

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology employed in this study. It describes six parts of research procedures: the research method, setting and participants, data collection, data analysis, and research schedule.

A. Research Design

The study employed a descriptive qualitative case study design, which aimed to provide a detailed description of students' motivational experiences in completing paper-based and online English assessments. A descriptive qualitative case study was considered appropriate because the purpose of this research was not to theorize or test hypotheses, but to explore and explain students' experiences, perceptions, and attitudes using their own words within a specific educational context (Sandelowski, 2000). This approach aligned with the goal of the study, which is to examine how students account for their motivation across various modes of assessments in a real-life classroom setting.

A descriptive qualitative case study was characterized by its contextual focus, flexibility in data collection, participant-centered perspectives, and rich narrative descriptions, making it well suited for exploring variations in students' motivational experiences. Descriptive designs allowed researchers to remain close to the data and present findings in the everyday language of participants, which helped the researcher authentically represent how phenomena are experienced and understood by those involved (Sandelowski, 2000). Case study research further enables the use of multiple sources of evidence (e.g., interviews, observations, documents) to develop a comprehensive understanding of the case, enhancing the depth and credibility of findings (Yin, 2014). Thus, by using this approach, the researcher was able to remain close to the data, allowing the findings to authentically represent students' voices and provide an in-depth understanding of how motivation manifests in both paper-based and online classroom assessments.

B. Research Setting and Participants

This study was conducted at a junior high school in Sukaraja, Tasikmalaya, West Java, Indonesia. The school was selected because it implements both paper-based and online assessments (e.g., Quizizz and Google Forms) in English classes, although online assessments are used only occasionally, mainly for quizzes or examinations. This context provides an opportunity to explore students' motivational experience in a learning environment where paper-based assessment remains dominant while digital assessment is gradually introduced.

The participants of this study consisted of four eighth-grade students selected through purposive sampling, specifically extreme case sampling. Participant selection was based on the results of a preliminary questionnaire administered through Google Forms to all students in the class. The questionnaire, developed based on Self-Determination Theory (SDT), was used to explore students' motivational experience in completing paper-based and online English assessments.

Based on the questionnaire results, four participants were selected to represent contrasting motivational profiles across both assessment formats. Two students were selected based on their motivation scores toward online assessments, consisting of one student with the highest score and one with the lowest score. Similarly, two students were selected based on their motivation scores toward paper-based assessments, consisting of one student with the highest score and one with the lowest score. This selection was intended to capture varied motivational experiences and perspectives across different assessment formats.

To be included in the study, participants had to meet several criteria: (1) actively participate in eighth-grade English classes, (2) have experience completing both paper-based and online assessments as part of regular classroom activities, and (3) be able to communicate their experiences, perceptions, and motivation during semi-structured interviews. The selected participants were considered suitable because they could provide rich and meaningful information regarding their experiences with both assessment formats.

To ensure confidentiality, participants were anonymized and identified as P1, P2, P3, and P4. A small number of participants was considered appropriate for this descriptive qualitative case study, as the purpose of the research was to gain an in-depth understanding of students' motivational experiences rather than to generalize findings. This approach enabled the researcher to obtain detailed and context-specific insights into students' experiences in their natural classroom setting (Creswell, 2014).

C. Data Collection

The instrument used in this study was a semi-structured interview designed to explore students' experiences and perceptions in depth. Semi-structured interviews combine predetermined guiding questions with the flexibility to explore emerging ideas or seek clarification during the conversation. This format enabled the researcher to obtain rich and detailed descriptions while ensuring that all key topics related to paper-based and online classroom assessments were covered. According to Creswell (2014), semi-structured interviews are appropriate for qualitative research because they allow participants to express their perspectives freely while enabling researchers to probe more deeply into issues relevant to the study. Similarly, Muho and Taraj (2022) emphasized that semi-structured interviews are suitable for exploring students' motivational experiences, as they provide opportunities for participants to reflect on their feelings, challenges, and learning processes.

Each interview was conducted individually in a comfortable setting to encourage participants to share their experiences openly. The duration of the interviews varied depending on the flow of the conversation and ended when participants had fully expressed their responses. Ethical approval was obtained through the school, and informed consent was secured from all participants. Students were informed that participation was voluntary and that their responses would remain anonymous and confidential.

The interview guidelines were developed based on SDT proposed by Ryan & Deci (2000), which conceptualizes motivation through three core psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Accordingly, the interview questions were designed to explore students' perceptions of these psychological needs when engaging in both paper-based and online classroom assessments in the EFL context. These aspects were used to examine how different assessment formats supported or constrained students' motivation.

The interview protocol included open-ended questions that allowed participants to freely express their thoughts, experiences, and feelings. This approach enabled the researcher to explore students' responses in greater depth and gain detailed insights into their motivation in both paper-based and online classroom assessments. In addition, the flexible nature of the interview allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions when necessary to clarify responses and obtain richer information. As a result, the data obtained were not only descriptive but also meaningful, reflecting students' authentic perspectives on how different assessment formats influenced their motivation in learning English.

