

Remaining motivated despite the limitations- University students' learning propensity during the COVID-19 pandemic .pdf

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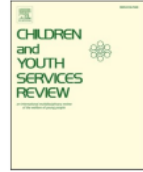
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Remaining motivated despite the limitations: University students' learning propensity during the COVID-19 pandemic

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ABSTRACT

This study explored how university students remained motivated to learn, despite all the limitations they encountered and endured during the COVID-19 pandemic. This work was carried out in Indonesia, but the benefits are beyond a state boundary. The study examines how university students in developing countries have faced obstacles, and yet despite this, they are still trying their hardest to stay focused on achieving their personal goals during the pandemic. This research employed a qualitative phenomenological approach, involving eighty students that were studying at the Faculty of Education at a state university in Jakarta, Indonesia. As data collection techniques, students were asked to write learning log diaries and reflective essays and to participate in an online focus group discussion. The results showed that the students' motivation to remain learning during the COVID-19 pandemic fell into three key themes, each with associated sub-themes. The three themes and sub-themes described were: (a) personal, with sub-themes of challenge, curiosity, self-determination, satisfaction and religious commitment; (b) social, with sub-themes of relationships, inspiration, and well-being of self and others; and (c) environmental, with sub-themes of facilities and conditioning. The themes and sub-themes indicate the source of motivation for these university students to learn during the pandemic. This study concluded that these emerging adults were both intrinsically and extrinsically autonomously motivated and committed to their studies. Most of these students were motivated by their consequential aspirations, not by a controlled motivation, nor were they motivated by a reward, a penalty, or a rule that propelled them. By defining how the students managed to empower themselves, this study recommends the importance of preparing students to be more resilient and to enable them to cultivate the ability to remain optimistic and motivated to succeed and overcome any of life's adversities.

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has created an extremely fast expanding health crisis with drastic implications throughout 2020 (Gómez-Salido, Andrés-Villas, Domínguez-Salas, Díaz-Milanés, & Ruiz-Frutos, 2020). Most nations responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by swiftly enforcing public health containment measures known as non-pharmaceutical interventions (Anderson, Heesterbeek, Klinkenberg, & Hollingsworth, 2020; Cauchemez, Valleron, Boëlle, Flahault, & Ferguson, 2008; Cauchemez et al., 2009; Chinazzi et al., 2020; Djidjou-Demasse, Michalakis, Choisy, Sofonea, & Alizon, 2020); and adopted a school closure strategy (Anderson et al., 2020; Ebrahim, Ahmed, Gozzer, Schlagenhauf, & Memish, 2020).

In the first week of April, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization announced that 195 countries had implemented national school closures, affecting almost 91.3 percent of the student population,

or 1.598.099.000 affected learners (UNESCO, 2020). Courses moved from in-person learning to online learning, predominantly using information and communication technology (ICT) (Evans et al., 2020; Quezada, Talbot, & Quezada-Parker, 2020; Sandars et al., 2020; Woolliscroft, 2020). These measures could not be easily enforced and created many issues due to a significant proportion of the curriculum being used, which was not originally planned for online or remote learning (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020; Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust, & Bond, 2020); similarly educators themselves were not equipped for online learning or digital resource use (Quezada et al., 2020); and many students did not have the required devices, internet access or resources needed to study remotely online (Assunção Flores & Gago, 2020; Rahiem, 2020a,b). Moreover, some learners and educators were not familiar with the digital platforms and online programs that they were required to use at such short notice (Huber & Helm, 2020; Rasmitadila et al., 2020).

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The transition to working and studying from home, which took place rapidly, caused numerous issues for the education sector, including higher education with university students dealing with significant obstacles to their learning process. Schiff, Zasiekina, Pat-Horenczyk, and Benbenishty (2020) investigated the practical challenges and concerns that university students encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic in two countries: Israel and Ukraine, with two large samples of university students from both countries. Results showed that the students' key practical challenges in both countries included fears about their family health and their learning assignments. The study reported that the degree of exposure and difficulties in both countries varied, but their connection with the varying students' concerns appears robust. More precisely, the constant exposure to the threat posed to the community by the media contributed to their increased anxiety and affected the students' learning.

Huang et al. (2020) studied the Chinese government's policy on pandemic education, focusing on how the government ensured uninterrupted learning while classes were disrupted by transforming the entire education system and implementing online learning methods. They pointed out that there were many barriers to this rapid reform: 1) lack of preparation time, teachers had not prepared their learning material to enable them to adjust to online learning, and the preparation of such material was time-consuming; 2) teachers/students' isolation, left them frustrated and helpless; and 3) The need for an appropriate instructional approach to keep students motivated and engaged during the long period of online learning, especially because distance learning drop-out rates are typically higher than on-campus-based learning.

Many technologically advanced countries already had e-learning and online education programs in place when the pandemic first began. While in developing countries, where internet service and technological equipment availability is often limited, the learning adaptation was more complicated (Farooq, Rathore, & Mansoor, 2020). Chung, Subramaniam, and Dass (2020) looked at online learning preparedness among university students in Malaysia. Data from 399 students in two different courses showed that respondents were generally prepared for online learning. However, more than half of the respondents implied that they did not want to continue studying online in the future, if they were given a choice. While internet access appears to be the biggest challenge for undergraduates, understanding the subject content was also a major issue for diploma students.

Emon, Alif, and Islam (2020) examined the problems in Bangladesh due to online learning in higher education during the COVID-19 enforced school closure. In Bangladesh, all the universities were directed by the Minister of Education to conduct online education. While some view this as an education-friendly policy, a recent survey of 2038 students in 45 higher education institutions run by BioTED, a novel training and research initiative, found that one-third of Bangladeshi students did not want to engage in online academic activities. The same study also found that 55 percent of students did not have adequate internet connectivity, and 44.7 percent did not have access to a computer (i.e., laptop, PC, tablet, etc.) to effectively participate in online teaching.

Ramij and Sultana (2020) researched the preparedness and practicality of online education in Bangladesh during the pandemic. The research analyzed primary information gathered through a survey. A logistic regression model was applied to explain the assumptions, in line with the collected data's descriptive interpretation. The results suggested that the lack of technical infrastructure, high internet prices, low internet speed, the financial crisis, and mental strain on students were the key barriers to online education in Bangladesh for the majority of students.

Another research in Bangladesh, Mamun, Chandrima, and Griffiths (2020) looked at the case of a private university student and his mother from Bogra, Bangladesh, who committed suicide together due to family issues that arose due to studying at home. He concluded that governments in Bangladesh and other low- and middle-income countries

(LMICs) should think very carefully about online schooling before making it mandatory. LMIC students are much less likely to have the required access to the internet and technology needed to enable online education.

Farooq et al. (2020) explored the problems faced by medical faculty members and students in Pakistan when participating in online medical education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their data identified the following challenges: lack of faculty preparation and institutional support, internet accessibility problems, student engagement, online evaluation, and difficulties in recognizing the unique complexities of online education.

Kapasias et al. (2020) examined the effect of the COVID-19 lockdown on undergraduate and postgraduate students from various colleges and universities in West Bengal, India, using an online survey involving 232 students that was conducted from 1 May to 8 May 2020. The study showed that students, particularly those from remote areas and disadvantaged parts, were confronted with various problems related to depression, poor network connectivity, and an unfavorable home study climate.

