

THE FACTORS OF STUDENTS' INVESTMENT IN LEARNING ENGLISH DURING ONLINE LEARNING AT ONE OF SMPN IN MUSI RAWAS

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APA Citation: Anggraini, Y., Eryansyah, E., & Silvhiany, S. (2023). The factors of students' investment in learning English during online learning at one of SMPN in Musi Rawas. *English Review: Journal of English Education*, 11(1), 47-52. <https://doi.org/10.25134/erjee.v11i1.6339>

Received: 19-10-2022

Accepted: 17-12-2022

Published: 28-02-2023

Abstract: Most of the students' reason decided to invest in learning English was because of the perceived capital that provided them with benefits for their academics as well as their future careers. This study was a qualitative narrative inquiry which was aimed to investigate the factors affecting the students' investment in learning English during online learning at one of SMPNs in Musi Rawas. The instruments used to collect data in this study were interviews and documentation. Seven ninth graders at one of SMPNs in Musi Rawas were involved as respondents in this study. Findings from the interviews indicated that the most dominant factors affecting the ninth students to invest in learning English was family support, the second dominant factor was to get better English achievement, and the last dominant factor was past experience. The findings from documentation collected in this study confirmed that the seven students had put some efforts in their investment in learning English in order to acquire their goals in the present and also future. They also wanted to improve their English language skills.

Keywords: *investment; learning English; online learning; perceived benefits.*

INTRODUCTION

In this globalization era, there are many aspects influencing people's life, such as economy, culture, and even language. Language is a means of communication that conveys meaning and message to each other. It helps people to express their thoughts, emotions, feelings, and desires. Thus, language is an important parts of human life because every human being needs a language to communicate with one another.

In this era, English is spoken by millions of people in the world. It has usually been used to interact effectively with people from all over the world. English has achieved the status of being a universally comprehensible international lingua franca (O'Neil, 2018). English as a global language can be used as a first, second or foreign language. English's distinctive quality as a global language suggests that it is primarily utilized for communication in most countries throughout the world since information is transmitted inter-

countries (Rao, 2019). The information is delivered in a way that takes into account codes in a multilingual society. Therefore, many people consider the need to master English for their life (Ahmad, 2016).

More than ever, in one of SMPNs in Musi Rawas, English is a compulsory subject from grade 7 to grade 9. Learning English is expected to be able to reach the functional level, where the students are able to communicate spoken and written english to solve daily problems. The communication skills included are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. According to the Ministry of National Education in Kepmendiknas No. 22 of 2006, English is a tool to communicate spoken and written. Therefore, English subject was directed to develop those skills, since the students were able to communicate in English at a certain literacy level.

The spread of Covid-19 pandemic had reached many areas in our life. In this pandemic era, for

instance, it is undeniable that learning is done online. The students have to use some applications to participate in every meeting. Therefore, the student must be able to master in English, in order the students to do their tasks and homework, especially in academic texts by themselves. Anwar and Wardhono (2019) argue that learners need English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in order to study at an English-speaking university or college, or because they need to access English-language academic text. Then, during the online learning, the teacher always gave assignments or quizzes in everyweek, and sometimes the material of the assignments was not explained by the teachers previously. Therefore, the students had to understand the material indpendently by themselves, because they wanted to get good grades in academics, especially in the English subject (Adger *et al.*, 2018; Murray & Christison, 2019).

Considering to meet the demands of English proficiency, the students had to begin to invest in learning English. According to Teng (2019), the idea of investment might more effectively describe how students' relationships with the target language are socially and historically created, as well as how ambivalent they are about learning and using English. Assalahi (2018) also states that the motivation to learn English actually is not the same as being involved in investing in language learning, because the investment involves commitment from students and the practice community. Similarly, Moná and Rodríguez (2019) also explain that, despite their motivation to learn a language, students may put little effort into their studies as a result of marginalization, racism, intolerance, classism, and other forms of prejudice. These inequitable relations of power could affect learners' investment despited their high level of motivation to learn the foreign language. In other words, it could be explained that the students might have a high motivation in learning English, but it did not imply that their investments were same as their motivation (Jiang *et al.*, 2020; Sung, 2020).

The notion of Investment was firstly introduced by Norton in 1995, she had mentioned that investment perceived language learners as having a complex social history and multiple desire. The main reason language learners invested in the target language because they did so in order to gain a wider range of material and symbolic resources (Darvin, 2019; Darvin & Norton, 2021; Lu *et al.*, 2020). The students were aware that their investment in the target language could help them to acquire the resources which would increase the

value of their social power and cultural capital. Learners invested in learning English because they hoped that it would provide a wider range of material and symbolic resources that increase the value of their cultural capital and social power (Darvin & Norton, 2017). Teng (2019) believes that investment depends on learners' perception of affordance, benefits for the self, or the action opportunities grasp by the learners. Thus, It understood that the belief of investment spilled the socially constructed desires and goals of the learner between the learner and the destination language. Therefore, the model of investment is located at the intersection of identity, capital, and ideology (Darvin & Norton, 2017; Lado & Quijano, 2020; Leeman, 2018). However, this study was only focused on the capital of investment.

