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[1,2,3]Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Malaysia, [4]Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Malaysia, [5]Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Email: [1]choon322@uitm.edu.my, [2]normah698@uitm.edu.my, [3]sriqamariah@uitm.edu.my, [4]zaidmz@upm.edu.my, [5]rosi.rosiah@umy.ac.id

Abstract

Motivation is one of the most important stimuli in learning. The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 has resulted in changes in teaching and learning patterns. A study on the subject was conducted to identify the motivation categories of students and analyze the factors influencing their motivation toward Japanese language learning during the COVID-19 pandemic period. This study is a quantitative study that utilizes a Google Form questionnaire. A total of 366 Japanese language learners answered the questionnaire. Data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The findings showed that although classes were conducted online, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) students were highly motivated to learn Japanese as a foreign language. The highest motivation was the classroom support category with a very high mean score (M = 4.6), followed by integrative motivation (M = 4.4) and instrumental motivation (M = 3.8). The structure of the Japanese language, culture, and the interesting way of life of the Japanese people have been the factors influencing the motivation to learn the Japanese language. In addition, learning methods and materials, peer interaction, and the positive attitude of lecturers are also important factors that influence the motivation of Japanese language students. In times of the pandemic, classroom support plays a big role in maintaining the motivation for students to study a second language.

Keywords: Motivation, Japanese Language, Pandemic, Integrative Motivation, Instrumental Motivation

Introduction
Background of The Research

Motivation is one of the preconditions in learning. A student who excels, but does not have enough motivation will not achieve the results as expected. As students begin to learn a foreign language, they may already have their own motivations. In the learning process, students may get a stimulus that can be a new motivation to learn the language. Meanwhile, for some students, the same stimulus can be a hindrance to their learning and cause them to

drop out. Gardner and Lambert (1972) divide motivation into two categories, namely integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation reflects a sincere personal interest in the people and culture they belong to, while instrumental motivation comes from practical reasons such as getting a good job or getting a higher status.

The COVID-19 pandemic that has hit the world since 2020 has resulted in the closure of universities and forced class operations to be conducted online. This has led to major changes in teaching and learning (T&L) from face-to-face to online learning. This situation has affected students who have had to adapt to virtual learning. The field of teaching and learning foreign languages, especially Japanese is no exception. Thus, this study was conducted to identify the motivation categories of students and analyze the factors that influence their motivation toward Japanese language learning during the COVID-19 pandemic period. This study was conducted on Japanese language learners at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). Questionnaires were distributed to students from all three streams, namely Science and Technology stream, Social Science stream, and Business Management stream. UiTM is the largest university in Malaysia and Japanese is one of the compulsory elective courses for all students at the undergraduate level. Japanese is offered for three semesters, two hours a week. It is hoped that this study can be used as a reference instrument by those involved in the teaching and learning of Japanese to improve the syllabus, pedagogy, assessment, and others. This study is also expected to increase references in the study of motivation in foreign language learning, especially in Japanese.

Problem Statement

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit the world in 2020, teaching and learning patterns have changed. The closure of the university has forced teaching and learning to be done online. Lecturers and students have to adapt to the new teaching and learning norms (Harian, 2020). These changes in teaching and learning patterns have had an impact on students' motivation. By 2021, there have been several studies published on students' motivation. They cover various areas of learning and some even look at student motivation in general. The results of such studies also have diversity, for example, studies by Aguilera-Hermida (2020); Daniels et. al (2021) found that student motivation decreased after teaching switched to online and students preferred face-to-face learning.

Similarly, the study by Mese et. al (2021) found that online learning had a negative impact on students' motivation due to lack of social interaction, the mismatch between expectations and content, organizational problems and the learning environment. However, there are also studies such as the one conducted by Putri and Winarta (2021), who studied the motivation of English language students in Indonesia, found that students still have high motivation throughout the period of online learning despite certain issues faced by students and lecturers.

Dhingra et al (2021) conducted a study about students' perceptions and motivations towards online classes among medical students in India. They found that online teaching could be used as a complement to traditional pedagogy but could not be a substitute for it. Students stated that they were more comfortable with a traditional classroom than online teaching because it physically and optically put pressure on them to sit in front of a computer screen for a long period of time. The diversity of findings in previous studies is a gap that this study wants to fill, which specifically looks at motivation among Japanese language students at UiTM. Students who take Japanese language courses at UiTM come from a variety of different academic backgrounds and faculties. As such, this study would like to identify the

motivation categories of students and analyze the factors influencing their motivation towards language learning during the COVID-19 pandemic period.

Research Questions
This study was conducted to answer the following 3 questions:
1. What are the reasons that motivate students to learn Japanese as a foreign language?
2. What are the categories of motivation do the students employ in studying the Japanese language during the COVID-19 pandemic period?
3. What are the motivational factors that influenced students toward Japanese language learning during the COVID-19 pandemic period?

Research Objectives
The objectives of this study are as follows:
1. Identify the reasons that motivate the students to learn Japanese as a foreign language
2. Identify categories of student motivation toward Japanese language learning during the COVID-19 pandemic period
3. Analyze the factors that influence students' motivation toward learning Japanese during the COVID-19 pandemic period

Literature Review
Motivation To Learn Foreign Languages

Research on motivation in language learning has been dominated by Gardner's theory with the Socio-Educational Model of Second-language learning (1972), (1985). Gardner (2001) states that motivation includes three elements, namely the effort needed to learn a language, the desire to achieve goals and the enjoyment in learning the language. Gardner (2010) argues that some individuals actively try to learn other languages due to a deep interest in cultures and people from different linguistic communities. In addition, there are other reasons that motivate a person to learn a second language, such as being motivated by a dedicated language teacher, being interested in people who use that language or the immediate need to learn a language. There are two orientations introduced by Gardner (1972), integrative and instrumental orientations. Integrative orientation refers to a positive attitude towards the community of the second language and a desire to be close or even to be a member of that community. In contrast, instrumental orientation is defined as learning a second language for pragmatic reasons, such as securing a job or getting a higher salary.

