated by Munjiana (2018). Overall, students present positive motivation in learning English as it is shown in self-assessment as well. Astriningsih and Mbato (2019) further study on Indonesian young learners' motivation to join the English club. They reveal that learners show a high level of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Besides, motivation has not been conducted merely with students' contexts, but also with teachers. For example, Indraswari and Kuswando (2018) examine the voices from English teachers regarding their motivation and perceived challenges of professional development. They find out intrinsic motivation, challenges, and needs in doing teacher professional development (TPD), i.e., time management, teaching schedule, and ICT skills.

Based on the examples above, it is apparent that scholars have conducted numerous studies related to students and motivation. None of them, nevertheless, has focused students' motivation to study in a Master's Degree. As a result, this issue becomes the significance of this study and the focus of the researchers. This study therefore, is a mixed-methods research design investigating students' motivation in undertaking a Master's Degree in English Education at Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. It aims to find out how motivational factors influence students to further their studies. Additionally,

the researchers attempt to answer one research question: what are the motivational factors influencing Indonesian students in undertaking a Master's Degree in English Education?

### What is motivation?

Motivation consists of powerful inside and outside factors that boost intention and effort in people to move toward a goal (Akhtar, Iqbal, & Tatlah, 2017). Besides, it stimulates people to overcome the obstacles and continually move forward to face the difficulties of achieving their desired goal (Renandya, 2015). Sharma and Sharma (2018) states that motivation is considered as a significant reason influencing how people live, act, and respond to desires and needs. Furthermore, it leads people to meet a particular action, and when they find it gives a positive result, motivation may cause them to repeat that action. According to Sharma and Sharma (2018), there are four factors involve motivation, namely: surroundings (external stimuli), feelings (internal condition), goals (purpose of behavior), and instruments (tools for accomplishing the target).

Previous studies have discovered the main types of motivation. Gardner and Lambert (1959) postulated two kinds of motivation in learning English as a second language, namely, integrative and instrumental motivation (see also Suryasa, Prayoga, & Werdistira, 2017; Nailufar, 2018). They have been defined differently by scholars and experts. According to Chalak and Kassaian (2010), integrative motivation is taking part oneself into a culture to be accepted by that community since he or she has a purpose of learning their culture and language through communicating with people while instrumental motivation is obtaining language in a target to achieve specific goals (career, job, or rewards). Furthermore, Lamb (2004) addresses that integrative motivation is a learner's positive attitude towards learning a language. Meaning to say that learners have desires to mingle themselves into that community in learning a language, whereas learners possessed instrumental motivation tend to have the desire to achieve something "practical or concrete from the study of a second language." In sum, learners who have integrative motivation learn a language to connect with societies from different cultures, while those who have instrumental motivation learn a language to fulfill their definite positive goals (Suryasa et al., 2017).

Besides, Rotter (1966) and Edward Deci (1971) define other types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (see also Nailufar, 2018; Werang, 2018). Intrinsic motivation is stimuli within a person, such as an attitude, opinion, interest, intention, appreciation, and satisfaction (Odanga, 2018). These stimuli tend to influence a person to have a permanent behavior. For example, a teacher who has been teaching for many years, perceive his or her teaching as happiness and satisfaction – not money or position. Meanwhile, extrinsic motivation is external stimuli that arouse a person to perform a particular behavior such as, honor, fame, and admiration (Vibulphol, 2016). Therefore, these stimuli are temporary to the action. In brief, a person merely indicates an action to respond to those incentives. Additionally, Mbato (2013) declares that when the students know how to combine intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in their learning process, they can increase their learning outcome. However, intrinsically motivated students seem to have more ability to continue learning to accomplish desired goals than extrinsically motivated students.

### Motivation in L2 learning



Motivation is widely considered as an initial stimulus that plays an essential role in L2 learning for learners to achieve a long-term learning process (Renandya, 2015). Dörnyei (2005), states that students who lack motivation will never be able to achieve long-term goals, although they have significant capabilities. Consequently, students' motivation plays an essential factor in inspiring them to acquire their academic success. Also, it has a significant impact on the way they learn, perform, and behave in the classroom (Fan & Wolters, 2014). Besides, highly motivated students seem to be able to control their language aptitude and learning conditions. (Macintyre & Vincze, 2017).

Studies have attempted to figure out the connection of L2 learning and motivation, which were mostly influenced by Gardner and Lambert's study (Ghenghesh, 2010). Gardner and Lambert perceive L2 as a medium between different communities and learners. Therefore, they claim that L2 learning is different from any other subject in a school since learners have to adapt themselves to various factors occurring in society, such as language, attitudes, and social stereotypes. On the other hand, learning of L2 is not only about memorizing grammar, rules of usage, or skills needed for learning, but it involves the ability to build one self-image and embrace new cultures and societies. Besides, their study indicated that motivation and attitudes are relevant to each other in supporting learners to learn L2 or foreign language better.