The study discussed in this article is part of a larger project on Emergency Remote Learning (ERL) in tertiary education in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research found that students had paradoxical viewpoints and insights into learning; ERL was viewed as flexible yet challenging (Rahiem, 2020a). Students said that studying remotely at home allowed them the flexibility to control their own time, which provided them with additional time for self-care, daily exercise at home, and a lot of family time. At the same time, they also study in a comfortable and quiet environment. Contradictory to the degree of flexibility, they argued that lecturers overwhelmed them with assignments, and they, therefore, found it difficult to control their time. They felt distracted by their siblings and the noise at home, while a few of them thought that, compared to face-to-face learning, remote learning was much more tiring. They complained about technological interference while studying, costly internet costs, less structured courses, and difficulties accessing learning materials during the ERL (Rahiem, 2020a). The study also explained the technology barriers and challenges in using ICT that the students faced: device issues, internet connectivity, technology costs, and lack of technology skills. Students had problems with incompatible devices, sharing devices with other family members, unstable internet connection, restricted or unavailable internet access, data costs, purchasing new appliances, new programs or apps, inexperience with ICT, lack of ICT skills, and inadequate learning platforms (Rahiem, 2020b).

Students need to overcome all of these unexpected learning changes as quickly as possible (Dhawan, 2020); A lack of certainty, insecurity, volatility, and reduced autonomy and self-directedness are typical feelings encountered by students during the pandemic crisis (Germani, Buratta, Delvecchio, & Mazzeschi, 2020). Staying at home, worrying about being affected by the virus, changing their usual school routine, and not being able to socialize with friends affect their mental well-being (Husky, Kovess-Masfety, & Swendsen, 2020; Rahiem, 2020a; Son, Hegde, Smith, Wang, & Sasangohar, 2020). The pandemic brought the infection risk of death and led to intolerable psychological strain (Cao et al., 2020; Horeh & Brown, 2020). Stress has an impact on students' motivation (Martin, Cayanus, Weber, & Goodboy, 2006). Some students with psychological hardness will suffer a loss in motivation to perform and, even worse, a few will experience a severe state of depressed mood (Cole, Feild, & Harris, 2004). All of these factors mean that students are often at risk of significant learning loss (Dorn, Hancock, Sarakatsannis, & Viruleg, 2020).

However, the exploration of students' experiences conducted by the researcher showed that students remained positive and kept moving forward on their learning despite all the limitations they faced (Rahiem, 2020a). The students were still eagerly attending the online courses, working on assignments, and maintained their grades despite all the barriers and challenges they faced. In recognizing this, the researcher

continued the study and aimed to explore what kept the student's motivated to learn amid all the difficulties and constraints of learning remotely online? The research discussed in this paper, in particular, is the subsequent issue of looking at the experiences of university students studying during the pandemic, discovering that they remained motivated, which led to further exploration into the source of this motivation. By understanding their motivation, we can learn what could be done to help students succeed despite all the limitations and help prepare them to be motivated during this time of difficulty.

This study used the case of students in Indonesia, but the lessons learned are applicable beyond the country's borders, especially developing countries. Technologically advanced countries are equipped with all the resources required for online education while developing countries only have full-fledged online education (Ramij & Sultana, 2020). Many public institutions in developing countries also do not have access to structured online learning management systems (LMS) to promote contact between students and/or faculty members (Sobaih, Hasanein, & Abu Elnasr, 2020).

2. Theory/Calculation

2.1. Learning

Vermunt and Donche (2017) conducted a systematic literature search to identify empirical and theoretical work research on students' learning patterns in higher education using the ILS inventory in the reference period (2004–2016). Their study recognized four qualitatively different learning patterns: reproduction-directed learning, meaning-directed learning, application-directed learning, and undirected learning. In reproduction-directed learning, students strive to recall the learning material to enable them to replicate it in a test. They memorize the learning materials and sequentially pass through them, step by step, rarely thinking about the relationship between larger units. Students pay a great deal of attention to the regulations made available by teachers and other external agents. The reason they study is to pass the exam or to test their ability.

Students who study in a meaningful-directed way take a deeper approach to learn. They try to grasp the significance of what they understand, explore relationships between different facts or views, structure learning materials into a greater whole and engage critically in what they know. They learn in a self-regulatory way and do not restrict themselves to prescribed materials. Students who study in an application-directed way strive to explore the connection between what they know and the outside world. They're trying to find examples of what they're doing and think about how they're going to apply what they're learning in reality. Students who study in an undirected way do not know how to handle their studies. This trend can also be seen with students transitioning from one type of schooling to another, e.g., from secondary to higher education, from undergraduate to graduate, or students from another country with different pedagogical methods. They continue to follow the approach they have used previously, as they do not yet know how to learn better. They attach great importance to fellow students and teachers to provide support and help them adapt.

In this study's initial research report, the researcher addressed how the change in learning methods had impacted students' learning habits. Students had been used to face-to-face conventional teaching methods and had not found it easy to adapt to remote online learning (Rahiem, 2020a,b). The initial investigation results indicated that students appeared to have reproduction-directed learning patterns before the pandemic, in which they studied mainly for the examination. Because the students had previously been highly reliant on the teachers, they found it hard to adjust and could not catch up quickly with the learning when they were expected to study independently at home. They claimed that they felt that they were not learning because there was no lecturer to guide them in grasping the lesson (Rahiem, 2020a).

The study also showed that the university and its community were

not well prepared to face an emergency, such as closing the campus due to a pandemic. The major and dramatic change in learning resulted in the students learning in a largely undirected way. As Vermunt and Donche (2017) explained above, students have lost their way of learning because they continued to study in a way that they had used before. They faced challenges in adapting to new circumstances: curriculums and lessons originally designed for conventional learning, the unprecedented use of technology in teaching and learning programs (Rahiem, 2020b), the need to study independently and the subsequent lack of structure (Rahiem, 2020a). Teachers' support in this situation is very important (Vermunt & Donche, 2017). University learning should allow students to learn independently through various methods, with prior planning into how remote learning could be implemented if needed.

The biggest lesson from the COVID-19 crisis is that disasters or health crises could arise at any moment; therefore, prior preparation should enable society to face such threats, students to adapt, and trainers to be prepared with direct learning skills for emergencies. It is imperative that universities are better aware of the latest ICT available, as it is an alternative to schooling when learning is disrupted due to an emergency, and are better positioned to use these facilities in the future if another crisis is to occur.

However, the use of ICT for learning is not without problems. The students in this study explained that they missed getting the opportunity to socialize, develop relationships with peers, and work as a team on a class project during online learning (Rahiem, 2020a,b). Millis (2010) described cooperative learning as one of ten high-impact learning activities that improve student learning. Haggis (2004) clarified that learning in higher education is social and relational; it should be operating adeptly in a realistic environment, learning problem-solving and rational thinking, language and interpersonal skills. Lotz-Sisitka, Wals, Kronlid, and McGarry (2015) argued that higher education needs to provide students with opportunities for engaged and experienced transformative praxis. For this reason, it is essential to explore alternative ways for students to develop skills to communicate and work together during online learning.

Another thing to be taken into account is that higher education is intended to prepare youth for the workforce (Lester & Costley, 2010). How does learning pay attention to this during online learning? The researcher's study sample was prospective social science education teachers. They said that online learning could be effective for theoretical subjects, but not for more realistic lessons such as cartography or teaching practice (which they believed online learning would be ineffective). They also questioned how distance learning could prepare potential teachers for the world of work, as they had lost the required in-school training and face-to-face experience with students. Despite this, the unique benefit they have gained is a better insight into teaching online in a distant learning environment.

The changes in learning methods that influence student learning habits during emergency remote learning are feared to affect student motivation. In this study's initial research, students discussed online learning challenges, as mentioned above. The researcher found that students still completed the semester well despite all the challenges they faced during the 2019/2020 semester (February to June 2020). Understanding the learning concept is a solid basis for understanding the adaptation of student learning patterns to the emerging emergency learning environment during health crises and their measures to respond to the situation. This interpretation is used to clarify the research findings: amid all the limitations, what motivates the students to continue learning during the pandemic?