Past research has proven that integrative motivation has motivated students to learn better. However, Dornyei (2009) questions its relevance in the context of foreign language learning where students do not have the opportunity to interact with the target language-speaking community. Dornyei has investigated the motivational component in foreign language learning involving students learning the target language at institutions where respondents do not regularly interact with the target language community. According to Dornyei (1990), a motivational construct is assumed to consist of the Instrumental Motivation Subsystem, Integrative Motivation Subsystem, Need for Achievement and Attribution of Past Failures. Dornyei (1990) also found that the Instrumental Motivation Subsystem and the Need for Achievement are very important for students to master the intermediate target language.

Dornyei (2001) considers motivation as something that motivates a person to make choices and strive continuously. Dornyei and Ryan (2015) also argue that motivation provides the main impetus to initiate second language learning, and then becomes the motivator to maintain the long and tedious learning process. Without adequate motivation, even individuals with extraordinary abilities are also unable to achieve learning objectives. On the other hand, high motivation can make up for a lack of language abilities.

Teaching and Learning in a Pandemic Period

In early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic that hit the world also affected T&L methods in institutions of higher learning. Teachers and students face a variety of challenges in the adaptation of T&L that involve new technology. Since the pandemic began, much research has been done on online learning from different varieties of perspectives. However, studies on student motivation in learning Japanese are still scarce. Gustiani (2020) has studied the motivation of English language students at Sriwijaya Polytechnic, Indonesia. He found that students have both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The results of the study showed that the decrease in motivation (demotivation) is due to problems such as poor electricity and internet facilities.

Raharjo and Pertiwi (2020) have done a study about the motivation and achievement of students in secondary schools in Surabaya, Indonesia. The study found that changes in the learning system that occurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on students' motivation and achievement. However, they also found that teachers have been able to adapt to the new norms as well as provide students with learning materials that are not too different from the time prior to the pandemic. This prevents the level of motivation and achievement of students from decreasing too much.

Educational Efforts in a Pandemic Period

In an effort to ensure that education never stops, UNESCO (Mampankini, 2019) responded with a group of initiatives so that the learning system also needs to change in line with the various technologies that are fast-moving forward. Through the 4th SDG (The Sustainable Development Goals 4), various efforts have been made to improve learning outcomes to help make education successful for a country or a society. Only those who are motivated and able to pursue existing progress are ready to compete in a pandemic atmosphere. There have been many motivational studies done before the pandemic began, but motivational studies during the pandemic period are yet to be widely discovered. Therefore, research needs to be conducted in order to contribute to the efforts of SDG 4 to produce an education system of higher quality.

Motivation of students learning Japanese During the Pandemic Period

The need to learn a foreign language is increasing in the current era of globalization, in which people have more opportunities to travel abroad more than in the past. Even if one does not have such an opportunity, they still have the opportunity to communicate with the international community virtually. The value of learning a foreign language is indeed acknowledged. Among the advantages of mastering a foreign or other international language is that one is able to negotiate smoothly or understand documents in business without the need for the services of an interpreter or middleman (Hieda et al., 2012). Understanding why students learn a foreign language is also important. This is because teachers need to teach

the language in an effective way and plan classes that are more in line with students 'objectives to prevent them from dropping out.

Gardner (1972) hypothesized that instrumental motivation is less effective than integrative motivation. Gardner's motivational framework, even after 50 years, is still popular and still used by researchers to this day. Among them is a study by Matsumoto and Obana (2001) that examined the motivation of Japanese language students in Australia. They studied the motivational characteristics that help students continue their studies. Their study was quite different from other studies in that they compared students' motivation at the beginning of the semester and at the end of the semester. They found that students who continued their studies were individuals that were more highly committed compared to students who did not continue their studies. Students at higher levels of proficiency show a more pronounced interest in the depth and complexity of the language as well as its background. They also found that integrative motivation was more clearly generated at high levels of mastery. Jones (2006) studied the relationship between integrative and instrumental motivation and measured it with the achievements in the Japanese language test at a university in America. He found no statistically significant relationship between integrative motivation scores and Japanese language test scores. In the interviews conducted, it was found that there were students who were highly motivated, but did not excel in the test. Similarly, conversely, there are students who are less motivated but excelled in tests.

Classroom Support During Pandemic Periods
Learning Methods and Materials
Learning methods also underwent significant changes throughout the pandemic from face-to-face T&L in the classroom to online learning. Online learning uses electronic devices such as smartphones, computers and internet networks. The learning process also relies heavily on online applications such as WAG (Whatsapp Group), Google for Education (Google Form, Google Classroom, Google Drive), Youtube, Zoom Meeting and others (Putra, 2021). Thus, educators can ensure that students participate in learning at the same time despite being in different places. Educators can also assign measurable assignments appropriate to the objectives of the materials presented to students.

At the same time, classroom support involving teaching methods and materials can motivate students to learn Japanese. Consistent with what Levin & Nolan (2000) have said, a well-managed classroom is always a place where students collaborate with each other, make wise choices, and produce quality and interesting work. Indirectly, a well-managed and effective classroom can improve students' academic achievements (Dali & Johdi, 2009). The role of an educator, which is crucial, is to manage and control the classroom and students' behavior to ensure that the T&L process runs smoothly and effectively without interruption.

In addition, the development of instructional media in online learning is also very important. This is in accordance with what is stated by Latifah (2021) that the process and evaluation of learning or the results of students' observation are seen based on visual and auditory attention. They found that the lesson planning done by teachers before teaching materials is related to the learning medium, while in the teaching process, teachers use media that can attract students' attention, either auditorily or visually. Students' visual attention increased due to the use of interesting learning media and the assessment aspect of learning that required students to submit voice recordings.

Peer Interaction

In the learning process, a good interaction between lecturers and students is essential, as well as the interaction between students. The interaction between lecturers and students in online learning occurs according to the procedure described by Budiani (2021). The interaction between lecturers and students tends to happen when the lecturers give instructions to students which involve learning activities, assignments and assessments. In addition, there is also an effort to maintain social relationships between lecturers and students. While this interaction is important in learning, it is not directly beneficial to improving students' understanding and Japanese language skills. Thus, a certain effort is required so that cognitive interaction emerges in learning by opening up discussion spaces and providing feedback as quickly as possible.