Further, Dörnyei (1998) claims that L2 motivation can be developed and supported by teachers to acquire language achievement. In other words, teachers influence L2 students on how they perceive, learn, perform, and respond in the classroom (Miao Yee Clare, Renandya, & Qiu Rong, 2019). Likewise, motivating strategies used by teachers in the classroom are significantly essential in promoting students' higher motivation to L2 achievement (Bernaus, Wilson, & Gardner, 2009). Ghenghesh (2010) studies how age influenced L2 students' motivation. He interestingly found out that older students take lower motivation levels than younger students. Besides, Macintyre and Vincze (2017) point out that positive emotions are essential for L2 learners. They demonstrate that positive emotions underpin and consistently endure L2 learners' high motivation in the long term.

### Higher education

Higher education is a necessity to be accomplished by learners. It is essential, not only a choice (Cortese, 2003). Moreover, studying in higher education will shape learners to be ready for their longing jobs through effective education system provided by each university (Angelianawati, 2018). However, the world is being gradually changed and more competitive (Salmi, 2009). Hence, the Bachelor's degree is perceived by many developed countries that it is no longer adequate (Uka, 2012). This matter involves parents, university, and more importantly, the government to instruct students to have sufficient capabilities and skills that suit the needs of the enterprises.

Alternatively, this is likely to arouse students to further their studies to guarantee their employment. Therefore, post-graduate education is an ongoing study to enhance learners' knowledge and skill in a particular area that he or she is interested in. It does not only benefit learners to specialize and implement their knowledge in their future careers but also prepares them to be ready for the globalization. Arar and Abramowitz (2017) argued that post-graduate study assists students in terms of "social mobility and promotion." More than three hundred universities are available in Indonesia, with approximately 2,250,000 students in 2018. Higher education in this country is encountering new challenges in transforming "dependency of government funding to the competitive market" (Kusumawati,

Yanamandram, & Perera, 2010). This transforming increases the competition among the universities to attract students as they are considered as consumers.

**METHOD**

**Research design and participants**

In this study, the researchers applied a mixed methods design by integrating both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. The questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data whereas an in-depth interview was conducted to obtain qualitative data. The participants involving in this study were 15 students studying in the first semester of the English Education Master Program (MPBI). They were chosen to be the participants because of the richness of diversity. It is to say, they have different cultural backgrounds, ages, and experiences in teaching and education field. The majority of the participants were female (66.33%), and the prominent age of them was between 20 to 25 years old, 46.66%. A total of 15 participants, 13 were single, and two were married. Considering participants' education, 73.33% of the participants graduated from Sanata Dharma University, whereas 26.66% were from other universities. Looking at the current job, it appeared that 7 participants (46.66%) were teaching in schools and studying in this program at the same time. However, all participants had teaching experience in schools before undertaking the Master's Degree. 8 participants had at least 1-2 years of teaching experience, 3-4 years for 4 participants, and 5-10 years for 3 participants. A profile of the participants in this study is illustrated in table 1.

Table 1. Participant Demographic Profile

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage	Factors	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Factors</b>					
<b>Gender:</b>			<b>Education:</b>		
Male	5	33.3	Graduated from SDU	11	73.3
Female	10	66.7	From other university	4	26.7
<b>Age:</b>			<b>Current Job:</b>		
20-25 years old	7	46.7	Teacher	7	46.7
26-30 years old	5	33.3	Student	8	53.3
31-40 years old	3	20.0	<b>Teaching Experience:</b>		
<b>Marital Status:</b>			1-2 years	8	53.3
Single	13	86.7	3-4 years	4	26.7
Married	2	13.3	5-10 years	3	20.0

**Instruments**

The researchers found that a questionnaire was the most appropriate tool to get the data. Acharya (2010) defines a questionnaire as a document widely used in survey research, experiments, and observation. The questionnaire was adapted and developed from Mbato (2013) and Durso et al. (2016) and divided into two parts. Part A was a short demographic survey of the participants' backgrounds included their personal details: gender, age, marital status, previous education, current job, and years of teaching experience. Part B, participants were asked to respond to a five-point Likert scale from each statement by choosing whether they strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree. The questionnaire

consisted of 10 statements: five statements for intrinsic motivation and five statements for extrinsic motivation. The researchers distributed the questionnaire in the educational psychology class on 26 November 2019. All participants completed the questionnaire and submitted it. Further, the interviewees were selected purposefully a week after that, including two male and two female students with various backgrounds and based on the results of the questionnaires. The interviews were conducted in English and lasted for about 35 to 40 minutes and audio-recorded.

