

The Use of ELENA Towards Students' Motivation During the Online Learning in Universitas Negeri Semarang

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Abstract. The changes caused by the pandemic of COVID-19 led education sectors in Indonesia to find a new way of teaching-learning processes. Due to the pandemic, students found it difficult to keep themselves motivated to keep up with school materials which could affect their academic from time to time. Furthermore, they still attended the online class but they experienced learning loss because they could not maximize the potential of the e-learning used. This study aimed at evaluating the use of ELENA utilized during the online teaching-learning processes in UNNES which affects students' academic motivation. Observations, interview, and 20 Likert-scale items of questionnaire were conducted and distributed to 45 students of English Literature and Education Department of UNNES. The result of this study proved that students had good impressions towards the use of ELENA as a platform to their teaching-learning activities. Some of their answers were the students' quality of work, the students' attitudes towards assignments, the students' confidence, the learning process, the design of ELENA, the students' behavior in lessons, and the students' attendance. This research is expected to be one of the references for other researchers to conduct similar studies on this related topic.

Keywords: electronic learning aid, academic motivation, online learning.

1 Introduction

The pandemic of COVID-19 has brought a lot of impacts on all sectors in Indonesia including education. When students used to learn face-to-face through a direct method of teaching, they now have to adapt to the new way of learning through the help of online education technology. This technology facilitates not only for teachers in delivering the lessons but also for students in understanding the school materials online. As online learning deals with the presence of digital technology and some applications, universities need to set up a learning management

system that can facilitate all the students' needs comfortably. Besides, teachers should also be able to monitor and evaluate students' learning processes from time to time.

Choosing the right method for teaching tertiary students is another challenge that universities need to set up. Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES) is one of the state tertiary institutions in Semarang that has been providing a suitable method of teaching students online. They believe that they have the responsibility to create a comprehensive, conducive, and also effective way of learning for their students (Abidin, 2020) [1]. UNNES has been optimizing an electronic learning aid abbreviated as ELENA aiming to reduce the number of COVID-19 spread in Semarang and also support the academic activities for the tertiary students (UNNES. Panduan Elena, 2016) [2].

ELENA is an electronic learning site which is based on (Moodle) version 2.0 and created for the students of Universitas Negeri Semarang. This learning aid has been created and developed since 2012 by BPTIK (Information and Communication Development Department). The university itself concerns with providing comprehensive features so that all tertiary students do not have to visit different websites for different academic purposes.

ELENA has some benefits that all students can obtain, such as accessing the online classes, submitting assignments, filling the questionnaire, and accessing discussion forum (UNNES. Panduan Elena, 2016) [2]. Moreover, ELENA facilitates the users with comprehensive sections including the course overview, timeline, navigation, private files, badges, calendar, and upcoming events. The course overview consists of the current courses or classes that you have enrolled in. Next, the timeline displays the due time of the upcoming activities. When the deadline is coming near, it will appear in this timeline section. The users can even set whether they want to display the due date for the next week, next month, next 3 or even 6 months. Then, the navigation panel helps the users whether they wish to return to the site home, access the site page, or even visit the courses. Moreover, the private files section manages to keep a record of users' private files which cannot be accessed by other users. The section of latest badges displays any kinds of badges that users earn as their achievements when they successfully completed some missions beyond the minimum standards. Further, the calendar section shows the date and days that lecturers can highlight some changes on online courses or assignments' submission. Lastly, there is a section of upcoming events. Similar to timeline that highlights the due time of upcoming test or deadline of assignments, upcoming events underline the events that students need to apply for or enroll via online.

Having the urge to comprehend these features is not an easy task to do. The implementation of UNNES' learning aid has intrigued not only the tertiary students but also the lecturers. Lecturers might be unwilling to utilize and maximize the benefits of ELENA for their teaching processes (Nurkhin, 2021) [3]. As a result, students will get dull learning processes because lecturers cannot keep up with the shifting learning pattern. Shortly, facing the difficulties in utilizing the learning aid affects some students in their academic achievement negatively. In contrast, many students mentioned that the presence of ELENA has affected their academic motivation to be more satisfying than before. Students even believe when they have (perceived usefulness) towards ELENA, they will have higher performance and better academic outputs (Adros and Oktarina, 2019) [4].

