

# Exploring Motivating and Demotivating Factors for Learning

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## Abstract

The interplay between learner's motivation and demotivation is integral in ensuring consistent learning outcomes such as good grades. Hence, to have a better grasp on factors that impact the learning process of learners as to allow effective learning environments that can foster learner's engagement and success. A quantitative methodology was applied, utilizing online surveys, in order to evaluate the motivation and demotivation of learners. An extensive survey was carried out among undergraduates at UiTM Johor Campus Pasir Gudang and UNITAR International University to acquire a deeper understanding of their engagements. The present research employs a quantitative approach to scrutinize data gathered through an online structured questionnaire, incorporating the use of 5-point Likert scales. The findings reveal that motivation are essential in achieving good grade. A pressure to have good grade lead to demotivation in learner's class as student tend to have a competition among classmates.

**Keywords:** Motivation Factors, Demotivation Factors, Burnout, Learners

## Introduction

### *Background of Study*

Recently, there has been a significant shift in teaching and learning styles, possibly due to the acceptance of technology development such as online learning classes and could be

due to crises such as COVID-19 (Azami et al., 2023). On top of that, most research in the teaching pedagogy has analysed on the learner's motivation by outlining possible causes or factors. As learners perceive that to achieve academic success, they need to possess a learning motivation and are expected to have a certain amount of interest in enrolled courses. Learners need to be motivated as to overcome their anxiety and nervousness of challenges during learning (Fkhururazi et al., 2023).

In contrast, demotivation is a negative perception and action of a learner's learning process and causes declining in the learner's motivation. In this context, a good learner may also be impacted by demotivation and causes to inability to achieve good academic goals. Previously, research on factors that contribute to a learner's demotivation in learning has received less attention until recently. Learner's demotivation in the learning process can be the biggest barrier for learners to achieve academic success and impliedly, may cause them to feel learning is exhaustion and lead to disengagement during the learning process. A crisis in the learning process may also result in learner's demotivation such as covid-19 crisis where a sudden shift from traditional learning classes to online learning virtual classroom (Wan Mohd et al., 2024; Azami et al., 2023; Ma'ruf et al., 2022)

### **Problem Statement**

Student motivation is a critical factor in academic success, influencing engagement, learning outcomes, and overall well-being. However, increasing rates of demotivation and burnout among students have become significant concerns for educators, parents, and policymakers. The modern educational landscape, characterized by high academic demands, competitive pressures, and often inadequate support systems, contributes to these issues (Walberg, 2014; Farrell et al., 2019; Frajerman et al., 2020; Fiorelli et al., 2022; Azami et al., 2023; Olson et al., 2023). Understanding the intricate relationship between motivation, demotivation, and burnout is essential for developing effective interventions to support students. Therefore, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the motivational challenges faced by students and to inform the development of targeted interventions to improve their academic experience and well-being.

### **Objective of the Study and Research Questions**

This study aims to explore learners' perception on their utilization of learning strategies. More precisely, the primary objective of this study is to address the following questions;

RQ1: What is learners' perception on the motivating factors that influence their learning process?

RQ2: How do learners perceive the demotivating factors that influence their learning process?

RQ3: Is there a relationship between motivating and demotivating factors in learning process?

### **Literature Review**

#### *Motivating Factors for Learning Process*

One of the factors affecting student achievement is student learning motivation. An abundance of previous studies has been done to explore the motivation factors that lead students to be earnestly engaged in learning activities. Agustina et al (2021) described a positive correlation between academic accomplishment of students as measured by their grade point average (GPA) and motivation of tertiary level students. Besides that, Hosseini and Shokrpour (2019) suggested that factors such as teaching materials and characteristics,

instrumental motivation, intrinsic motivation, and learning motivation were motivating factors for nursing school students in Iran. According to Harnett and George (2014), clear guidelines, ongoing support, feedback from the lecturer, and a supportive, caring relationship all affect students' motivation to learn. Meanwhile, Oke and Fernandes (2020) propose that innovation in learning, such as implementing Industrial Revolution 4.0 and transforming the workplace, are effective teaching components that facilitate the student learning experience.

#### *Demotivating Factors for Learning Process*

Demotivation can be described as external factors that reduce a learner's motivation to intend or act, (Adara and Najmudin, 2020). They emphasized that demotivation is distinct from the absence of motivation. Examining demotivation and its contributing factors is vital because it helps identify strategies to counteract demotivation in learners. One study revealed that low self-esteem significantly demotivates learners when acquiring a foreign language (Wan et al. 2024). Moreover, factors such as insufficient self-confidence and adverse learning environments also substantially reduce learners' motivation in educational settings (Wan et al., 2024).