Previous Research

A study on Japanese language learning motivation based on Gardner's (1985) Attitude and Motivation Theory and Dornyei's (1994) Attitudinal Motivation Theory was conducted by Maktiar Singh et. al (2021). Their respondents were 171 Japanese language students at a university in Malaysia. The findings of the study indicate that foreign language learners are generally highly motivated to learn Japanese as a foreign language. Moreover, their levels of integrative motivation and attitudes were equally high and slightly higher than their instrumental motivation

Rethinasamy (2021) has also investigated the views and motivations of Malaysian students on learning Japanese. This study was conducted through a questionnaire involving 150 students from institutions of higher learning in Malaysia who are learning Japanese as a third language. This study found that most students felt that listening and speaking skills were more difficult to acquire than reading and writing skills. Most students were found to be unsure about their ability to communicate in Japanese. And it was also discovered that in terms of motivation, there is a combination of integrative factors and instrumental motivation that encourage students to learn Japanese.

A survey of the three phases of motivation was conducted by Yean, C.P. (2022) at a public university in Malaysia. The questionnaire was answered by 255 Japanese language students. Findings show that students have the highest motivation during the action stage (pre-actional) because it is driven by curiosity intrinsically. Students' motivation changes when their learning process reaches the action stage due to their stress on tests or exams. However, students' motivation bounced back during the post-actional stage in which students are confident that they would succeed in their test or assignment.

Rahmah (2019) conducted a quantitative case study at a university in Indonesia to find out the interests and motivations of Japanese language students. The results showed that the respondents' interest was quite high based on the element of enjoyment. The elements of respondents' enjoyment included their interest in things related to Japanese subcultures such as anime, manga and festivals. The reasons were given by the respondents for their motivation to learn Japanese also refer more to the type of integrative motivation.

Rahmat (2021) has conducted a study on social learning during online learning for Japanese. The findings of the study indicate that students need positive stimuli for positive

responses in learning. Students also learn and emulate their instructors. It was also found that students learn well in an environment that has supportive peers to help them cope with online engagement.

Methodology

A total of 366 undergraduate students who took the Japanese language courses at UiTM Shah Alam were selected as respondents. 110 students are from the Science and Technology stream, 135 Social Science students and 121 students from the Business and Management stream. All respondents were taking Japanese Level 1, Japanese Level 2 and Japanese Level 3 in the final week of the semester. Based on the table of Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the number of respondents that amounted to 366 people can be considered adequate, based on the total population of students which is around 3000 people.

This study uses quantitative methods. The research instrument used was a questionnaire using the Google Form platform. The questions used were modified to meet the needs of the objectives and background of the study.

The questionnaire for this study consisted of 39 closed-ended questions using a 5-Likert scale namely 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (somewhat agree), 4 (agree) and 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire was modified based on the studies of Gardner (1985) and Taguchi, Magid and Papi (2009). The questionnaire consists of four (4) sections. Section A consists of demographic questions, Section B consists of the respondents' feedback on integrative motivation, Section C investigates instrumental motivation and Section D includes questions related to classroom support.

Data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 28. Table 1 presents the reliability statistics for the instrument. SPSS analysis revealed a Cronbach alpha of .914 thus showing high internal reliability of the instrument used. Descriptive analysis was conducted to obtain mean, mode, frequency and percentage values. Mean score analysis was conducted using a 5-level mean scale interpretation that was adapted from (Eeza et al., 2019).

Table 1
Reliability Statistics for the Instrument

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.914	39

Total respondents =366
Numbers of items in the survey = 39

Framework of The Questionnaire

With reference to Table 2, the content of the questionnaire has been divided into four sections; Section A, Section B, Section C and Section D.

In Section A, the information required is Japanese language learning experience, class level, age, semester, gender and faculty. While Section B contains items related to integrative

motivation which is divided into two parts. Part I is the structure and form of the Japanese language and Part II is the culture and lifestyle.

Section C deals with instrument motivation items which consists of two parts. Part I is a learning requirement and Part II is a future career. This is followed by Section D which is on classroom support. There are also two sections consisting of learning methods, materials and peer interaction.

Table 2
Distribution of Items in the Survey (Sections B, C & D)

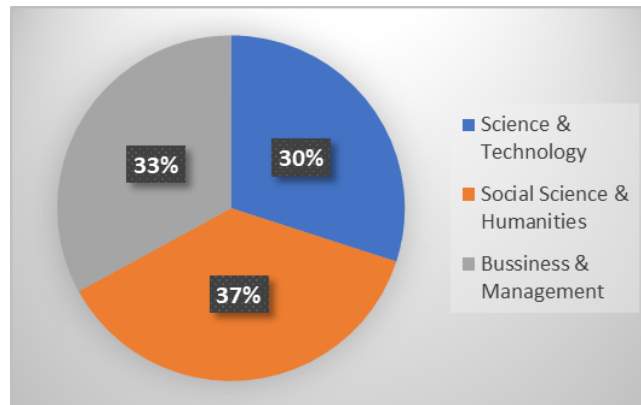| Section	Component	Part	Sub-component	Numbers of Items	Total of Item
B	Integrative Motivation	I	Japanese Language and Forms	6	15
		II	Culture and Lifestyle	9	
C	Instrumental Motivation	I	Excel in Study	6	12
		II	Future career	6	
D	Classroom Support	I	Teaching Method and Materials	6	12
		II	Peer Interaction	6	
				Total of items:	39