Motivation is something that keeps pushing someone or some people to do something and achieve what they desire in life (Ryan and Deci, 2000a) [5]. Motivation is a strong tool that

helps people push their limits in achieving specific goals (Dobre, 2013) [6]. Motivation is fundamental especially in learning because it shows the academic performance (Gbollie and Keamu, 2017) [7]. Everyone has their own motivation in doing things either to perform well professionally, have great income, get their popularity in a community, or others. Similarly, it works the same with students in performing their capabilities at school academically. Students who have no motivation tend to have low academic results than those who are motivated academically. They might have good academic results because they have figured out their academic potential at school or they wish to enroll in a reputable university and have a high-paying job in the future. Based on the reasons that push them to achieve the goals, there are two types of academic motivation namely intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation as seen in the following.

Intrinsic motivation is usually seen as the motivation that comes from themselves that drives them to achieve the goals. Specifically, people who have intrinsic motivation tend to possess interests and enjoyment in engaging in some activities without any forces (Ryan and Deci, 2002) [8]. Intrinsic motivation can be seen from the actions that students have in accomplishing things (Ryan and Deci, 2017) [9]. As they have their own excitement in learning, they will consider all lessons fun and enjoyable to do. In other words, it can be said that students who do something passionately and enjoyably are intrinsically motivated. They do not seek for any rewards or compliments except for the excitement and pleasure they obtain by themselves.

In contrast, extrinsic motivation is usually misunderstood as a type of motivation that comes from the surroundings. In fact, extrinsic motivation pushes people to achieve their goals because they want to have satisfying outcomes rather than the interests they have in reality (Ryan and Deci, 2000b) [10]. Some people usually have this extrinsic motivation since they want to avoid being punished by the teachers. Thus, extrinsic motivation is considered as a type of motivation that has negative purpose in the learning processes as students have it in order to keep themselves away from punishments or other academic consequences (Deci and Ryan, 2008) [11].

However, these two types of motivation affects the students' performances academically especially their goals and achievements at school (Adamma and Unamba, 2018) [12]. It is said that students who aim for future goal orientations tend to change from highly intrinsically motivated to be simultaneously extrinsic (Husman and Lens, 2002) [13]. Students who are extrinsically motivated usually concern on obtaining higher grades and gaining rewards and compliments from peers while those who are intrinsically motivated are likely to challenge themselves in conquering new tasks and show their accomplishments.

Further, the existence of students' academic motivation especially in learning a foreign language has been claimed as one of the critical issues in language learning for years (Ma and Liu, 2020) [14]. Thus, this paper aims at evaluating the use of ELENA as an electronic learning aid utilized during the online teaching and learning processes in UNNES which affects students' academic motivation.

2 Method

In this research, qualitative phenomenological research approach was chosen. Phenomenological research encompasses essence description, generation of meanings, and significant statements (Creswell, 2014) [15]. The subject of this research were English Literature and Education Department Students that consist of 45 students. The data were obtained through observation, interview and questionnaire. Observations were conducted by the researchers and interviews were conducted to all of the respondents on their participation in using ELENA during online learning at Universitas Negeri Semarang. During two different observations, we took notes and took screenshots, The researchers chose Universitas Negeri Semarang as the research site because this university has already used ELENA during the online teaching and learning. The object of this research was students' motivations. The researchers wanted to know the students' motivations about the use of ELENA during the online teaching and learning in Universitas Negeri Semarang. The researchers in this research had the roles as data collectors and data analysts. The researchers constructed the questions for the questionnaire and the interviews. After that the researchers distributed the questionnaire and did the interviews. Further, the data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed and the data from the interview were transcribed and analyzed. In this research, we used 4-point Likert scale because it is aimed to measure attitudes and opinions of students related to the use of ELENA. The data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using mode or the most frequent degree of agreement chosen. As mode can provide the value that shows the most, it is well-suited to choose mode to summarize the data which further converted in a frequency percentage.