2.2. Motivation

Motivation is a complex aspect of human psychology and behavior that affects how people will spend their time, how much energy they expend on each assigned task, how they think and feel about the task, and how long they are engaged in the task (Urdan & Schoenfelder,

2006). Research has demonstrated that students with academic motivation continue to see school and learning as important, like to learn and enjoy learning-related activities (Zimmerman, 2000a, 2000b, 2008). Conversely, a lack of motivation is a key explanation for academic underachievement (Scheel, Madabhushi, & Backhaus, 2009). Numerous factors that have a real impact on learning and motivation are the school environment, educators' attitudes and expectations, and family and social values. These factors have been shown as critical factors that impact student participation and academic performance (Wang & Pomerantz, 2009). Motivation is, therefore, essential to students' academic achievement.

In this study, the researcher used two motivational theories, namely Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) and Self-Determination Theory (SDT), to outline the research context and results. SCT was first introduced as Social Learning Theory (SLT) in the 1960s by Albert Bandura. It evolved into SCT in 1986 and claimed that learning occurs in a social context with a complex and reciprocal interaction between the person, the environment and the actions. SCT's distinctive characteristic is its focus on social power and its importance on external and internal social reinforcement (Bandura, 1989, 1999, 2002, 2012).

SCT has added emotions and cognitions compared to SLT so that one's feelings and thoughts influence one's behavior and that one's behavior can alter or provoke reactions from the social environment (Oden, Ward, & Gisingani, 2019). The cognition of individuals on academic work is influenced by social-contextual factors such as teacher interaction, student expectations, and descriptions of the quality of learning content (Bakura, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Weiner, 1986). In this sense, motivation does not occur exclusively within the individual or entirely within the person's context. Rather, motivation is derived from individual encounters within the social context of the classroom and the school.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT), on the other hand, focuses on the forms of motivation: autonomous motivation, controlled motivation and amotivation (Ackerman, 2020; Ryan & Deci, 2000); as predictors of academic achievement. SDT was formulated by Deci and Ryan (2008). This theory discusses the social factors that enhance and reduce motivation, proposing and finding that the degrees to which basic psychological requirements for autonomy, competence and relatedness are supported, compared to the negative impact, forms and strengthens the motivation. SDT also examines people's life goals or aspirations, displaying differential relationships between intrinsic and extrinsic life goals to performance and psychological wellbeing (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Autonomous motivation includes both the intrinsic and extrinsic types of motivation in which people have recognized the importance of action and hopefully incorporate it into their sense of self (Willem, de Rycke, & Theeboom, 2017). If people are self-motivated, they exhibit volition or self-indulgence in their actions (Zenati & Souitaris, 2005). Controlled motivation, on the other hand, consists of both external regulation, in which one's conduct as a result of external contingencies of reward or punishment, and initial regulation, in which the control of action has been partly internalized and is energized by factors such as the desire for acceptance, the prevention of guilt, conditional self-esteem and self-involvement. When people are controlled, they are under pressure to think, feel, or act in a certain way. Both autonomous and controlled motivations invigorate and direct behavior, and they stand in contrast to amotivation, which pertains to a lack of intention and motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Vansteenkiste, Lens, and Deci (2006), Vansteenkiste, Soenens, & Lens, (2007) claimed that SDT has proved useful for understanding differences in student learning approaches, success and persistence. In addition to the concepts of autonomous versus controlled motivation for learning-related behaviors, SDT researchers (Kasser & Ryan, 1996) have increasingly paid more attention to the individual targets that students concentrate on. Individuals are said to have a natural propensity to focus on intrinsic and growth-oriented goals rather than extrinsic and out-of-the-box goals. The intrinsic goals are theorized to be more specifically

related to the fulfillment of the essential psychological need for competence, partnership and autonomy. The distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic purposes was originally used to assess psychological health and wellbeing. More recently, it has been related to learning, success and engagement in learning activities.

In some experimental studies, it has been found that activities with intrinsic goals rather than extrinsic goals promote deeper processing and a greater conceptual understanding of learning content and encourage the person to arrange both short-term and long-term learning assignments (Froiland & Worrell, 2016; Vansteenkiste, Soenens, Lens, Soenens, & Matos, 2005). Such results have been shown to occur because intrinsic goal-framing produces a particular level of motivation; for example, it encourages the task's orientation. However, extrinsic goals also have positive effects; namely, it encourages rote learning and provides higher persistence in short-term learning tasks (Vansteenkiste et al., 2005).

These two literature studies (learning and motivation) form the framework for this research. In the context of the COVID-19 crisis, students' nature of learning, learning methods, and learning habits may change, which may affect student motivation to learn. However, in the initial study of this project, students were found to be able to complete one semester of study and obtain good grades. By understanding student motivation, we can learn what helps the students learn despite the varying limitations. Also, by learning more about student motivation, we can suggest how to help and prepare students to be more resilient in challenging times in the future. Additionally, this information may also help teachers understand the learning process better from a student's perspective, which may positively influence their teaching.

3. Material and methods

This study looked at how students remained motivated to learn during the COVID-19 crisis. The research discussed in this article is part of a larger project on tertiary ERL education in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic. The researcher used a qualitative phenomenological approach as the analytical method. A phenomenology is a research approach that aims to explain the nature of a phenomenon by examining it from the viewpoint of those who have experienced it (Teherani, Martimianakis, Stenfors-Hayes, Wadhwa, & Varpio, 2015). Using a phenomenological approach, the researcher gathered and investigated the university students' insights on how they remained eager to learn, considering all the limitations they often faced when studying remotely from home. Phenomenology research investigates the nature of the experience and explores the phenomenon's plausible viewpoints (Casmir, 1983; MacDermott, 2002). The phenomenological approach outlines the meaning of experience, both in terms of what has been experienced and how it has been experienced (Teherani et al., 2015).

A phenomenological approach is concerned with understanding social and psychological phenomena from the people involved (Wellman & Krueger, 2002). The researcher obtained findings from the realities examined. Realities are thus treated as pure 'phenomena' and the only absolute data from where to begin (Groenewald, 2004). However, the researcher did not detach herself from investigating the students' realities in this study. Following the hermeneutic tradition, the previous experiences and expertise of the researcher are important guides to study. The researcher's education and knowledge led her to recognize a phenomenon or incident worthy of investigation (Neubauer, Witkop, & Varpio, 2019).

The researcher employed purposive sampling methods in selecting the study participants. This sampling method is the most important kind of a non-probability sampling to identify the primary participants (Groenewald, 2004). The sample was selected based on both the researcher's judgment and the purpose of the research and respondents with experiences relating to the phenomenon to be researched (Wellman & Krueger, 2002). The background and context of the data gathering are essential for interpreting the data and the findings' conclusion.

In the hermeneutic approach to phenomenology, theories help focus analysis and help decide which research participants will be involved and how research questions can be answered (Lopez & Willis, 2004). The learning theory and motivation influenced the researcher in determining who the study participants were, which included 80 university students studying social science education in the fourth semester at a public university in Jakarta. They were all studying social science education, with forty participants from class 4A (majoring in sociology) and forty participants from class 4B (majoring in geography). The participants were halfway through their studies, which generally takes eight semesters for undergraduates to complete. They had considerable previous academic experiences that they could then use to compare and contrast to the ERL experienced during the COVID-19 outbreak. The students came from various social backgrounds. This variation augmented the data further. The researcher intentionally selected students from educational programs as they were training to become teachers and had, therefore, taken training courses in learning strategies, educational media and curricula. They may, therefore, link their previous courses to the ERL during the pandemic.

The research participants were fairly balanced in terms of gender, with fifty-eight percent of female respondents. Forty percent of students had rented a room near the university to reside in while studying. Yet, only one percent remained in this accommodation at the time the research was conducted. Sixty-eight percent of the total sample lived in suburban areas of Jakarta and the surrounding areas. Just 36 percent of students are economically adequate, estimated by their parents' total monthly revenue above the Jakarta basic income standard (Rp. 4,416,000 or USD 313). Sixty-eight percent had a personal PC/laptop of their own, while 3 percent did not have a PC/Laptop, and the rest shared devices with other family members. However, all students had smartphones. Thirty-eight percent used a Wi-Fi connection, while the remainder had internet access on the phone through a restricted data plan that they would then tether to connect to the internet on their laptop/PC.