Findings
Demographic Data

Figure 1
Percentage of Respondents by Faculty

Figure 1 above shows that 37% (135 people) are respondents from the faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities. Followed by the faculty of Business and Management which is 33% (121 people), and Science and Technology with 30% (110 people).
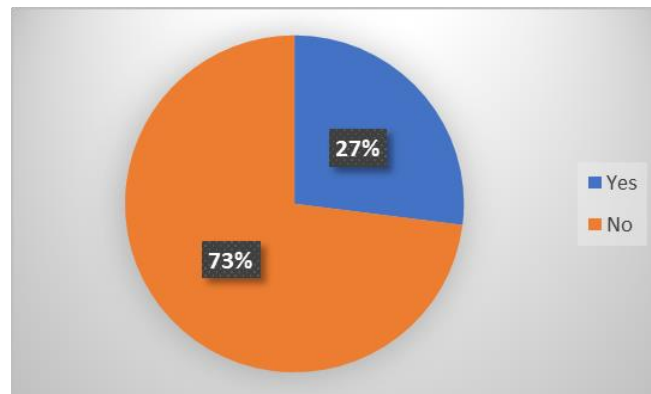

Figure 2
Percentage of Respondents Who Have Studied Japanese before entering UiTM

Figure 2 above shows the percentage of respondents who have studied Japanese before entering UiTM. A total of 73% (267 people) stated that they had never, while another 27% (99 people) stated that they had studied Japanese before entering UiTM.
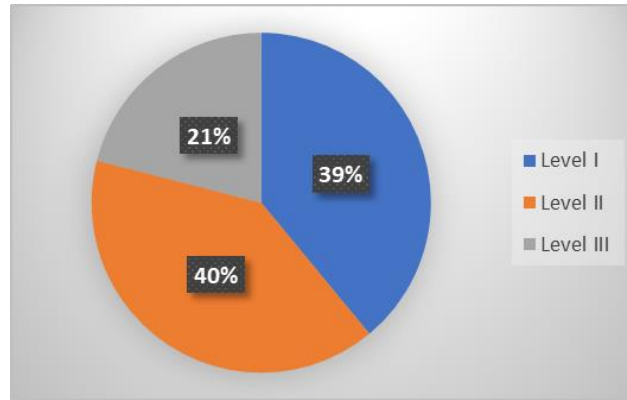
Figure 3
Percentage of Respondents Based on the Level of Japanese Language

Figure 3 above illustrates the percentage of respondents based on the level of the Japanese language they are taking. 40% (146 people) are the Level I students, 39% (143 people) are the Level II students, and 21% (77 people) are the Level II students.
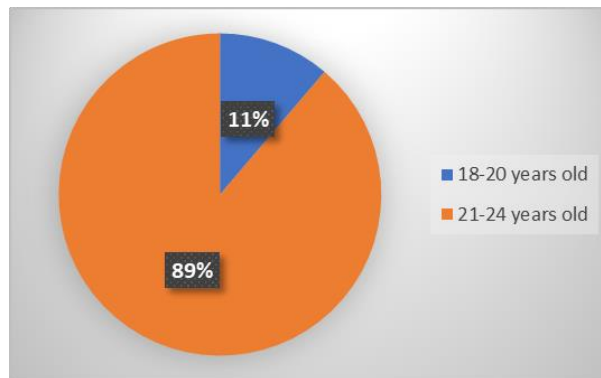

Figure 4
Percentage Based on Age
Figure 4 above is the percentage based on the age of the respondents. A total of 89% (325 people) are respondents aged 21 to 24 years. 11% (41 people) are aged 18 to 20 years.
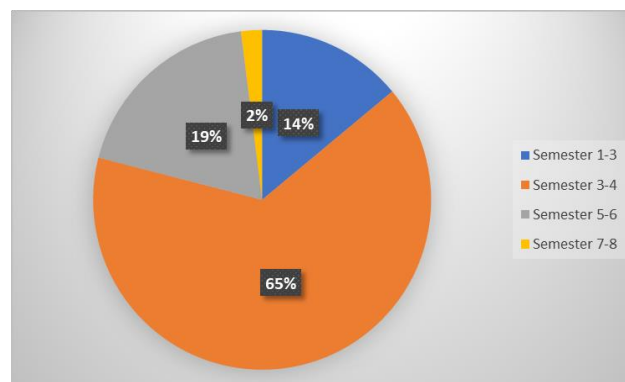

Figure 5
Percentage Based on Semester

Based on the breakdown in Figure 5 above, most respondents are from semesters 3 and 4 which is 65% (238 people). Followed by semesters 5 and 6 by 19% (70 people), semesters 1 to 3 by 14% (51 people) and semesters 7 and 8 by 2% (7 people).
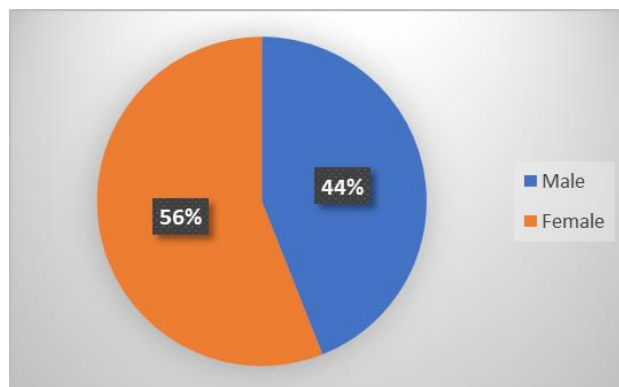
Figure 6
Percentage by Gender

Figure 6 above shows the percentage based on gender. A total of 56% (205 people) are female respondents, while another 44% (161 people) are male respondents. This is due to the fact that female students outnumbered male students at UiTM.

The questionnaires in sections B to D are about the respondents' opinions based on integrative motivation, instrumental motivation and classroom support. Table 2 below shows the findings of sections B to D according to the mean score. Data evaluation is based on the interpretation of mean scores on a scale of 5 (5-Likert scale).