3 Results and Discussion

Table 1. Students' Questionnaire Results

CATEGORIES		ASPECTS		INDICATORS	ITEM NUMBER	AGREE	PERCENTAGE
A	Motivational Impact on Learning	1	Quality of Work	ELENA enabled me to work faster and more neatly.	4	40	89%
				ELENA let me work whenever I want to.	6	37	82%
				Using ELENA makes me keen on doing my assignments.	14	39	87%
		2	Attitudes towards Assignments	ELENA enabled me to do my assignment more easily.	1	41	91%
				Coursework is more interesting by using ELENA.	5	32	71%
				ELENA enabled me to do my assignment more.	7	38	84%
		3	Assignments / Homeworks	ELENA enabled me to redraft my assignments.	2	39	87%
				ELENA enabled me to be more creative.	3	34	76%
		4	Pupil Confidence	ELENA enabled me to work with my own pace.	8	39	87%
				ELENA enhanced my independence.	9	41	91%
				I get more attention with my assignments when use ELENA.	10	37	82%
		6	Learning Process	ELENA helps me to understand my assignments better.	11	33	73%
				Using ELENA helps me to get feedback from my lectures.	15	34	76%
I can see examples in pictures or videos given by lectures.	13			44	98%		
7	Design & Technology	I always get notifications from ELENA to do my assignments.	16	24	53%		
		Using ELENA grasps my attention better.	12	39	87%		
B	Motivational Impact on Behaviour and Attendance	1	Behaviour in Lessons	Using ELENA helps me submit the assignments on time.	17	40	89%
				Using ELENA motivates me to submit the assignments before due date.	18	43	96%
				The design of ELENA facilitates me to check my course regularly.	19	41	91%
				ELENA makes me able to keep a record of my presence.	20	43	96%
		2	Pupil Attendance				

Learning motivation is recognized as one of the main determinants of the success and quality of academic learning. The relevance of motivation in learning situations suggesting that this construct is fundamental for student development, whether in an on-site education context or in a virtual environment (Hartnett and Dron, 2011) [16]. In this perspective, this study is committed to ensure students' motivation and demotivation for online learning facilitated by ELENA. As previously explained, to understand and discuss the results obtained, this research is based on the theory of self-determination (Ryan and Deci, 2000a) [5], (Ryan and Deci, 2000b) [10]. Based on the data analysis carried out, it is possible to confirm that a large number of participants consider themselves to be intrinsically motivated to engage in the proposed learning situations in learning using ELENA. The questionnaire is divided into motivational impact on learning and motivational impact on behavior and attendance. The column of agree shows the sum of students who chose the answers of agree and strongly agree. The findings are presented into eight parts; they were students' quality of work, students' attitudes towards their assignments, students' assignments or homework, students' confidence, the learning process, the design of ELENA, students' behavior in lessons, and students' attendance. Each of these parts is elaborated into the followings.

Students' Quality of Work

The students have a positive intention about the implementation of ELENA to conduct online teaching and learning activities in Universitas Negeri Semarang. They believe that ELENA can improve their quality of work. From the result, students have positive perceptions about the use of ELENA. They explained that ELENA helps them to work faster. This fact arises from a well-

considered approach in which students are encouraged to apply the use of ELENA to support online learning. They can do tasks anywhere and anytime easily through ELENA. By using this electronic learning aid, they showed improvements to the quality of their work. For example, one student reported, *"I feel very helpful with ELENA because I can do my assignments anywhere because ELENA is a web-based platform so I can always monitor and do my work anytime"* (R2). It was proven by the result of students' questionnaire about students' perception regarding the use of ELENA. Based on the Likert scale, the research is claimed positive if every single questionnaire of the students' perception is upper than 60%. Then, it showed that 86% students agreed that ELENA can improve their quality of work. It can be related to specific forms including assignments, test, or even coursework. Besides, ELENA also facilitates them to work properly, neatly, and satisfactorily. The results of this study are in line with the findings of previous research which explained that all respondents were strongly influenced by their intrinsic motivation in participating in online learning (Gustiani, 2020) [17]. Their online learning is driven by their ambition or belief to learn and gain new knowledge; and the joy of experiencing new learning methods despite being hindered by distance.