D. Data Analysis

The data collected in this study were analyzed using a qualitative data analysis technique that aligns with the characteristics of the data and the research design. Specifically, this study employed thematic analysis to interpret the data. Thematic analysis is suitable for qualitative case studies because it enables researchers to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) within qualitative data in a systematic yet flexible manner (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach allows the researcher to derive meaning from participants' responses while remaining close to the data and the participants experiences.

Through thematic analysis, the researcher moved beyond surface-level descriptions to uncover underlying motivational expressed by the participants. The identified themes were interpreted using Self-Determination Theory (SDT) as an analytical lens, focusing on how different assessment formats supported or

constrained students' basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This process enabled an in-depth understanding of how paper-based and online classroom assessments influenced students' motivational experience within a specific classroom context.

Ethical considerations were addressed throughout the data analysis process. Participants' confidentiality and privacy were protected by anonymizing all interview transcripts prior to coding and analysis. Pseudonyms were used to replace participants' real names, and all data were stored securely and accessed only by the researcher. The data were analyzed solely for academic purposes to ensure responsible and ethical interpretation.

Data analysis in this study followed the six stages of thematic analysis proposed by Braun & Clarke (2006), as follows:

1. Familiarizing with the Data

In this first phase, the researcher carefully read the interview transcripts several times to become familiar with the data. While reading, the researcher paid close attention to students' responses about their feelings, experiences, and perceptions when taking both paper-based and online English assessments. Some initial notes were also written down to capture important ideas related to motivation, such as enjoyment, difficulty, confidence, anxiety, and interaction with the teacher. This step was important to build an overall understanding before moving to the next stage.

2. Generating Initial Codes

After gaining a general understanding of the data, the researcher began identifying important parts of the data and assigning initial codes. These codes were based on words, phrases, or sentences that reflected students' motivational. To make the process easier, similar patterns were grouped using techniques such as color coding. For example, responses related to confidence, control, feedback, or emotional reactions during assessments were grouped together. These codes served as the foundation for further analysis.

Table 1. *Generating Initial Codes*

Interview Data	Codes
P1: Kalau di online sebenarnya juga bisa. Cuma kadang ada page yang berbeda. Kalau tertulis dulu ya, teh. Biasanya saya mengerjakan soal yang paling mudah dulu. Yang paling susah dilewati dulu. Kalau mentok dan tidak bisa, atau lupa caranya, biasanya ya sudah, pakai feeling saja. Apalagi kalau waktunya mepet dan masih ada soal yang tidak bisa, kadang jadi ngasal. Tapi tidak semuanya ngasal.	Prioritizing easier question Intuition
Kalau di Online, seingat saya, untuk Bahasa Inggris tidak ada page yang berbeda-beda, jadi caranya sama seperti tertulis. Kalau pun ada page berbeda, biasanya saya refresh, nanti kembali ke halaman awal dan jawabannya tetap tersimpan.	Refresh the page
P2: Terkadang bisa. Tapi kalau soalnya agak sulit, suka bingung dan tanya ke teman. Kalau online sebisa mungkin sendiri, karena soalnya beda-beda, jadi ga mungkin juga kalau mau tanya ke teman.	Interactive assesment process (offline) Independent in completing assessments
P3: Berbeda. Kalau tertulis, saya bisa berkomunikasi dengan guru dan teman untuk memahami soal. Kalau online, lebih sulit karena ada pengawas dan soal diacak, jadi tidak bisa bertanya dengan mudah.	Teacher accesibility (offline) Limited interaction (online)
P4: Kalau tertulis kurang nyaman, karena ada teman yang suka bertanya jawaban, jadi ga fokus. Kalau online juga kadang bisa berisik kalau guru keluar, tapi tetap lebih nyaman.	Less conducive exam progress (offline) Conducive exam process (online)

The participants' interview transcription showed that 15 initial codes represented different aspects. Here are the list of initial codes and their frequency.

Table 2. List of Initial Codes and Their Frequency

No.	Initial Codes	Frequency
1.	Prioritizing easier questions	4
2.	Eyes strain	1
3.	Independent in completing assessment	3
4.	Layout disorientation	3
5.	Conductive exam process (online)	6
6.	Less conducive exam progress (offline)	6
7.	Teacher accessibility (offline)	7
8.	Limited interaction (online)	9
9.	Interactive assesment process (offline)	3
10.	Less confident in regular task	3
11.	More confident in assessment	3
12.	Rush in assessment (online)	2
13.	Relax in assessment (offline)	3
14.	Not independent in completing assessment	2
15.	Ability to Complete Tasks Independently	

3. Searching for Themes

In this phase, the researcher began identifying broader patterns by organizing the initial codes into potential themes. Codes that shared similar meanings were grouped together to represent patterns in students' motivational across different assessment formats. The researcher carefully examined how these codes related to one another and whether they formed a meaningful category. At this stage, the process was still exploratory, so some themes were tentative and subject to change. The researcher also started linking these

emerging themes with the components of Self-Determination Theory, such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness. This step helped provide a clearer direction for interpreting how assessment practices influenced students' motivational experience.