Table 2
Interpretation of Mean Scores - 5-Likert Scale (adapted from Nor Eeza, Tajul & Jamil, 2019)

Mean Score	Level
1.00 to 1.8	very low
1.81 to 2.6	low
2.61 to 3.4	moderate
3.41 to 4.2	high
4.21 to 5.0	very high

Integrative Motivation Factor
The findings of the study in terms of integrative motivation can be explained based on Figures 7 and 8 below. Figure 7 shows the factors that generate motivation for learning Japanese from the aspect of structure and form of the Japanese language, while Figure 8 shows the factors that generate motivation for learning Japanese from the aspect of Japanese culture and lifestyle.
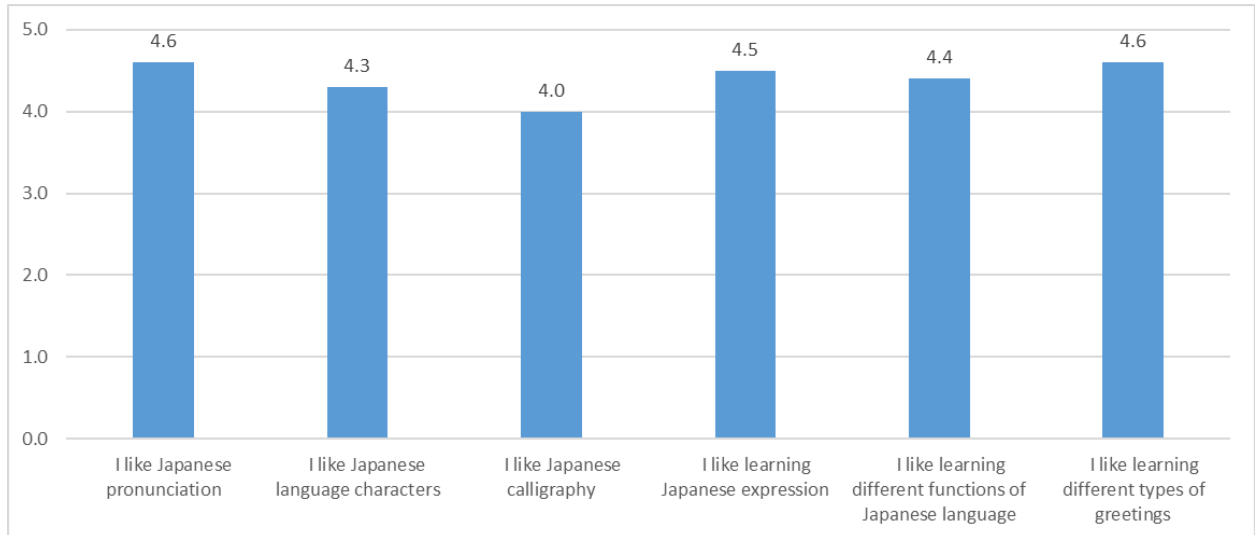
Figure 7
Japanese Language and Forms

Based on Figure 7 above, there are 6 items for the structure and form of the Japanese language. Overall, the findings show that the mean score achieved for all items is very high; which indicates that the aspects of the structure and form of the Japanese language are the factors for students to be motivated in learning Japanese.

The items, "I like Japanese pronunciation" and "I like learning different types of greetings" showed the highest mean score (M = 4.6), followed by the items "I like learning Japanese expressions" (M = 4.5), "I like to learn various different functions in Japanese" (M = 4.4), "I like Japanese characters" (M = 4.3) and "I like Japanese calligraphy" (M = 4.0).

Through these findings, it can be understood that the simple pronunciation of Japanese and the variety of speeches or greetings are the main impetus to increase students' motivation. However, all factors such as expression, diversity of functions, characters/writing and Japanese calligraphy also play a role in shaping students' motivation to learn Japanese.
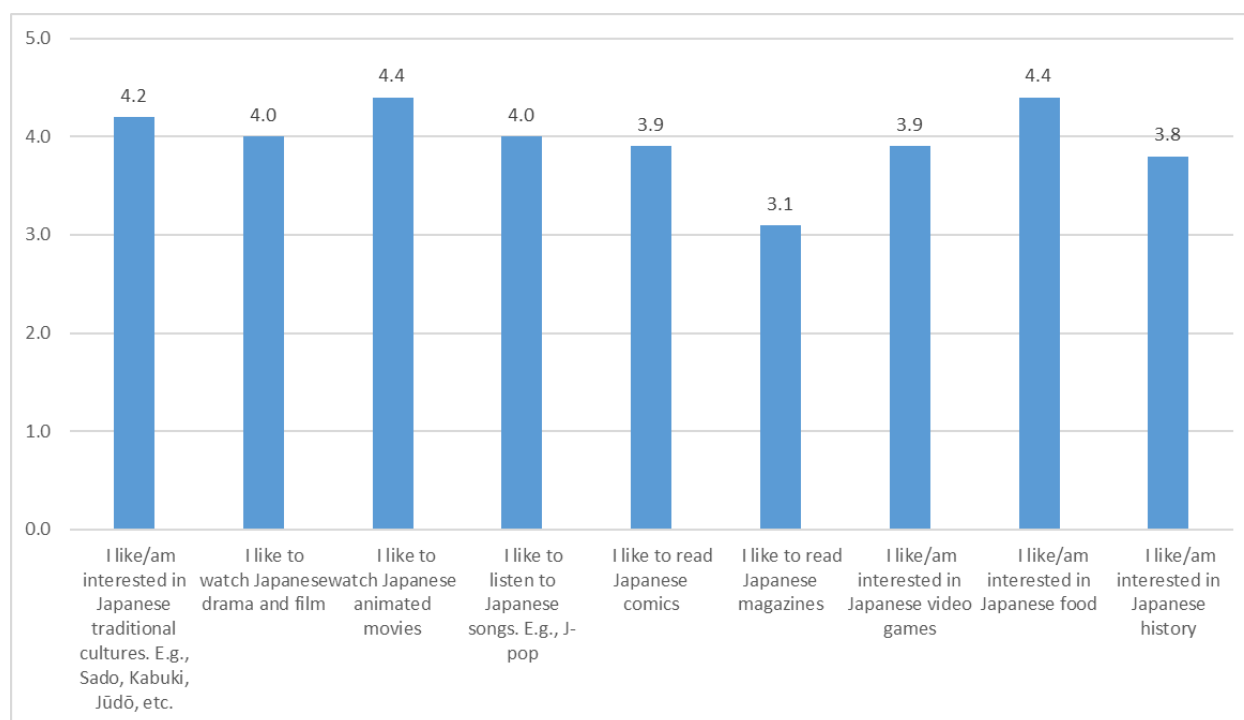
Figure 8
Japanese Culture and Lifestyle

Figure 8 above is an item of the culture and lifestyle of Japanese society. Overall, the findings show that the mean scores recorded from the aspects of culture and lifestyle of Japanese society are from moderate to very high.