Students' Attitudes towards their Assignments

The respondents of this research mentioned a wide range of reasons on why they found ELENA useful and motivational on their attitudes academically. From the interview, all respondents clearly stated that they felt ELENA brought a positive impact on students' interests and attitudes towards schoolwork. The students reported that they felt if ELENA helps students access their work more, it helps students to be proud of their work. For example, one students reported, *"for me personally, Elena helps a lot especially for assignments' submission because firstly when using Elena can just submit the soft file. We do not have to print it out, go to the college, and submit the file...ehhh...in the form of print out which in my opinion wasting time even if the due date is very near"* (R2). It was proven by the result of students' questionnaire about students' attitudes towards their assignments. The data gotten from the students' questionnaire shows that 82% students agreed that ELENA had a positive impact on students' interests and attitudes towards assignments. Given these results, with respect to the characteristics of online education challenges, the scores presented by students, through the selection of options from a scale that express students' motivational behaviors to put into learning effects mediated by the use of ELENA which is considered significant. It is emphasized that a similar conclusion was found that also investigated students' motivation to learn in an online education setting (Giesbers and Gijsselaers, 2013) [18], (Xie and Yen, 2011) [19].

Students' Assignments and Homework

The impact of ELENA on homework was reported positively by students, they reported that lessons had more to do with preparing students for learning activities. They believe that they could complete those activities outside the class and mostly at home. It indicated that they feel that ELENA supports them with their homework. However, it usually depends on their internet connection at home. Students also mentioned that they wanted to do more homework when ELENA has the feature of redrafting their homework which made the work start quicker and tidier. ELENA enables students a way to express ideas more easily and widely and allows for a much wider range of editing than is possible on paper. For example, one student reported, *"Usually, if the material from the homework has been uploaded by the lecturer, I can*

immediately download it and can draft my answer" (R11). It was also proven by the result of students' questionnaire about students perception regarding the use of ELENA for finishing homeworks. The data gotten from the students' questionnaire shows that 87% students agreed that ELENA help them to finish homework.

Students' Confidence

Using ELENA also affects students' confidence in terms of their independence and their pace of finishing tasks. They feel that using ELENA makes them more creative and they can do the tasks independently without asking questions. One student said, *"I think the use of ELENA also helps me to be more independent because all the assignments and materials given by the lecturer are very complete, so I just need to read the instructions and then do the assignments independently. Creativity in writing is also very honed when using ELENA, I can open a browser to look for theories and supporting answers from several experts"* (R9). Then, the data gotten from the students' questionnaire shows that 86 % students agreed that ELENA can improve their quality of works. The findings revealed that the use of ELENA to motivate students during online learning at Universitas Negeri Semarang was significantly driven by internal factors. This is consistent with the finding proposed by previous researchers who stated that successful online learners have consistent personalities to drive their learning activities (Artino, 2008) [20], (Keller, 2008) [21], (Mervyn and Wighting, 2008) [22], (Yukselturk and Bulut, 2007) [23]. Because online learning necessitates learners' self-awareness, students' engagement in online learning was the outcome of their self-determination, personal interest, belief, and ambition in the form of intrinsic motivation (Knowles and Kerkman, 2007) [24].

The Learning Process

Maintenance of motivational behavior is associated with acts of effort, active participation, persistence and attention (Xie and Yen, 2011) [19]. In this case, the role of the teacher can be an important factor in the persistence of students in activities carried out in virtual environments. Consequently, it is necessary to consider the need for studies that investigate more in-depth this continuity of motivation to learn, as well as the relationship that can be established between student engagement and the teaching strategies adopted by lecturers at ELENA. Overall students reported that ELENA had a motivational impact on internal cognition (processes related to knowledge acquisition, comprehension, attention, and evaluation). From the results of the interviews, most students reported that the presence of ELENA made them understand the task instructions better because they could be read over and over again. Moreover, students feel that they get more attention and understanding from the application of ELENA in the online learning process. One student reported, *"I feel much helped when using Elena.. First, I was facilitated in downloading book files or documents for the lessons materials given by the lecturers. Second, doing the assignments becomes much easier because I can reread the instruction of the assignment more comprehensively and completely"* (R3). Also, some students revealed that they could see feedback from the lecturer on some assignments. For example, students reported, *"because I feel much helped, the strengths are that it helps me check, submit, and see the feedback given by the lecturers about our assignments...yes, our assignments... I will be very easy to see the feedback so that I can revise it on the next revision"* (R7).

It was proven by the result of students' questionnaire about the learning process regarding the use of ELENA. The data gotten from the students' questionnaire shows that 77% students agreed that ELENA can improve their quality of learning process.

