

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Nowadays, many higher educational institutions implement online learning as a method for providing education. The emergence of educational technologies offers flexible learning opportunities to the twenty-first-century learners (Gedera, William, & Wright, 2015). Watson (2008) stated that online learning offers the advantage of personalization, allowing individualized attention and support when students need it most. That is why many universities have already applied one type of online learning called synchronous online learning. The former arranges learners to participate in the lesson at the same moment by using online tools like video conferencing or audio conferencing (Hernández & Flórez, 2020). This allows students to learn at a distance, anytime, and anywhere. Moreover, Salbego and Tumolo (2015) said that online video conferencing environments can be used in language teaching.

One of the most popular platforms for distance learning is Skype. As a synchronous online platform, *Skype* offers much more flexibility in course scheduling and class time allocation because of the internet-based nature of this platform may be conducted without students and teachers having to physically be at the same location (Yen, Hou, & Chang, 2015). Shirai (2007) argued that *Skype* gives us opportunities to encounter people who speak foreign languages through the internet and we can have mutual communication in real-time. Salbego and Tumolo (2015) claimed that *Skype* serves as tools for online interaction combining different modes of communication, such as body language, spoken and written language, visual and graphic systems, among others, and have been increasingly used for the purposes of teaching and learning languages. Thus, Skype has become one of the more suitable platforms for language learning. It is an excellent online language learning platform for shy students who are not fluent enough to

communicate in English language. Moreover, *Skype* helps language teachers as well as students to improve their technology literacy and increase their confidence using technology in the classroom (Hashemi & Azizinezhad, 2011).

Online learning offers new conveniences and has gained immense popularity, however the impact on student motivation correlated to online learning is sometimes overlooked (Lee, 2000). One possible reason is that educators used to focus on the student cognition while ignoring affective, socio-emotional processes (Chen & Jang, 2010). Meanwhile, it is a true fact that the key of a successful online learning implementation comes from students' motivation in online learning itself (Hamzah, Ali, Saman, Yusoff, & Yacob, 2015). As high attrition rates become a pressing issue of online learning and a major concern of online educators, it is important to investigate online learner motivation. Chen and Jang (2010) suggest that motivation should be taken seriously in the online learning environment.

Regarding the motivation of online learners, Hartnett (2016) argues that online students are often required to be more intrinsically motivated because the learning environment typically relies on intrinsic motivation and the associated characteristics of curiosity and self-regulation to engage students. To be exact, with increasingly internal drive students might demonstrate greater persistence, more positive self-perceptions, and higher quality task engagement (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Briefly, students who are intrinsically motivated tend to reach better achievements, because their inner motivation is the prime driving force for them to learn without any external coercion so that they are able to achieve their best.

One of the most well-known theories of intrinsic-extrinsic motivation is Self-Determination Theory (henceforth referred to as SDT). SDT argues that all humans have an intrinsic need to be self-determining, as well as competent and connected, in relation to their environment (Hartnett, 2016). Moreover, SDT states that in interacting with the environment a person seeks to fulfill the basic psychological needs for autonomy (sense of control and agency), competence (feeling competent with tasks and activities), and relatedness (feeling included or affiliated with others) (Bieg, Rickelman, Jones, & Mittag, 2013). In the lens of

SDT, there are three models of motivation; (1) amotivation (lack of motivation), extrinsic motivation (external), and intrinsic motivation (internal).

SDT was chosen as the motivation theory used in this present study, because this theory clearly describes the types of motivation. Starting from the motivation that comes from within a person (intrinsic), from the outside environment that affects someone (extrinsic), even there is no motivation at all (amotivation). In addition, Hartnett (2016) argues that SDT is the most suitable theory for investigating the motivation of students in an online learning environment.