The items "I like to watch Japanese animated movies" and "I like/am interested in Japanese food" recorded a very high mean score (M = 4.4), followed by the item "I like/am interested in traditional Japanese cultures such as Sado, Kabuki, Judo and others" (M = 4.2). Next items "I like to watch Japanese dramas and films" and "I like to listen to Japanese songs like J-pop" achieved a high mean score (M = 4.0), followed by items "I like to read Japanese comics" and item "I like/am interested in Japanese video games" as well recorded a high mean score (M = 3.9). Then followed by the item "I like/am interested in Japanese history" with a high mean score (M = 3.8) and the lowest is the item "I like to read Japanese magazines" with a moderate mean score (M = 3.1).

Based on these findings, the cultural and lifestyle aspects of Japanese society are indeed the main drivers for most Japanese language learners. In general, it can be said that many students are very fond of and interested in Japanese food which is very easy to find, some like to watch Japanese animated films and are attracted to traditional Japanese culture such as Sado, Kabuki, Judo and others that are very unique compared to other country's traditional culture.

Currently, although the pandemic period hinders face-to-face learning, technological advances and globalization have not dampened students 'motivation to access information around the world. Thus, their desire to watch dramas or movies, listen to songs, read comics and play Japanese videos can continuously encourage and motivate students to learn Japanese. There are also students who are interested in Japanese magazines and read them even though it requires high Japanese language skills.

In conclusion, the findings of this section prove that both aspects of i) Japanese Language and Forms and ii) Japanese Culture and Lifestyle are important factors that greatly increase students' motivation to continue learning Japanese even during the pandemic period.
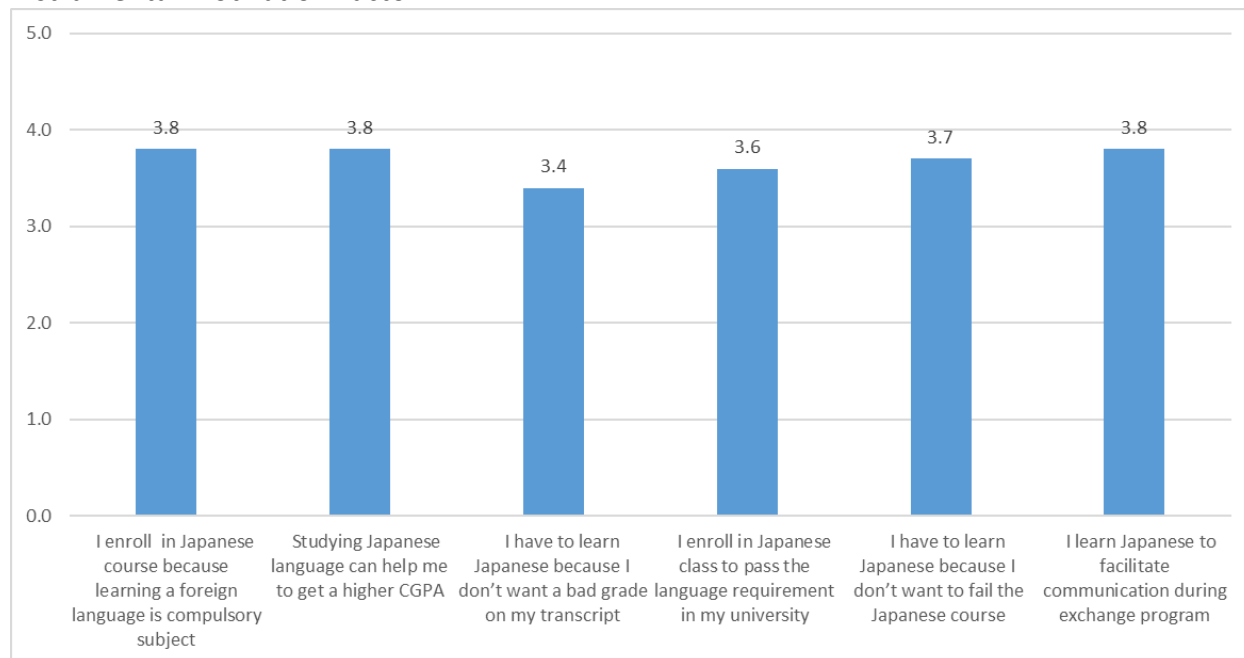
Instrumental Motivation Factor