The Design of ELENA

This situation will be different if ELENA is applied by lecturers for the process and learning needs of certain subjects. There are several reported examples of where this appears to be the case, and it appears in technology design and practice. In the forty-five students studied, the design of ELENA was considered to lead to better achievement. The design is not hard to understand and its process enables them access the lessons easily. Students can see examples in the form of videos or pictures given by the lecturer. According to the student statements, "*the feature of adding images and videos provided by ELENA helped me understand the material and assignments given by the lecturer... emmm the videos and photos can also be viewed over and over again so I can better understand the material*" (R5). It was proven that 98% students are agreed that the design of ELENA was proper. Moreover, in ELENA there is a calendar and a table about the list of assignments and learning materials, so it is very easy for students to access it. One Students said that "Elena has a kind of notif... no, no, not a notification... it has a kind of calendar in Elena. Thus, when you check on it regularly, you must figure out the tasks or test that will be due in near time. Besides, we don't have to check it one by one. These help me do my academic tasks better" (R6).

However, some of the students complained that ELENA did not provide a notification feature that was directly connected to the email so that they did not receive notifications when new materials or assignments were given by the lecturer. This was conveyed by students, "On the other hand, one of the weaknesses of Elena is that whenever students do not open Elena, we will never get informed on any important assignments due. Elena has no notification feature to be linked or connected automatically to either Chrome or anything" (R7). The data show that 53% students agreed that ELENA still needs changes and improvement to the design about notifications.

Students' Behavior in Lessons

It was widely reported that some students could concentrate on their lessons for longer periods of time using ELENA. According to the 45 students interviewed, 87% students felt that ELENA positively helped their concentration. For example, one students reported, "Because there is a time setting in submitting assignments, it makes me more concentrated in doing it. Because if I am late in submitting assignments, there will be a track record" (R14). Students widely reported the increasing commitment to learning tasks that arose when ELENA was used. Principals report that students respond positively when learning outcomes look professional, that they will spend more time to make sure that they do not make many mistakes. Besides, students will try harder to fulfill the deadline when ELENA is utilized. All students indicated that they could do their schoolwork better when using ELENA. One student said that "*I can challenge myself to complete the assignments and tasks before the due date*" (R11); "*Elena facilitates me to be on time in submitting the assignments...ummm... as there is time there like how many hours and minutes left*" (R6)

It was proven by the result of students' questionnaire about students behavior in lessons regarding the use of ELENA. The data gotten from the students' questionnaire shows that 90,5% students agreed that ELENA can improve their behaviour in lessons.

Students' Attendance

There is evidence that the use of ELENA motivates students and positively affects their attendance at class in some lessons. Lecturers usually consider attendance as part of their assessment. When lecturers asked students to tick their attendance list, all students will be always present or tick the list to show that they attend the class. In other words, ELENA motivates them in attending all classes held by the lecturers. None of the students indicated that ELENA had a negative impact on attendance. Students speculated that ELENA encourages students to stay at home and use ELENA or with them to use ELENA until late at night. Interviewed students mentioned, "Elena also shows the attendance list for the students to refer on what date this attendance is needed" (R10). It was proven by the result of students' questionnaire about students attendance regarding the use of ELENA. The data gotten from the students' questionnaire shows that 96% students agreed that ELENA can improve their attendance. This is in line with previous research which suggested that motivation in online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic timeframe was affected by external control, since they attended online classes to avoid punishment for being absent (Keller, 2008) [21]. As a result of the punishment, students' online learning goals were isolated from the learning activities themselves (Ryan and Deci, 2000a) [5], (Ryan and Deci, 2000b) [10].

4 Conclusion

The findings of this study showed that students had good impressions of the use of ELENA as a platform to conduct online teaching and learning activities. There were some reasons why students have positive responses to the use of ELENA. There were the students' quality of work, the students' attitudes towards assignments, the students' confidence, the learning process, the design of ELENA, the students' behavior in lessons, and the students' attendance. All indicators mentioned showed that most students find it helpful in doing assignments using ELENA during online learning. It can be concluded that ELENA has motivational impacts on learning, behavior, and attendance for UNNES' students during the online learning. The drawback that students think of ELENA that needs to be improved is its notifications. Students highly hoped that ELENA can be further improved for its features and completeness of notifications to make it easier for students to check assignments from lecturers.

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¹ Moodle is the abbreviation for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment. It is an open source software under the Public License that is generally used for academic and training purposes on the internet-based.

² Perceived usefulness is seen as how far someone or people believe that the use of technology can affect their performance in a positive way.