There are a number of studies applied to SDT to examine students' motivation in online learning. One of those, a study conducted by Hsu, Wang and Bristol (2019). The study focused on re-examined the impact of Self-Determination Theory in online learning environment, including the students' motivation. Applying quantitative paradigm with 330 undergraduate students involved in the study. Moreover, The Situational Motivational Scale was used in the study to measure the participants' motivation in joining in the online learning course. Overall, the results indicated that the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs fostered students' self-determined motivation. Specifically, students perceived moderate-to-high levels of external motivation in the form of integrated and identified regulation, and low levels of intrinsic motivation and amotivation. In the end, this study enriched the literature review of students' motivation in online learning environment. Additionally, this study provided implications for online learning practices.

Nevertheless, few research studies are carried out when a pandemic occurs such as the Coronavirus outbreak that emerged in November 2019 and led to a global pandemic which affected almost every global aspect, including the educational sector (Nelson, Pettitt, Flannery, & Allen, 2020). The worldwide spread of the Coronavirus pandemic poses new challenges to higher education including methods of providing education. Many governments have ordered institutions to cease face-to-face instruction for most of their students, requiring them to switch, almost overnight, to online teaching and virtual education (Daniel, 2020). In

Indonesia, the government developed incredibly strict rules and regulations about teaching and learning activities in order to stop the spread of Covid-19. Based on a circular from the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture dated 17 March 2020, regarding the prevention of Coronavirus, all learning activities are carried out online from home. This new regulation poses new challenges both for students and teachers, since the regulation does not allow them to have a face-to-face meeting under any condition. Therefore, the study-at-home program is the only way to ensure education continuity (Chung, Subramaniam, & Dass, 2020).

Few research studies have been conducted during the Coronavirus pandemic, especially about students' motivation in online English learning. A study by Subakthiasih and Putri (2020), focused on investigating students' motivation in studying English during the Coronavirus pandemic, whether they had intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. Applying the quantitative method and using the questionnaire as data collection, the result of the study shows that the students had higher intrinsic motivation than extrinsic motivation in learning English during the Coronavirus pandemic. In other words, the motivation to learn English that comes from inside students was higher than the motivation that comes from outside students. Another study by Benhima and Benabderrazik (2020) investigated the role of using a *WhatsApp* focus group in motivating Moroccan English Department Students to learn during the Coronavirus pandemic. Investigating the motivated and unmotivated students, the result of this study revealed that the most highly motivating factor behind using *WhatsApp* to learn is attributed to extrinsic factors, whereas the demotivating factors are about lack and weakness of connection and lack of orientation. Hence, this present study will explore EFL undergraduate students' motivation in online synchronous learning especially through *Skype* as the platform in learning English through the lens of SDT in qualitative paradigm during study at home program due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

In this study the researcher addressed the following question:

What is the students' motivation towards the use of *Skype* for online English learning during study at home in the lens of Self-Determination Theory?

1.3 Operational Definitions

To avoid misunderstanding about the terms set out in this study, the researcher provides the definitions related to this study, as follow:

- 1.3.1 Synchronous online learning** : Synchronous online learning is live, real-time, facilitated instruction and learning takes place through electronic media (Hyder, Kwinn, Miazga, & Murray, 2007).
- 1.3.2 Self-Determination Theory** : A method of human motivation and personality that uses traditional empirical methods while employing an organismic metatheory that highlights the importance of humans evolved inner resources for personality development and behavioral self-regulation (Hartnett, 2016).
- 1.3.3 Skype** : A synchronous online video conferencing platform in which electronic media like computers and smartphones are utilized as a piece of an educational delivery system.
- 1.3.4 Study at Home Program** : Regulation that has been approved by Indonesian government regarding the prevention of the spread of Coronavirus (Covid-19) which requires all learning activities to be carried out online from home.

1.4 Aim of the Study

The present study aims to:

To identify students' motivation in learning English through *Skype* as synchronous online learning platforms during study at home.

1.5 Significances of the Study

- 1.5.1 Empirical use** : This study will show empirical understanding of what student motivation is while online learning during study at home program
- 1.5.2 Theoretical use** : This study contributes in enriching the literature review on students' motivation in online learning specifically during an outbreak since it has fewer studies conducted.
- 1.5.3 Practical use** : The outcomes of this research will be helpful for educational thinkers to better comprehend what the students' motivation in online learning during an outbreak is.