Figure 9 An Aspect of Learning Needs

Figure 9 above is an item of learning requirements. Mean scores for learning needs items are high. However, there is an item with a moderate mean value which is "I have to learn Japanese because I don't want a bad grade on my transcript" (M = 3.40). While the high mean scores are the items, "I enroll in Japanese class to pass the language requirement in my university" (M = 3.6), "I have to learn Japanese because I don't want to fail my Japanese course" (M = 3.7), "I enroll Japanese because learning a foreign language is a compulsory subject" (M=3.8), "studying the Japanese language can help me get a higher CGPA", and "I learn Japanese to facilitate communication during student exchange programs" (M = 3.8). This shows that instrumental motivation in the aspect of learning needs motivates students. This is in line with what was put forward by Gardner (1972), which says that instrumental orientation refers to a person's practical motive to learn a language. Students may be motivated to learn a second language to fulfil their educational needs or because they wish to have more opportunities to find jobs after graduating.
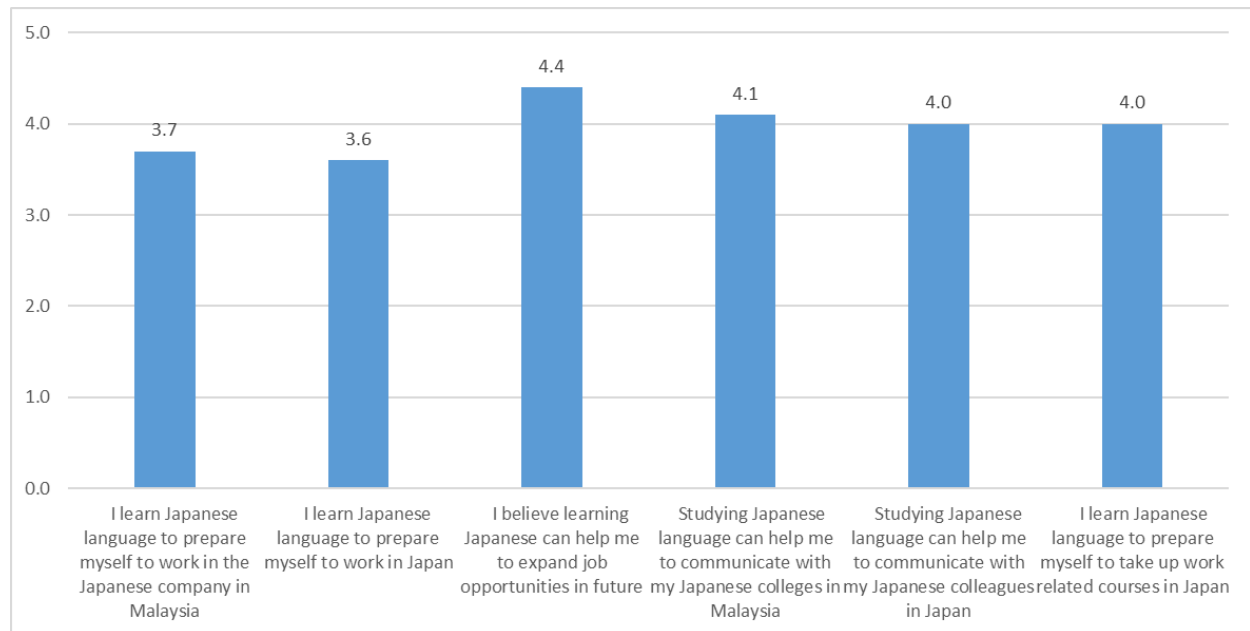
Figure 10 The Aspect of Future Career

Figure 10 above is an item regarding aspects of future careers. Most of the mean scores indicate a high mean score. They are, "I learned Japanese to prepare myself to work in Japan" (M = 3.6), "I learned Japanese to prepare myself to work in the Japanese company in Malaysia" (M = 3.7), "studying Japanese language can help me to communicate with my Japanese colleagues in Japan" (M=4.0), "I learn Japanese language to prepare myself to take up work-related courses in Japan" (M = 4.0), and "studying Japanese language can help me to communicate with my Japanese colleagues in Malaysia" (M = 4.1). Meanwhile, the highest mean score is for the item "I believe learning Japanese can help me to expand job opportunities in the future" (M = 4.4). This is in accordance with what was presented by Kobari (2014) that instrumental motivation is the motivation that encourages a person to learn because of the benefits such as for the purpose of working or to get a promotion in the workplace.
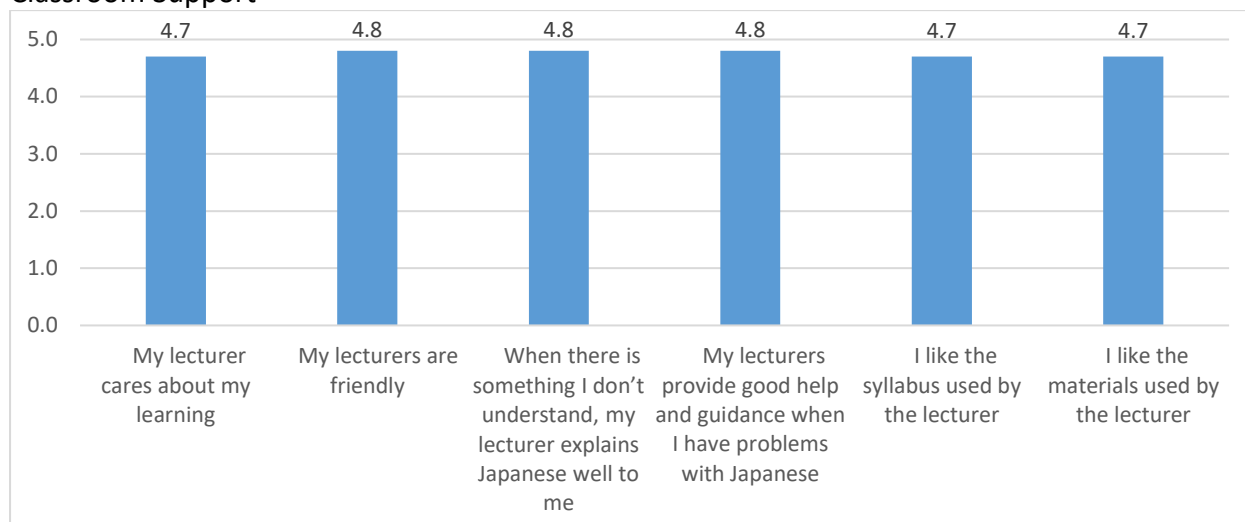
Classroom Support