Participants' identity and university name have been concealed to protect their privacy and encourage them to speak openly. The researcher used the class name (4A & 4B), followed by a number for each person to be identified in the data analysis and findings. Before the data was collected, the researcher explained the research's scope and purpose, and informed consent was signed by all students who agreed to participate in the study. If they felt dissatisfied, they had the right to withdraw from the analysis without being questioned. The researcher obtained a research approval letter from the university research center, where the researcher worked, and the authorization to collect data from the university's research center where the students were studying.

The researcher collected data in creative ways. In the absence of direct interviews, due to the large-scale social restrictions that were in place in Jakarta at the time of the research, the researcher collected information from students using written media: diaries and essays. The participants wrote a diary containing two weeks of daily learning activities (May 4–18, 2020). Later, they concluded their thoughts and opinions in a reflective essay on learning during the COVID-19 outbreak, which was compiled on May 20, 2020. The researcher also held two online focus group discussion meetings following Patton's suggestion (Patton, 1990), which outlined the need to incorporate data collection methods for data triangulation and establish a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Meetings were conducted twice; each discussion lasted for 120 min and was attended by 40 participants each time (May 26 and 27, 2020). The focus group discussions sought to enhance the accuracy, reliability, validity and adequacy of the findings (member check). The researcher introduced the overall results of the analysis and then opened a discussion session. The researcher explained her understanding of the participants' experiences. The participants and the researcher discussed the findings and concluded that the study appeared credible after the participants acknowledged the report's consistency and correctness.

Hermeneutic phenomenology is rooted in perception, recognizing events and phenomena in an individual's life, and then viewing these experiences through that context (Neubauer et al., 2019). Hermeneutic phenomenology accepts that the researcher freely acknowledges her preconceptions and reflects on how her subjectivity is part of the study process rather than bracketing the researcher's subjective perspective (Kerry-Moran & Aerila, 2019). The researcher was mindful of the importance of the individual's past and took note (analytical memo) of the influence they had on the experience (Neubauer et al., 2019).

Hermeneutic phenomenology's interpretive work is not tied to a single set of analytical techniques; instead, it is an interpretive method involving several analytical activities (Bynum & Varpio, 2018). Following Bynum and Varpio (2018), the researcher began the study by defining a fascinating phenomenon that focused her attention: the students' learning motivation amid the limitations encountered during the COVID-19 crisis. The researcher studied the students' lived experience and focused on the phenomenological themes that defined the experience with the phenomenon by reflecting on her own experiences at the same time.

The researchers used NVivo to both store and analyze the data. This software allowed the researchers to interpret the detailed data that was gathered during the study process. The researchers also produced a continuous memo in the NVivo program that helped document ideas and analyze the participants' opinions, perceptions, and experiences. Analytical memos offer the researcher a means to record their thoughts during the study and code memos as supplementary proof for the thesis (Saldana, 2016). The analytical memos captured reflection writing, which were then reflected upon and rewritten, creating a continuous, iterative cycle to develop increasingly robust and nuanced analyses.

Throughout the analysis, the researcher retained a clear orientation towards the phenomenon under study and examined sections individually and then wholly as a group. This last step, often identified as the hermeneutic circle, underlines the practice of consciously considering how data contributes to the evolving understanding of the phenomenon and how each strengthens the significance of the other (Bynum & Varpio, 2018).

Phenomenological themes are the findings of the study. The researchers used the two-stage coding model of Miles, Huberman and Saldana to interpret the findings (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014; Saldana, 2009). The two stages of coding are not linear events; the data had indeed been continuously analyzed. In the first cycle, the researcher coded each essay and diary separately. During the second step, the researcher re-configured and re-analyzed the coded data in the first coding process. The second-cycle coding's main aim was to define the categorical, thematic, logical and theoretical sense of the first-cycle code set. The researcher updated the codes, added an array of different codes and withdrew a few codes to infer the study results. When recording the findings, the researcher made summative conclusions based on personal interpretations based on the data analysis facts.

4. Results

Despite all the limitations of ERL, the university students studied remained motivated to study from home. What was their openness to learn? Results showed that the motivation of the students fell into three major phenomenological themes, each with further associated sub-themes. The three themes and sub-themes described included: (a) personal, the sub-themes of challenge, curiosity, self-determination, satisfaction and religious commitment; (b) social, the sub-themes of relationships, inspiration, and well-being; (c) the environment, the sub-themes of facilities and conditioning.

On the basis of the researcher's interpretations, the researcher made summative findings based on the evidence of the data analysis. Data was systematically explored in a two-cycle phase. The following figure describes the analysis process and how the findings were established (see Figs. 1–6).

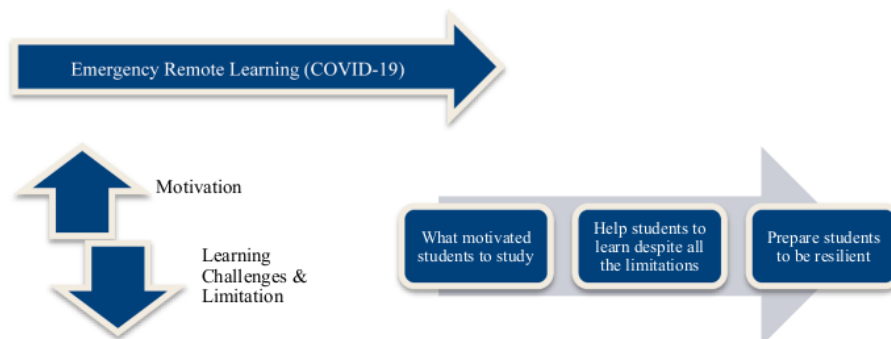


Fig. 1. Theoretical model.

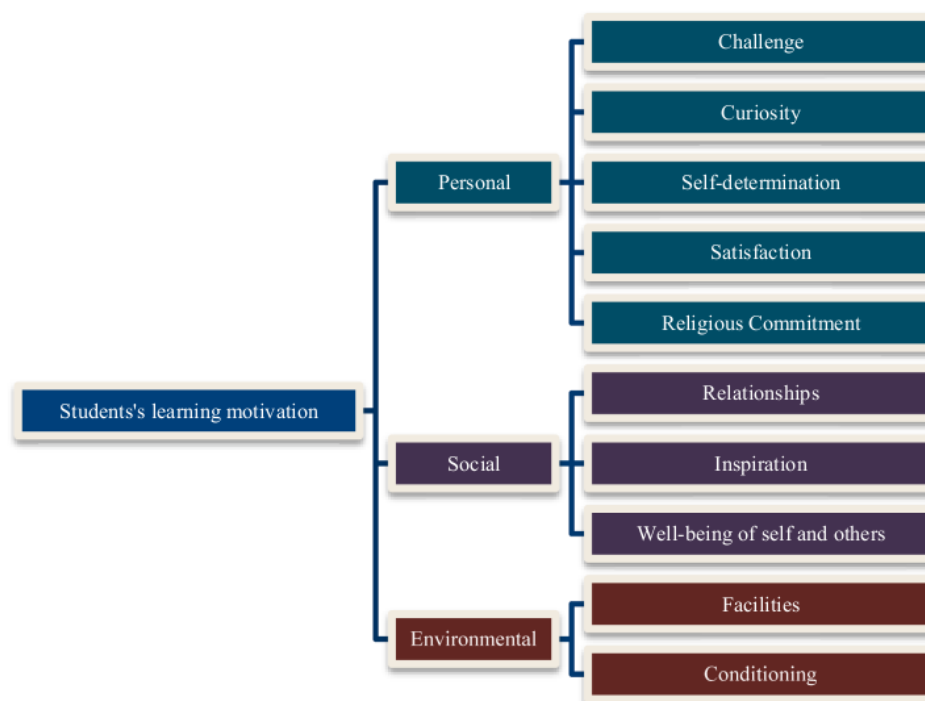


Fig. 2. Students' learning motivation.