Regarding to Capital and Investment, Darvin and Norton (2017) further states that language learners invest in language knowing that it may aid them to gain greater resources that will increase the value of learners' social and cultural capital. Then, drawing on Bourdieu (2020), we use capital to recognize that power exists in different forms that is from the economic to the cultural and social. Therefore, from the statement above we could illustrate that students affordance in their language learning investment was influenced by the benefits provided by his family. It understood that the background and context of students learning were related to the outcome of the individual's learning investment. Darvin and Norton (2017) also states that Investing and learning must be worth the time, effort, and money spent. It could be concluded that the gains from language learning were expected to be comparable to the energy utilized during the learning process. As Darvin and Norton (2017) argues, if learners invest in a language, they do so with the understanding that they would acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which would increase the value of their cultural capital and social power. Therefore, from the statement above we could illustrate that students affordance in their language learning investment was influenced by the benefits provided to theirs. It understood that the background and context of students learning were related to the outcome of the individual's learning investment (Rintaningrum *et al.*, 2017). Thus, with the purpose explained before, this paper addressed the following research question: 1) what were the factors of students' investment in learning English during online learning?

METHOD

The present study employed a narrative inquiry approach to know the EFL students' investment in learning English and also explained the interests of the participants during their English learning process especially in this covid-19. Clandinin and Connelly as cited in Haydon and van der Riet (2017), states that "Narrative inquiry is a way of understanding and inquiring into experience through collaboration between writer and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieu" (p.20). It understood that narrative inquiry was seen in a variety of ways and tends to transcend a number of different approaches and traditions such as biography, autobiography, lifestory, and life course research.

This study was conducted at one of SMPNs in Musi Rawas, involving ninth-grade students. There was a total of 7 students involved in this study. The students who rarely came to school were not involved in this study because they were hard to find in the school and they were also not active in the class.

The data of this study were collected by asking the participants' opinions. The method to collect the data required a narrative inquiry approach by using some instruments, they were interview and documentation. This study was aimed to find out about what factors affecting the students' investment in learning English during online learning. The participants were allowed to use English, Indonesian, or translanguaging to describe their responses. It would avoid the language barrier that might hinder their ability to express their opinions.

In this present study, the analysing of data focused on the interview. The data were analysed by thematic analysis. The first thing to do once the data obtained was gaining familiarity, then proceed to generating initial codes; after that, searching for themes. After the theme was determined, the next process was reviewing the theme and followed by defining and naming themes. The last step was producing the report. The interview was done in semi-structure interview type. It was used to analyse the students investment in learning English. The responses of interviews were recorded during the interviewing and they were transcribed descriptively, coded and the interpreted with narrative analysis by pointing out investment in learning English through sequences of narrative procedures by adapting Creswell's model of qualitative data analysis (Nawawi, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results are presented related to the research question, namely the factors affecting students to invest in learning English. The results of this study were taken from the Interviews results.

The factors why learners invested in learning English

Based on the interviews from the participants, there were three various factors why the ninth grade students in one of SMPN in Musi Rawas invested in learning English.

Past experience

The first factor was past experience. There were two students who wanted to follow their brother footsteps. The students were Fino and Ani (psuedonym). Fino's brother had become a police officer right now at Lubuk Linggau. He could be a police successfully right now because of their proficient in English. While Ani's brother had become an English teacher at one of English course in Muara Beliti since he was at senior high school. Thus, Fino and Ani were really proud of their brother's achievements. Then, they started to invest in learning English right now. They wanted to get a better job like their brothers in the future.

"Hmmm... I was motivated by my brother who was currently a police in Lubuk Linggau. He was very proficient in English. Thus, he can graduate to become a police. My parents also really support me in learning English. They said that English would help me easier to get a job later. One of them was like working in a foreign company, one of the requirement was to be able in speaking English." (Fino)

"I liked English because of the inspiration and motivation from my brother who has taught at one course in Muara Beliti since he was in high school. I wanted to follow his footsteps, at least I was able to make my own money although i was still a student. My brother and parent always supported me to be proficient in English, because they thought English was very important. English would help me easier to get a job later." (Ani)

From the statements above, it could be concluded that the students believed investing in learning English would help them to achieve their success as same like their brothers. It shown that the factor came from themselves, which means that the factor was included as extrinsic factor. Those who are extrinsically motivated perform a certain action not because they truly enjoy it, but because

of a reward that is available in their environment (Burda *et al.*, 2018; Buzdar *et al.*, 2017; Locke & Schattke, 2019). It understood that extrinsic motivation involved doing something because they wanted to earn a reward (Cherry, 2022). Legault (2020) also states that the extrinsic activities is an individual engages to an expected outcome rather than for one's sake. Therefore, the students invested in learning English was because they wanted to followed their brothers' success footsteps. Darvin and Norton's (2017) analysis, discusses if learners invest in language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire more symbolic and material resources, which in turn will increase the value of their cultural capital and social power.