Table 2. Mean Range for Motivation

Mean Range	Interpretation
3.68-5.00	High Degree of Motivation
2.34-3.67	Moderate Degree of Motivation
1.00-2.33	Low Degree of Motivation

### Data analysis

The quantitative and qualitative data gathered from the questionnaire and in-depth interview were analyzed by the researchers. First, the raw data were counted by focusing on the number from every degree of agreement. Further, the researchers calculated the obtained data into the mean score and made an interpretation. After that, the researchers determined the level of motivation based on the obtained data, using the scale shown in table 2. Additionally, the description for each statement based on the data was constructed.

For the data gathered from the semi-structured interview, the researcher first transcribed the interview audio-recording. After that, the transcription was organized, coded, analyzed, and interpreted. In addition, all participants were given a pseudonym.

### FINDING AND DISCUSSION

As mentioned earlier, this study attempted to find out the motivational factors influencing Indonesian students in undertaking a Master's Degree in English Education. First of all, the descriptive analysis of the questionnaire data revealed that participants were prominently intrinsically motivated to undertake their study a Master's Degree. The average mean score of intrinsic motivation was 3.99 which was considered a high level of motivation as shown in table 3. Conversely, table 4 presents the extrinsic motivation of the participants with an average mean score of 3.66 and at a moderate level of motivation.

In addition to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation revealed in the questionnaire, the interview was conducted to gain more profound data regarding students' motivational factors. The data showed that there were at least three motivational factors influencing the students in pursuing a Master's Degree. In the following discussion, the three motivational factors, namely personal, environmental, and profession-oriented factors will be presented.

#### Personal Factors

Personal factors are significant motivational factors driving students to enhance their education by undertaking a Master's degree. These factors can be referred to intrinsic motivation as Dörnyei (2005) states that when a person performs for its own sake to meet personal curiosity and satisfaction, he or she is triggered by internal factors. Table 3 presents



that the intrinsic motivation of the participants in undertaking the Master’s Degree is quite high. Based on the results, the mean score of learning new things and engaging with challenging subjects is maximum,  $M=4.53$ , and the minimum average of mean,  $M=3.26$ , is personal accomplishments in learning. Statement number 1 indicates that participants decided to undertake the Master’s Degree because of their own personal happiness and ambition to be excellent in education ( $M=4.20$ ).

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Intrinsic Motivation

No.	Intrinsic Motivation	Mean	Level of Motivation
1	Personal happiness and ambition to be excellent in education	4.20	High
2	Learning new things and engaging with challenging subjects	4.53	High
3	Academic improvement, personal development, and lifelong learning.	4.00	High
4	Personal accomplishments in learning	3.26	Moderate
5	Developing professionalism to support students	3.92	High
<b>Mean Score of Intrinsic Motivation</b>		<b>3.99</b>	<b>High</b>

Further, academic improvement, personal development, and lifelong learning are also considered as important reasons for them ( $M=4.00$ ). Besides, as all participants have teaching experiences and are preparing themselves to become future educators, statement number 5 shows that participants also would like to develop their professionalism to support their students in their learning process.

Personal factors denote to personal development, academic improvement, and self-satisfaction from personal accomplishment in learning. The results from the interview were in line with the results of the questionnaire. All participants reported that they decided to further their study in a Master’s Degree because of their interest in learning. Moreover, they mentioned that they would like to learn more and improve their knowledge and professionalism which will be beneficial for them in the future.

[1] *As a teacher, I need to develop myself, especially in terms of professional development. The situation is changing every time and you can imagine if the teacher will not change, what will happen to the students?*

[2] *For the first reason, as I told you (the researcher) in the sharing moment, I want to continue my study...I don't know deep down in myself but I just want to learn more.*

[3] *I want to learn more about English (English education).*

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It is obvious that participants' motivation to study in a Master's Degree is from their internal desire, their personal enjoyment of learning, and their eagerness to improve themselves. Additionally, one participant emphasized that studying in the Master's Degree also helps him to exercise his brain and increase his critical thinking skill as indicated in the following excerpts.

*[1] For me, the benefits that I can get from learning and studying in the Master's Degree is that...our brain needs to be practiced, to be activated all the time. And we need to be more critical all the time as we grow up. These lectures or studying here is one way how we can activate our brain, we can activate to go on learning. This is very important for us as a human being since we have to practice our brain, we need to see whether we can get along with the changes in the environment, including the educational field.*

### Environmental factors

In contrast, as shown in table 4, the participants' level of extrinsic motivation is moderate, with a mean score of 3.66. However, the results also demonstrate that the participants were highly extrinsically motivated in several aspects. Statement number 5, for instance, shows that participants continued their study because they believed that it would help them prepare for the competitive world, with the highest mean ( $M=4.26$ ). Furthermore, social values, social mobility, and social status were also greatly crucial for the participants when considering undertaking a Master's Degree ( $M=4.13$ ).