4.1. Personal

The first phenomenological theme that emerged from the iterative and continuous research due to the two-cycle process was, "personal." The theme of personal motivation included five sub-themes and thirteen key codes. The challenge, curiosity, self-determination satisfaction and religious commitment sub-themes were perceived by the researchers as personal motivation.

Students remained motivated to study remotely from home during the COVID-19 pandemic as their learning targets challenged them. The learning impediments increased their determination to learn, even though they believed that ERL was ineffective. The students explained that they wanted to improve their grades from the previous semester. They were confident that they could still achieve their goal(s) and gain a good grade.

Another personal aspiration is that they were challenged to have a career choice when they graduated and make their parents proud of

them. One student expressed her desire to be an educator in the reflective essay. She pushed herself to be able to do well this semester despite all the limitations she had encountered.

What motivated me to learn during the COVID-19 pandemic was my desire to become a teacher, so even though learning during this semester was disrupted and learning was conducted online, I always pushed myself to be able to learn independently for the sake of my dream of becoming a teacher (4B10).

In the case of university students in Indonesia, their attachment to their parents is very close. It's different from young people in western society, who typically leave home after graduating from high school. Almost all students are also financially supported by their parents. In this social-cultural environment, the cost of studying in higher education is the responsibility of parents. Not only the tuition fees but also the students' daily living expenses, which are often financed by their parents. Almost all the students who participated in this research wrote, in

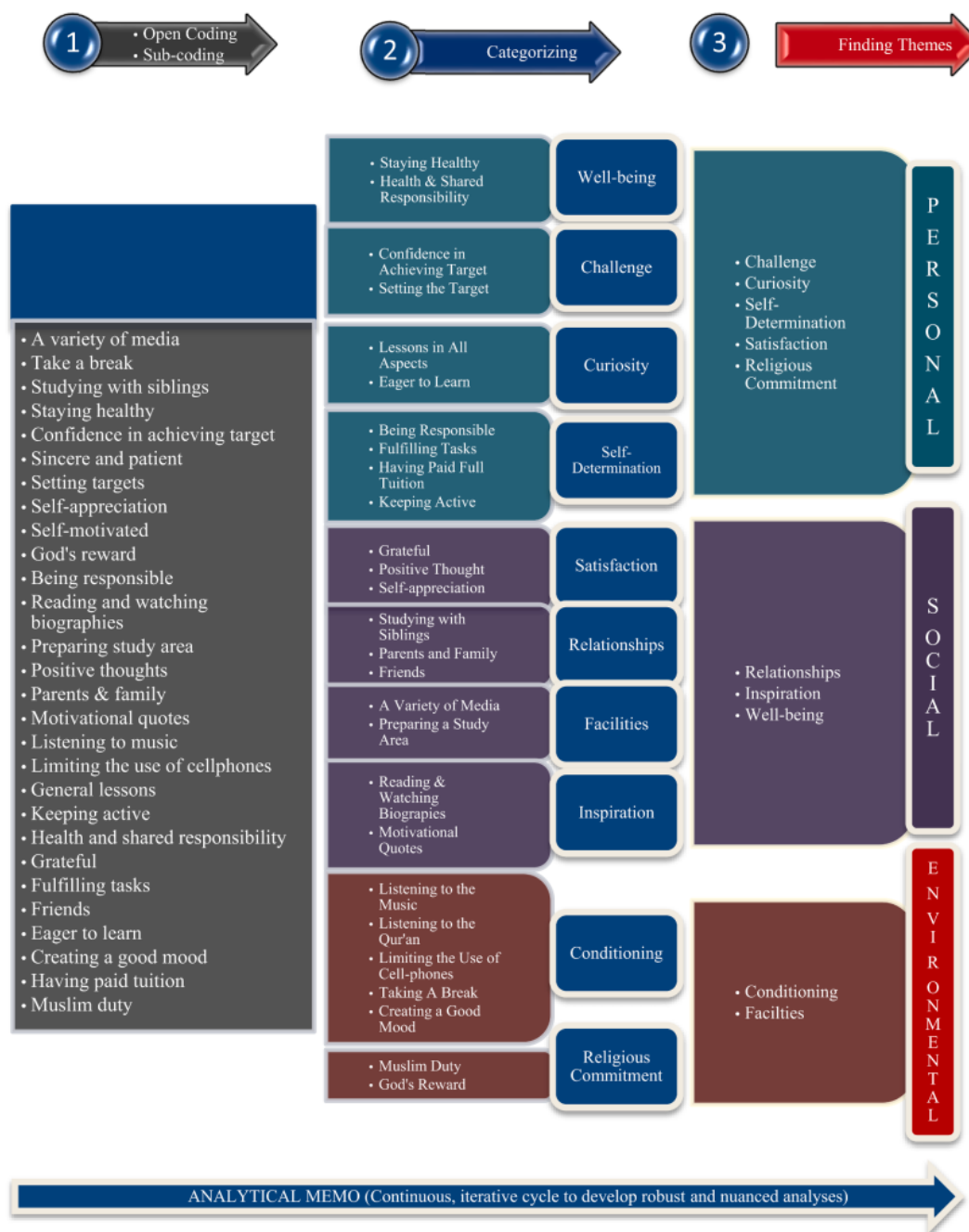


Fig. 3. Data analysis process and research findings.

the diary and essay, that they were still studying in a difficult situation because they didn't want to disappoint their parents. Learning at the university level is often a great sense of pride for students, parents and their wider family since it is still considered a luxury, and only thirty-three percent of the students have parents with a bachelor's degree.

The best way for me to remain inspired to keep learning during the COVID-19 pandemic is to recall my primary aim of studying at university. It's my dream to make my parents happy. My parents only

graduated from elementary school, so I must become a graduate and make my parents proud (4B8).

Many of these students do not live comfortably, as many of their parents receive less than USD 300 a month. Yet, they have social solidarity and empathy for those who are not so lucky. Eleven students volunteered to teach in the *Ayo Mengajar* (Let's Teach) Movement in underdeveloped villages for a month, from January to February 2020. They said in the FGD that the experience of living and teaching in a

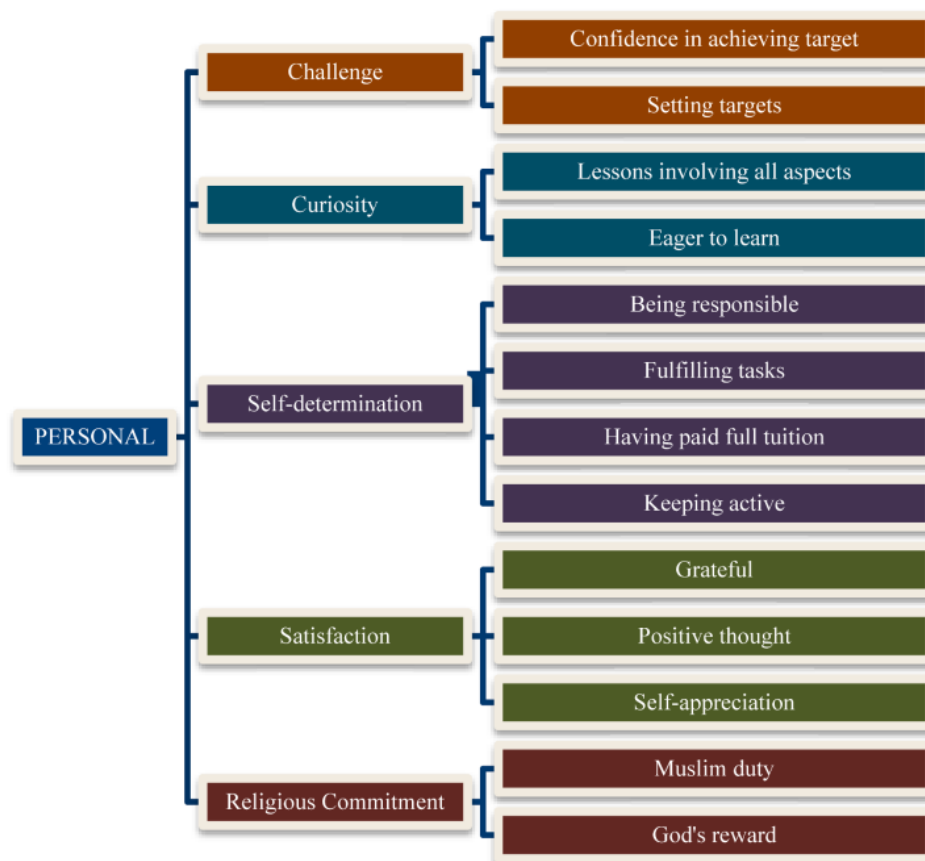


Fig. 4. The personal motivation.