Figure 11
The Aspect of Teaching Method and Materials

Figure 11 above is a classroom support item involving teaching methods and materials. All items recorded mean scores on a very high scale. The mean scores for the item "My lecturer cares about my learning", "I like the syllabus used by the lecturer" and "I like the materials used by the lecturer" are at a very high level (M = 4.7). Meanwhile, the item score for "my Lecturer was friendly and hospitable" and "when there is something I don't understand, my lecturer explains Japanese well to me" (M = 4.8). This indicates that the classroom support involving teaching methods and materials is very motivating for the students to learn Japanese. As noted by Levin & Nolan (2000), a well-managed classroom has always been a place where students care and collaborate with each other, make wise choices, and produce quality and engaging work. Indirectly, a well-managed and effective classroom can improve students' academic achievement (Hasani Dali & Mohd Johdi, 2009). An educator should be able to manage the classroom and control students' behavior so that the T&L process runs smoothly and effectively without interruption.
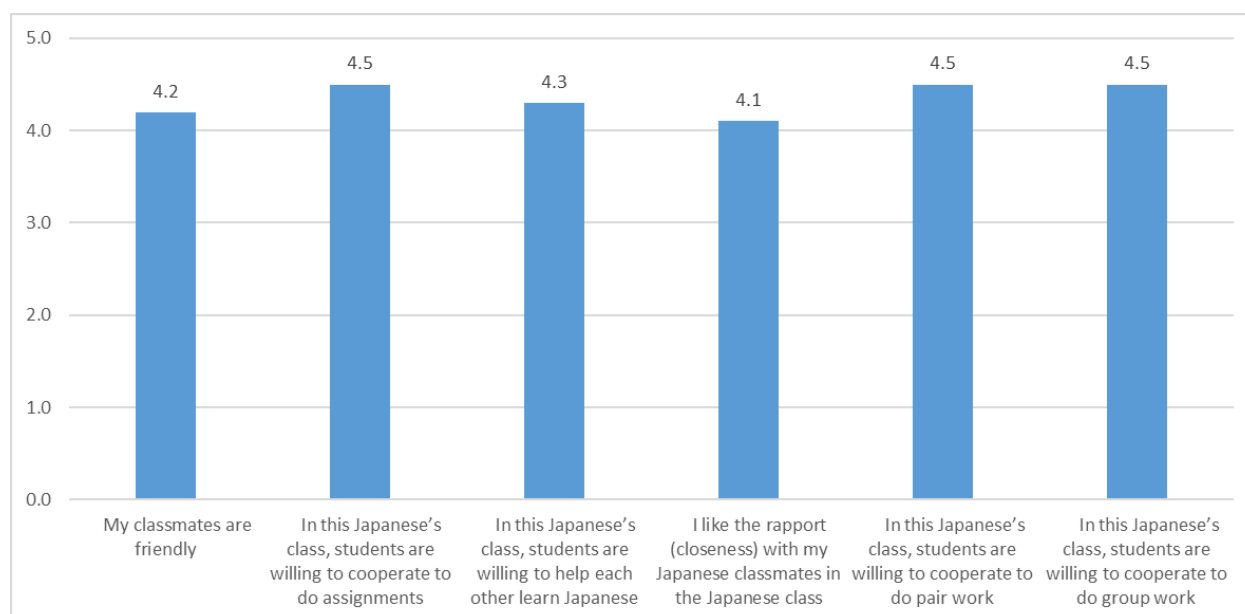
Figure 12 The Aspect of Peer Interaction

Based on Figure 12 above, a very high mean score is on the items "In this Japanese class, students are willing to work together to do assignments", "In this Japanese class, students are willing to work together to do pair work" and "In this Japanese class, students are willing to work together to do group work" (M = 4.5). This indicates that the students have no problem cooperating in completing the given assignments. While the mean score for the item "In the Japanese language class, students are willing to help each other learn Japanese" is also at a very high level (M = 4.3). For the item, "my classmates are friendly" and "I like the rapport (closeness) with my Japanese classmates in the Japanese class", the mean scores are at a high level (M = 4.2 and M = 4.1). This suggests that peer interactions produce very high levels of motivation. As stated by Budiani (2021), stimulating student interest involves interaction between students with students and lecturers with students. The results of this interaction will lead to academic discussion sessions either between students and students or between lecturers and students. It can also indirectly improve their understanding and mastery of the Japanese language in the presence of such interactions. This is because interaction will lead to communication whether formal or informal.

Conclusion
Online learning undeniably has enormous challenges. There is a possibility that students will be left behind and not be able to follow the learning of the subject efficiently if they are not highly motivated. In this study, it was found that the undergraduates in UiTM were very keen to learn Japanese language. Their motivation was highly influenced by the language itself, the uniqueness of the Japanese culture, the future needs, and for the future career. In addition, classroom support is the most important factor influencing learning motivation. Classroom support which includes support from teachers as well as classmates is highly valued, especially during online learning. During the pandemic, when students no longer have access to their regular social life and support systems, the small gestures of their peers and teachers go a long way towards them being motivated to continue their studies. And, clearly the integrative motivation factor also overcomes instrumental motivation. Students were found to be interested in the structure and form of the Japanese language itself, in addition to being attracted to the Japanese culture and way of life that prompted them to learn Japanese. The

lower instrumental motivation may be due to the fact that this study only involved students who are not majoring in Japanese. They consist of students taking various majors such as science and technology, management and business as well as social sciences. As a result, as stated in the findings for instrumental motivation, students do not expect too much to work or continue their studies in Japan. Instead, they learn Japanese more out of their interest in the Japanese language itself, as well as the encouraging classroom support during the COVID-19 pandemic period. The study also revealed that peer interactions produce very high levels of motivation. Peers are a significant factor in learning the Japanese language. In times of the pandemic, classroom support is even more crucial for keeping students motivated in learning languages, which includes the interaction between students and their peers and students and their teachers. Although they may initially be motivated by the different reasons for learning a foreign language, our research has found that the role classroom support plays in maintaining motivation is irreplaceable.

Suggestions for Future Research

The results showed that Japanese language students have high motivation, especially integrative motivation in UiTM. However, it cannot be ascertained whether a student's motivation is related to his test performance. Therefore, to further complete this study of motivation, it is necessary to conduct research on the relationship between motivation and student's performance in the assessment. For more in-depth research, it is recommended that future studies should be conducted by combining quantitative and qualitative methods to obtain more accurate and thorough results.

Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study have provided an insight into the level of motivation of Japanese language learners during the pandemic period. The results of this study can be used as a reference for institutions that offer Japanese language courses. The positive integrative motivation possessed by students should be maintained and enhanced by opening up more opportunities for students to interact with native speakers. The role that can be played by a Japanese language teacher is to include or emphasize the aspects of Japanese culture in teaching and learning sessions, and not just the linguistic aspects.

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