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Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Extrinsic Motivation

No.	Extrinsic Motivation	Mean	Level of Motivation
1	Promoting into a high-paid job in the future career	3.73	High
2	Parents' expectation to study	2.46	Moderate
3	Social values, social mobility and social status	4.13	High
4	Improving family living standards	3.73	High
5	Preparing for the competitive world	4.26	High
<b>Mean Score of Extrinsic Motivation</b>		<b>3.66</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

Surprisingly, contradictory results were found in statement number 2 which was related to the parents' expectation to study. Based on the results, it can be inferred that most participants were slightly influenced by their parents' expectations. Nevertheless, the results from the interviews present that two interviewed participants mentioned that parents' expectations had a big impact on their decision when they were reluctant to undertake the Master's Degree. Uka (2012) argues that "family always plays an important role in the students' academic-related decisions". Therefore, it is fair enough to say that many students further their studies because their parents want them to. Two out of three participants in the interview remarked that they embark on the Master's Degree because their parents suggested them to do.

[1] *The second reason is because of my parents. They encourage me to continue my studies.*

[2] *The first reason that I continue my study is because of my parents. I just follow what they want.*

It is undeniable that many times parents have a massive impact on their children's decisions. Considering parents' love, affection, care, and goodwill, children are hoped to be successful in the future. Moreover, when the participants were asked how they maintained and boost motivation when they encountered difficulties in their study, two of them stated that they spent time talking to their parents to activate motivation.

[1] *For me, when I find difficulties or I am in a bad mood, the first thing is I always seek for other motivation, other encouragement. I talk to my boyfriend, my parents and they will give me the motivation. I think that is the way how I increase or maintain my motivation.*

[2] *I maintain my motivation by talking to my parents. For example, when I feel that I am in low motivation, I will call my mom and she will give me advice. After that, I will take time for myself to relax and then I push myself to do the task.*

### **Profession-Oriented Factors**

As it was previously shown in table 4, participants also revealed that the Master's Degree would allow them to find a high-paid job in their future and as well as increase their family living standards, as shown in statement number 1 and 4 (M=3.73). According to Ncube and Zondo (2018), people endeavor to increase their living conditions in a world full of competition. Therefore, one important motivational factor that stimulates students to enroll in a Master's Degree is "to accelerate their condition economically, socially, and educationally" (Arceño, 2018). The results from the interview revealed that all participants perceived the Master's Degree as a key to enhance their professional and academic skills in their current jobs and future careers.

[1] *I realized that as future teachers, we need to develop ourselves and I realized that many schools, well-known schools, required the teachers to take the Master's Degree.*

[2] *Students now are different from students 10 years ago. If we don't realize that, our paradigm of educational strategies, educational approaches may not be changed all the time. That why we need to get something new by learning new methodologies, strategies, the psychology of the students in education is very important.*

[3] *Maybe because I want to become a lecturer, thinking about my future will activate me.*

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In many fields of occupation, a Bachelor's degree is no longer sufficient to chase a career (Arar & Abramowitz, 2017). Seemingly, everyone wishes for a high level of achievement. Therefore, participants believed that earning a Master's Degree would assist them to be ready for this competitive world. Besides, they also realized that it would be much easier for them to find a high-paid job in the future even when they do not become a teacher or lecture. Finally, through a Master's Degree, their family living standards can be upgraded. Accordingly, it is understandable that profession-oriented factors also have a huge impact on students when they make a decision to further their Master's Degree.

## CONCLUSION

This study examined students' motivational factors in undertaking a Master's Program in English Education. Both quantitative and qualitative data from the questionnaire and in-depth interview indicated that there were three motivational factors triggering students to further their study. Firstly, personal factors were the most prominent factor driving students to embark on a Master's Degree. These factors are referred to intrinsic motivation which their interest in learning and personal development is essential. Secondly, environmental factors were also crucial for students. In this study, the family plays a significant role in students' desire. As a result, parents' expectations, love, affection, care, and goodwill motivate students to study. Lastly, in a world full of competition, students were also influenced by profession-oriented factors. They realized that a Master's Degree was a key to enhance their professional and academic skills in their current jobs and future careers. Considering two types of motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic, the data showed that students were highly intrinsically motivated to undertake a Master's Degree. The average mean score was 3.99 with a high level of motivation.

Nonetheless, this study had several limitations. First, the findings from this study cannot be generalized since this study was only conducted in one university and all participants were from one study program. Second, the researcher only focused on two major types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic in this study. Further research, therefore, should be conducted to investigate the other two types of motivation: instrumental and integrative motivation. Additionally, further research exploring Master's Degree students' motivation in other study programs, English Education students' motivation to become a teacher, and or investigating other motivational factors influencing students are recommended.



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