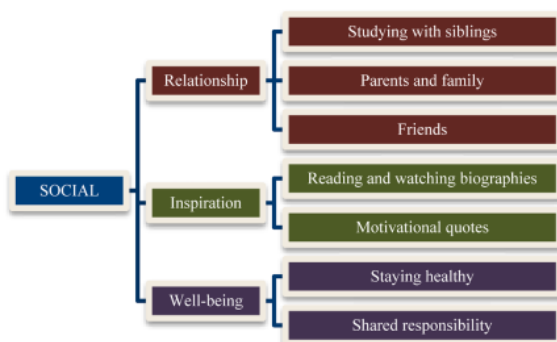


Fig. 5. The social motivation.

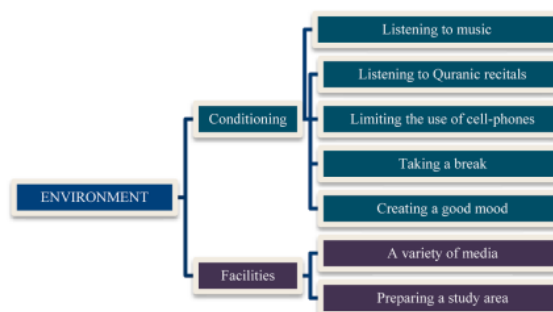


Fig. 6. The environmental motivation.

remote village taught them to be thankful and to keep up their love of learning. They saw that certain people were in a worse situation, and it inspired them to continue learning, so if the students they had visited could do it, why couldn't they? "It was an experience that made me think about how lucky I was, and it is this experience that made me so eager to learn even in today's tough times (4B22)."

Another supporting code that was interpreted as personal motivation is curiosity. Students retained their enthusiasm to learn new things, overcome trouble, and succeed during a tough situation. In the reflective essay, many students wrote virtual learning is a new experience. In the

FGD, the researcher found out that almost all of them had never used Zoom or Google Meet before. In the diary, they complained about the cost of accessing the internet and the meeting apps that used too much of their data plan. However, they wrote also that they were curious to use the new technology. As young people adapt to new experiences, it is challenging; overcoming adversities and keeping things going is an achievement. "These are all new things for me, but I am curious and would like to know more about how to use it (4C25)."

Self-determination is one category of code that led the researcher to infer that the student's personal motivation was what had kept them going despite all the limitations of remote learning during the COVID-19

pandemic. The data showed that self-determination was a specific category: to carry out assignments, to remain active, to study hard, and to think that, since they have paid school fees, they are not willing to quit but need to keep going. As described in the initial study and stated in the literature review section, students' learning pattern tends to be reproduction-directed learning. They were studying because they wanted good grades, so the assignments were very important; the researcher interpreted it as a personal theme since their commitment to carry out assignments came from themselves.

In this situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, I am inspired to continue learning by knowing that I am not on leave, there are responsibilities that I must keep working on. There are schedules that need to be followed every day, there are assignments from the lecturer that I have to complete (4B39).

Self-determination is also illustrated by how the students remained active. The students found life at home tiring, while learning helped keep them occupied, especially as they felt stressed from continually thinking about the world's current situation. The respondents felt that exercise kept them more focused and productive. An exercise is an act of self-determination, being responsible for one's own body, being mindful and present, and making sense of doing. A participant wrote in the reflective essay: "I usually do exercise, yoga or aerobics, or practice breathing. These exercises help me to concentrate on and keep full of energy, to know what I want. (4A22)"

Another coding that the researcher felt contributed to the conclusion of self-determination was paying full school fees, especially as for the majority, their parents paid the school fees. Only a limited number of individuals earned a scholarship or paid for their education themselves with their own money. They felt obligated to succeed in learning and did not want to waste their parents' money by not being driven to learn. They, therefore, determined that every penny spent by their parents was worthy. A participant stated in her diary:

My motivation for learning is to remember that I paid the fees in full, but I need to study at home. The money is impossible to be returned, so I have to study hard and participate in online learning, maintain the GPA from last semester, or hopefully receive a better grade than before (4C3).

The next category of codes is satisfaction, a feeling of fulfillment. The researchers used this category after perceiving the realities shared by students in their writing: they were motivated to learn as they continued to think positively, to be grateful and to appreciate themselves. Students were happy if they learned, and they remained driven to learn, even though ERL had many limitations. Positive thinking helped them to keep moving in this uneasy time. To stay thinking positively was shared by many students who emphasized the importance of it.

Furthermore, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, which inspired me to study, I keep on thinking positively. I tried to appreciate and be thankful for what was going on at the moment, so that I could continue to learn without coercion (4C30).

The research also revealed that the students rewarded themselves with small presents or alike. They marked their life achievements or any accomplishment with a little gift, however small or amazing the achievement was. One participant shared in the FGD: "I like to give rewards or small gifts to myself when I have finished tasks that I think are tough, such as things that I like: making my favorite food or watching movies, and so on (4B18)."

The last category, which was part of the phenomenological theme of "personal," is religious commitment. The students were motivated by their religious devotion. They believed that learning was a Muslim responsibility, and they received God's reward for learning. This perception is probably uncommon in other cultures, but this is how the students in this study looked at worship and religion and how studying is

viewed as worship. Since it is worship, learning then becomes a duty.

Learning is the duty of every Muslim, because I am a Muslim, I must therefore continue to study even if there is a pandemic like this. I have a deep belief that learning is worship, to repeat lessons is remembrance. Let's hope this pandemic comes to an end soon so that I can study again on campus (4B12).

One hundred percent of the participants in this study are Muslims. They all shared their religious practices in their daily diary and talked about their great faith in God and their religion. By having faith in God, they became thankful for what they have. A female student explained how she was grateful because Allah had allowed her to continue her education. She believed that God's grace that gave her a chance to study in higher education.

Despite the presence of the COVID-19 virus, which required us all to study online, even though it was difficult to do so, I had to remain grateful because Allah still allows me to continue my education. There are people out there who want to study at undergraduate level. A lot of people out there are trying to get to college, yet they cannot, so I will remain grateful even though I should study online now. Therefore, I keep studying hard, following the rules of the government, to stay at home and learn from home (4B34).

4.2. Social

The researcher interpreted the realities conveyed by the participants. Reading the diaries and reflective essays, it was concluded that they were also socially driven: their relationship with parents, family and friends; the social environment encouraged them to stay motivated to study.

The students' relationships with their siblings, parents, (extended) family and friends kept them learning in trying situations. Since school closures took place at all educational levels in Indonesia, students remained at home and studied with their siblings. They said that this also became one of their motivational outlets. "Looking at my siblings and cousins doing their school assignments makes me motivated to do mine (4B2)."