Family support

The next factor was family support. There were 5 students who stated that their influences to invest in learning English were because of their parents encouragement. In past, their parent could not speak English at all, because they were just a farmer, laborer, and trader who only stayed at a village. Thus, their parents hoped that their children might learn English well, in order they could get good grades in academics right now, especially in English subject. Their parents also believed that English would help their children more easily in finding a job in the future. Thus, their children was taking an offline or online English course right now, in order their children's careers would be better in the future. Their parents hoped by investing in learning English, their childrens' dreams will come true.

“Initially, my parents who motivated me to learn English. However, as time went by, It was myself that pushed me to learn English. I realized that my self who need English. My parent could only provide a support and encouragement for me to learn English. My parent wanted me to be able to achieve my goal of becoming an English teacher in future. Therefore, I have to be good at English.” (Leni)

“My parents. Because they always remind me about the importance of English. They always ask me to learn English, like taking courses or learning in my own way (listening to English songs), to improve my ability in learning English.” (Hani)

“As I mentioned before, My parents always said if I was proficient in English, then my career would also be better in the future. My father previously asked me to join with one of English

course in Muara Beliti. However, my mother didn't allow it, because our house was far from Muara Beliti. Therefore, my parent bought me a laptop to help me learn more easily, especially in learning English.” (Cinta)

“Of course. One example was like my parent bought the internet quota for me to study English. They did not support me to take an English course was because the location of my house was far from Muara Beliti, which made my parent did not allow me to join there. Also there was no English tutor in my village. Therefore, I had to learn English independently by Internet.” (Veny)

“My parents supported me to take an English class to increase my knowledge in learning English. The form of support they provided was a financial, because as I talked before that they did not speak English at all. Beside learning English at school, taking online class was my another way to learn English. My parent did not really think much about my learning process, because they had tried to help me as best they could.” (Santi)

Based on the five students's statements above, they explained that their parents always gave an advice about the important of learning English. Their parents also wanted their children got a good grade in academics, especially in English subject. Therefore, they began to learn English by some ways, like listening to English songs, taking an offline English course or online English course. Although their parents were a farmer or laborer in her village. However, they really appreciated the importance of learning English for their children, since they did their best to support their children in learning English, such as encouraging her to take English courses because her parents could not speak English at all. Thus, their English learning were stimulated both through instrumental motivation and acts as a symbolic force for them and their parents. Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation are important for children's success, motivation from parents is a separate form of motivation that has a more direct and positive influence on student achievement (Adamma *et al.*, 2018; Kumar & Hossain, 2017; Tripathi *et al.*, 2018). It means that If parents supported their children's invested in English by facilitating language learning opportunities, children are more likely to achieve success sooner. Bariroh (2018) estimated that the kids' parent-related motivation or what they called parent-oriented motivation would give the positive after effects of parental involvement and its part in

understudies' engagement and accomplishment.

Better English achievement

The last factor was getting a better English achievement. There were 3 students who stated that when learning was carried out online, the students had to be able to understand English material independently, because their teacher rarely explained the material in detail. Therefore, the students were decided to study English right now because they needed to be able to do their tasks or quizzes that given by their teacher in every week. Then, they wanted to get a better grade in English subject. Their grade in English subject would also affect their academic grade.

“The most pressing reason for me to study English right now is the learning condition that is carried out online. Now, the teacher often gives assignments without explained the material at all. That's why, we have to understand the material independently. We have to submit the assignments on time. If I just stay silent, my academic score will be low exactly. Therefore, my parent and my brother asked me to join one of English course in Muara Beliti immediately.” (Hani)

“English was one of the compulsory subjects in my current school. Especially when learning was carried out online, I had to be able to understand the English material independently. Thus, in my opinion, English was a must for me to learn in order to improve my academic grade and also my career in the future.” (Veny)

The students explained that when learning was done online, they had to be able to understand the English material independently. They had to be able to do the assignments and quizzes given by their teacher in every week. Thus, according to them, investing in learning English would help them to get good grades in academics, especially in English subject. According to Wang (2018), intrinsic motivation is acting in a way that is motivated by internal rewards. In other words, you are motivated to engage in an activity because you find it to be inherently satisfying. It was in line with the statement that Learners invested in learning English was because they hoped that it will provide a wider range of symbolic resources that increased the value of their cultural capital and social power (Bourdieu, 2018; Darvin & Norton, 2017).

CONCLUSION

The seven participants at one of SMPN in Musi Rawas realized how important to invest in learning

English to achieve the desired goals. The most dominant factor influenced the students to invest in their English learning was the family support. Their parents believed that investing in learning English would help their children in getting a good academic and their career in the future. The family support could be in the form of material and non-material. The material support could be seen from the support of parents by financing their English education and facilitating the needs of the participants. While the form of non-material support could be seen from the encouragement of parents in providing advices and overviews to participants about the importance of learning English for their future. The second dominant factor was a better English achievement. The students explained that the reasons they invested in learning English was because of the learning situation changing. When learning done online, their teachers often give the assignments and quizzes in everyweek (without material explanation before). They had to understand the English material independently. Then, the last dominant factor was past experience. The students explained that they want to follow their brothers' success footsteps. They added that their brothers could be a police and a teacher at a course successfully because they were proficient in English. Therefore, the students were motivated to invest in learning English.

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