Table 3. Searching for Themes

No.	Initial Codes	Potential Themes
1.	Prioritizing easier question Independent in completing assessment	Students' self-regulation in completing assessments
2.	Layout disorientation Not independent in completing assessment	Limited autonomy in online assessments
3.	More confident in assessment Relax in assessment (offline) Relax in assessment (online) Ability to Complete Tasks Independently	Students' Confidence and Perceived Competence in Completing Assessment
4.	Less confident in regular task Rush in assessment (online)	Reduced confidence in online assessment
5.	Teacher accesibility (offline) Interactive assesment process (offline)	Teacher support and interaction in offline assessment
6.	Limited interaction (online)	Restricted teacher and peer interaction in online assessment
7.	Less conducive exam progress (offline) Conduive exam process (online)	Differences in assessment environment

4. Reviewing Themes

After the initial themes were identified, the researcher reviewed them to ensure their accuracy and consistency with the data. Each theme was checked to determine whether it was supported by sufficient and relevant data excerpts. The researcher also examined whether the themes were clearly distinct from one another and did not overlap excessively. During this process, some themes were revised, merged, or separated to better reflect the participants' experiences. The researcher went back to the original data multiple times to confirm that the themes truly represented what the participants expressed. This phase was important to improve the clarity and credibility of the analysis

Table 4. Reviewing Themes

No.	Potential Themes	Themes
1.	Students' self-regulation in completing assessments Limited autonomy in online assessments	Students' Sense of Autonomy in Completing English Assessments
2.	Higher confidence in paper-based assessment Reduced confidence in online assessment	Students' Confidence and Perceived Competence in Completing Assessment
3.	Teacher support and interaction in offline assessment Restricted teacher and peer interaction in online assessment Differences in assessment environment	Students' Sense of Relatedness During Assessment

5. Defining and Naming Themes

Once the themes had been reviewed, the researcher moved on to defining and naming each theme more clearly. This process involved identifying the core meaning of each theme and explaining what aspect of the data it represented. The researcher ensured that each theme had a clear focus and was not too broad

or ambiguous. In addition, each theme was given a concise and meaningful name that reflected its main idea. The themes were also connected to the theoretical framework of Self-Determination Theory to strengthen the interpretation. This step helped make the findings easier to understand and more systematically organized.

Table 5. *Defining Themes*

No.	Definition	Themes
1.	This theme refers to students' ability to manage and regulate their own actions while completing English assessments. It explains how students make decisions about answering strategies, such as prioritizing easier questions and managing difficult items independently. The theme also highlights differences between paper-based and online assessments in terms of students' control over the assessment process. While paper-based assessments provided greater flexibility, online assessments sometimes limited students' autonomy due to technical settings and restricted navigation. These experiences influenced how students felt motivated and responsible during the assessment process.	Students' Sense of Autonomy in Completing English Assessments
2.	This theme focuses on students' perceptions of their own ability and confidence when completing English assessments. It explains how students felt more confident and relaxed in paper-based assessments because they had more time to think and review their answers. In contrast, online assessments often created pressure due to time limits, technical difficulties, and unfamiliar formats. Some students reported feeling rushed, confused, or less confident during online assessments. These experiences influenced students' motivation by affecting their sense of competence.	Students' Perceived Competence in Paper-Based and Online Assessments

3. This theme highlights students' social interactions with teachers and peers during the assessment process. It explains how paper-based assessments allowed more direct communication with teachers and classmates when students needed clarification. Students felt more supported when teachers were accessible and classroom interaction was more flexible. In addition, the physical environment of paper-based assessments was sometimes perceived as less conducive due to noise and peer distractions. In contrast, online assessments often limited communication due to stricter supervision and platform restrictions, reducing opportunities for interaction. However, online environments were generally perceived as quieter and more controlled, which helped some students maintain focus. These differences in both interaction and assessment environment influenced students' sense of relatedness and motivation during assessment activities.	Students' Sense of Relatedness During Assessment
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6. Producing the Report

In the final phase, the researcher compiled the results of the analysis into a structured and coherent report. The researcher selected relevant excerpts from the interview data to support and illustrate each identified theme. These excerpts were used as evidence to show how the themes were grounded in the participants' responses. The findings were then interpreted using Self-Determination Theory and relevant concepts of classroom assessment. The researcher also ensured that the analysis clearly addressed the research questions of the study. This final step aimed to present the findings in a clear, logical, and meaningful way for readers

E. Research Schedule

This research was conducted at a junior high school in Sukaraja, Tasikmalaya, West Java, Indonesia. It was conducted from September 2025 to May 2026.