Family relationship is a close bond in Indonesian culture. Children often leave their parents' home when they are married and settled (have money to buy a house). Although many still stay in their parents' home, even if they already have their own families. Parents send children to study at a level that is as high as possible due to their responsibility and pride. These child-parent or family relationships are significant and become one of the key reasons students often expressed as what motivated them to keep studying despite all the limitations. They understood what their parents had sacrificed to meet their needs and send them to school.

My parents have always struggled to keep my sister and me going to school. So, there is no longer any reason for me and my brother to be lazy now. My parents are now working outside in the midst of a pandemic. Besides that, my parents really encouraged me and my younger sibling to keep learning online. My parents have made it easier for me and my sister to learn from home. We have equipment, such as laptops, smartphones, and ample internet and network data to make me ready to continue studying at home during the pandemic. (4B28).

Many students pointed out how their friendship with their classmates had driven them to continue learning in this unprecedented time. They found encouragement and enthusiasm by staying in touch and spending time together virtually. A student said during the FGD: "My friends and I are helping each other. We also have fun doing TikTok together and playing bingo to relieve the boredom of sitting at home for a long time. (4B31)."

If the students felt lost, they would look for inspiration. Inspiration is one category created from the data: reading and watching biographies and reading motivational quotes. Inspiration is a form of motivation that comes from social contact or learning from others about success, stories and thinking. Reading and observing other success stories (biographies) and inspirational quotes also kept them learning. "By watching and seeing smart people who have been successful and lived happily. I'm being inspired (4C19)."

They also drew inspiration from quotations, including quotations from a religious figure. One student explained how the words of Imam Shafi'i, a Muslim scholar, inspired him to keep learning any time he felt lazy: "If you are unable to withstand the fatigue of learning, you must be able to withstand the pain of ignorance (4B24)."

The last category was "well-being." Students stayed motivated to study remotely during the outbreak of COVID-19 because they wanted to stay safe and keep others healthy. Even though they didn't like learning from home, they felt a mutual obligation to control the virus by remaining home. They were concerned not only with themselves or confined to the family but also with others in general. An individual could not win this war against the virus, but they need the communities' teamwork to take any required steps, such as wearing masks and social distances. It is the responsibility of society.

I always feel that this is my duty and obligation. This situation has occurred because the government is trying to disrupt the COVID-19 pandemic. By following the government's policy of studying from home, working from home, and conducting worship from home, it's a way of care and participation to help control the coronavirus pandemic, so that in the future my friends and I can study on campus again together. (4B21)

4.3. Environment

Besides being personally and socially inspired, their eagerness to continue learning has also been derived from the community. Students have exposed the realities of learning during the COVID-19 pandemic: how environmental conditioning and learning-promoting facilities are necessary to inspire students to succeed in learning despite all the limitations.

Students should have some provisions so that they can study effectively. They need a certain condition that will make them stay learning for a long time to come. Some students prefer a peaceful and quiet learning environment. "To be more interested in learning, I always build a serene environment to make learning more effective. I'm looking for a secluded spot, and I'm also preparing all the learning supplies (4B17)."

In contrast, some are more motivated to learn while they're in chaotic moments, such as learning while listening to hard rock music. "Loud music makes me more excited about studying (4C25)." Regardless of what they preferred, the students could create their learning environment that proved effective for them, something that might not have been possible if they were not distance learning.

Some students explained how the extended period of learning online was dangerous as they would overuse their cell phones. Some students were overwhelmed and wanted to turn off the phone for several hours per day. "I'm trying to limit the use of mobile phones, so it's not too excessive (4B24)." This change is intended to prepare the learning mood.

5. Discussion

The threat of the virus, rapid changes in learning and day-to-day behavior, including financial difficulties, could make anyone lose hope and become overshadowed by despair. The students in this study expressed their dissatisfaction with the ERL and their annoyance with all the changes that they had encountered. Yet, they all managed to

complete the semester successfully. All students in this study participated in the lecture until the end of the semester, completed all the assignments and almost all had an achievement index above three (highest grade four). Quality index three means the students received a good grade (B). Out of 80 students, only six received an achievement index, which was less than three.

It is clear from the students' statements and responses that at times they had indeed lost some of their motivation to learn, frequently lacked energy, and were tired and bored, which is all understandable given the situation that they found themselves in. Yet despite all of this, the students did not give up and remained determined to study and finish the semester and the assignments given to them successfully. This motivation and the reasoning behind it, is what the researcher was trying to investigate in greater detail. The students encountered many limitations, but they remained motivated to study remotely from home during the crisis of COVID-19. They were personally, socially and environmentally driven. Students were personally motivated to study because they were challenged to achieve their personal goals, curious and eager to learn, determined and responsible to study, satisfied and grateful to remain healthy and to have the opportunity to study in higher education, and committed to their faith and believed that learning is part of worship.

5.1. Personal

Students shared what hindered them from studying, including their mental state. Most of the students, however, were motivated. The first phenomenological theme to describe what motivated the students was that they were driven autonomously by mental fortitude. From the researcher's analysis of students' shared realities, most of the students were self-motivated, determined or self-indulgent in their conduct. They had their own goals that guided them. They were not motivated by controlled motivation. It was not a reward, penalty or regulation that moved them.

Students had explicitly defined their individual goals, and all of them mentioned how these goals were their main source of motivation. They talked about how committed they were to reach their goals, no matter what was happening. Students concentrated on the plan. They had a natural tendency to focus on intrinsic growth-oriented objectives rather than extrinsic or guided intentions. Goals provide a context through which an individual reacts to events and results in a particular pattern of cognition, behavior and control (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). The students had a long-term goal of making their parents proud and creating a successful future for themselves with a proximal goal of achieving a good grade.

Rowell and Hong (2013) described two forms of goals: mastery (or learning) goal orientation and performance goal orientation. Mastery-goal-oriented students are academically driven to study and master materials to show their skills (Pintrich, 2000). Students with performance goal orientation, on the other hand, show their competence relative to others and appear not to take academic risks. While both goals can improve achievement, mastery goals are positively linked to inner motivation and steady learning outcomes, whereas performance-oriented goals appear to be negatively related to intrinsic motivation (Rowell & Hong, 2013). Students in this research have mostly been motivated by their intrinsic mastery of goal-oriented motivation.

The students verified their self-efficacy, autonomous and attributional motives for learning. They talked about their confidence in performing tasks and achieving good grades, including studying from home. They claimed that they could address the challenge of their study. Such behaviors were positive indicators that students were resilient and could overcome the daunting obstacles they encountered during the pandemic. The students gave encouraging signs that they had elevated efficacy expectations. Students with high efficacy expectations work on demanding assignments, make sacrifices, continue when faced with challenges, and anticipate that they will excel in the future. Students with poor self-efficacy for learning prefer to avoid undertaking

assignments, avoid making an effort, and leave when they face learning problems (Rowell & Hong, 2013).

Having a target is one of the important factors that ensured these students remained motivated. Goal setting means establishing an objective to serve as an individual's aim of action (Schunk, 2012). A student who sets the goal of attending a university must commit to study hard to learn and gain good grades, which will help the student achieve their target. These goals direct the students' actions and help individuals track their learning progress and appear to improve academic achievements (Rowell & Hong, 2013). When their performance is evaluated as positive, their performance improves, thus maintaining motivation (Locke & Latham, 2002; Locke, Shaw, Saari, & Latham, 2005). These findings are important for lecturers, as they need to ensure that they assess the students' performance to sustain and even improve their motivation. Informative input on their learning progress and whether students are on the right track to achieve their goals is beneficial for students to achieve their goals (Rowell & Hong, 2013). Lecturers may also encourage students to set realistic targets based on their competence, as Locke and Latham (1990) argued that setting realistic targets based on student competence is more successful than setting goals that are simple or too difficult to achieve.

Vermunt and Donche (2017) researched learning patterns in higher education and found four learning patterns. One of those is reproduction-directed learning, which implies students learn because they want to reach goals, such as passing a test. Reproduction-directed learning is what best explains the learning patterns of students uncovered in this study.

Learning in tertiary institutions should provide students with opportunities to learn from their surroundings, solve problems and think critically (Haggis, 2004). Students must be allowed to discuss and provide feedback on the actual events surrounding them (Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2015). Thus, learning should use meaning-directed patterns, where students learn through context, not just by memorizing the text. Diekmann, Friis, Lippert, and Østergaard (2012) offered target-oriented learning called simulation-based learning. Learning should use meaning-directed patterns, where students learn through context, not just by memorizing text. This learning approach's key process objectives are to improve learning, involve learners, and help apply what has been learned during the course.

Liem, Lau, and Cai (2016) summarized the empirical work on achieving goals and their effect on academic, social and well-being outcomes. The research was set up in Singapore. The researchers concluded that Singapore students would benefit from educational activities that concentrate on mastery or task-based objectives. This is also seen in this report's data, how the goal is important and is the main motivation for students to continue learning. Therefore, it is necessary for the teacher to clearly describe the learning objectives and then discuss what steps need to be taken to achieve them. If this were to be completed in the remote online learning era, learning would be better organized. It could help address the issue raised by the students that during the COVID-19 period, they felt that they were left isolated and lacked direction.

5.2. Social

The students' social interactions should also be encouraged to help them continue studying even in the tumultuous times of COVID-19: their relationship with family and friends, their inspiration from biographies and insightful quotations, and their social duty to others to keep everyone healthy by staying at home safely. Motivation does not take place exclusively within the individual or completely within the context of the person. Rather, motivation stems from individual encounters within the classroom and the school (Rowell & Hong, 2013). The researcher concluded from the revealing data that the second phenomenological theme was social, that students often found the driving force to study from within their social ties.

The students demonstrated how they supported each other. They repeatedly emphasized the importance of their peers and how they had become stronger together. When they were down, they looked for support and motivation from their peers. Social groups are very important to students. Ryan and Deci (2000) clarified that students' attitudes towards academics seem to vary depending on their social groups. Students prefer to identify with peers who share similar achievement and motivational characteristics. Peer groups affect shifts in students' intrinsic value or enjoyment of learning, and friends' attitudes about school become more similar. Therefore, peer attitudes are important to shape the classroom climate and influence academic sentiments (Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006).

Student perceptions towards school and learning can be detrimentally affected by negative social environments, such as family difficulties or peer (Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006). Some students in this research addressed the challenges of their parents in meeting the needs of their children. A few parents had lost their jobs in this difficult time. They also discussed how often they could not study because they had to help their younger siblings learn. However, almost all the students explicitly stated that their parents were their key reasons behind their motivation and a form of strength. They had very optimistic feelings towards their parents, aspirations, and how hard they needed to work to make their parents proud of their achievements.

Young, Sercombe, Sachdev, Naeb, and Scharmer (2013) looked at international students in higher education adaptations. Findings revealed clear correlations between participants' academic performance, satisfaction with life in the new location and psychological well-being, and aspects of their intercultural competence, interaction with non-co-nationals, including hosts, and their language skills. Social support and interaction with non-co-nationals were found to be critical for these international students. Social support is required to adapt to the new learning environment; the students in this study experienced drastic learning techniques. Almost all of them addressed how important social support was to advance their learning and help them adapt. Parents and teachers should also be mindful of the student's need to support in words or gestures. Students should develop a strong relationship with their peers to help each other in good and bad times.

5.3. Environment

The environment is the third phenomenological theme. The students were motivated by their surroundings, the place they were studying, the atmosphere and the facilities. Vansteenkiste et al. (2006, 2007) explained how the interpersonal environment could affect autonomous and controlled motivation. Specifically, social contexts (e.g., classroom climates) in terms of the degree to which they were self-sustaining rather than controlling students' learning. Some research confirms that autonomy-supportive contexts strengthen autonomous motivation while controlling contexts decrease autonomous motivation and increase controlled motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Students in this study perceived how the environment influenced their motivation independently. The environment did not directly affect their motivation. They explained how they prepared themselves to learn by conditioning their atmosphere and making themselves comfortable by learning in a certain place.

Reading their diaries and essays, they expressed their passion for learning in new ways, even though they had a hard time adapting. The main driving force behind their motivation was their self-determination, their autonomous and goal-oriented attitudes. The students pointed out two aspects of the theory of self-determination motivation and the theory of social cognitive motivation, which has not been identified in past studies: religious commitment and social responsibility to keep oneself and others healthy. Participation and involvement in the local cultural context enormously influence how individuals feel, think and behave independently of their values and beliefs (Kitayama, 2002). Their religious beliefs affect the way they think, feel and behave. They

considered learning to be part of the practice of their religious beliefs. Their faith motivated them to keep on learning. The importance of religious belief as a means of enabling young people to cope with and rebound from adversity is something that must be further studied. Modernization and globalization may introduce young people to world culture, but the cultural roots and traditional religious values of the society in which they live still influence how they work and respond to life's opportunities and challenges. The representation of young Indonesian adults in this research can also be seen in other Muslim societies, especially in developing countries.

Fear may be beneficial at some point during an outbreak, leading to behavior that might reduce the spread of the disease. Excessive fear can lead to the irrational belief that hinders control measures for infection and may precipitate, however, inadvertently, maladaptive coping strategies (Paek, Oh, & Hove, 2016). Although fear is an important tool in public health messaging, excessive fear can hinder its reach and exacerbate another public health issue (Hisham, Townsend, Gillard, Debnath, & Sin, 2020). Fear of being infected by the virus might keep students at home and encourage them to study at home. The students even said that learning from home during the pandemic was ineffective, but they were willing to stay home and explore from home to reduce the virus's spread. They transformed that fear they had developed into a sense of social responsibility.

Vermeulen and Schmidt (2008) investigated the relationship between the quality of the learning environment, the learning process, and graduates' career success. Responses to the questionnaire of 3324 graduates at the Dutch university, with a focus on traditional large-scale classes, were analyzed using structural equation modeling. The findings indicated an indirect effect of university education on career progress. The learning environment increases students' motivation, which in turn increases their learning outcomes. Learning results show a significant relationship to success in the early phase of graduate employment. During remote online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, students need to prepare their learning space and atmosphere at home. They said it could be a driving force to study when they're sitting in a place they felt comfortable at. Vermeulen and Schmidt (2008) agreed that the learning environment enhances the motivation of students.

6. Conclusion

In the tough times of the COVID-19 crisis, students still have a positive attitude towards learning. The innate factors that led to this attitude included; being challenged, their enthusiasm and self-determination, the satisfaction of attaining and accomplishing their personal goals, and their religious devotion. They were also inspired by their social circle, their families and their friends. They were influenced by biographies and inspiring quotes, were determined to remain at home to help contain the virus, and agreed that they should learn from home because they cared for their well-being and felt responsible for others' well-being. The environment also inspired them; the atmosphere and facilities at home helped them remain focused on learning. Their determination made them resilient, a source to overcome and thrive on adversity during the pandemic. They used what they had experienced to enable them to cope with the situation and make progress in their studies. The COVID-19 situation was their first experience of school closure for more than a semester and led to the students studying remotely, and adapting to challenges and many new experiences. They were not prepared, but many of them were able to make many adjustments and keep progressing. They will undoubtedly be able to manage these events better, should they do happen again in the future, if they are prepared. Education should prepare students not only for the workforce but also to empower them to be resilient in life's trials.

7. Limitations and further studies

This study is limited to the exploration of university students'

insights and observations, uses only qualitative data, and a less representative sample; the researcher suggested further studies involving more dispersed samples and using mixed methods. This research focused on studying motivation, which could be expanded to investigate adolescents' and children's vulnerability and resilience and establish a resilience education model.

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Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Appendix A. Supplementary material

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105802>.

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