#### *Empirical review on motivation among learners*

Research into the motivation behind learning a foreign language has yielded significant insights into factors that enhance or impede this process. A notable study by Smith (2022) investigated how self-efficacy and language anxiety affect language learning outcomes. The research focused on 300 university students enrolled in beginner-level Spanish courses. Utilizing a Likert-scale questionnaire to assess self-efficacy and anxiety levels, the result revealed that higher self-efficacy strongly correlates with better language performance, while high anxiety levels were linked to poorer outcomes. The implications suggest that language curricula should incorporate strategies to build self-efficacy and reduce anxiety, such as more personalized learning paths and stress management workshops.

Another critical study by Johnson (2023) also explored these dimensions, particularly looking at the role of classroom environment and teacher support in shaping language learning motivation. This study involved 500 high school students learning French. Through interviews and classroom observations, the study revealed that supportive classroom environments and positive teacher-student relationships significantly boost students' motivation by reducing anxiety and enhancing their self-efficacy. These findings underline the importance of teacher training programs that equip educators with skills to create supportive and encouraging learning environments.

A recent study that relates well to the above themes and could provide additional insights is "Enhancing Language Learning through Technology-Integrated Teaching: Impacts on Self-Efficacy and Anxiety" by (Lee and Nguyen, 2021). This study examines how integrating technology in language teaching can affect students' self-efficacy and anxiety. The study surveyed 400 university students undergoing German language courses that used interactive software and online platforms for language practice. Results suggested that the use of technology-enhanced language learning tools significantly improved students' self-efficacy and reduced their anxiety, pointing to the need for modernized language teaching approaches that leverage digital tools. This study further supports the implication that incorporating technology in education can be a vital strategy in motivating students by

providing them with a sense of control and interactive learning experiences. Each of these studies contributes to a better understanding of how various factors influence motivation in learning a foreign language, providing valuable assistance for educators and curriculum developers

#### *Empirical review on demotivation among learners.*

Countless studies have investigated learning motivation, especially concerning burnout among students. Numerous research studies on the correlation between learning motivation and burnout among students. The study conducted by Madigan and Curran in 2021 to examine the relationship between student burnout and academic achievement. The sample encompassed of 109,396 students, who were students from high schools, colleges, and universities. The instrument used in this study was the Robust Variance Meta-Analysis. The results shown that there is a significant negative impact of burnout on academic achievement. This means that burnout can lead to lower academic achievement among high school, college, and university students. Fiorilli et al (2022) conducted a study to examine how gender and worker status affect student burnout. The study on Italian university of 114 students, with 49.6% female students and 49.4% working students. Using multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), the researchers found there is a significant gender differences in burnout levels. The result reported that, female students have higher levels of cognitive impairment, emotional impairment and exhaustion as compared to male students. However, the study did not find any interaction effects between gender and worker status. These findings suggest that gender plays a crucial role in the experience of burnout among university students and should be considered by academic staff who aim to prevent burnout and its potential consequences.

Salgado and Oliveira (2021) carry out a study to explore the impact of academic burnout on students' academic path at a public university in Portugal. They collected responses from 207 students and analysed the data using one-way ANOVA. The results indicate a significant relationship between burnout and various factors such as frequency of physical exercise, participation in extracurricular activities, course expectations and choices, evaluation of relationships with colleagues and uncertainty about professional future. Meanwhile, Dyrbye and Satele (2021) examined the medical student US on their association between burnout and learning environment. A total of 14 126 medical students have been investigated using unique numerical record identifiers to link the response between Year two and end-year medical students. The research concluded that medical students who had more negative experiences and who had an adverse experience of the learning environment were expected to develop higher levels of disengagement and exhaustion. This was in comparison to medical students who had more satisfactory experiences. The elimination of mistreatment and the improvement of the learning environment should be the focus of strategies that aim to promote the well-being, empathy, and experience of students.

#### **The Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework of the study is displayed in Figure 1. Learning success depends largely on motivating and demotivating factors around them. One important motivator for any type of learning is the environment (Rahmat et al., 2021). The framework for this study adopted from motivating factors by Pintrich and DeGroot (1990) which consist of value components, expectancy components and affective components. In addition to that

the demotivating factors are adopted from Campos et al. (2011) such as exhaustion and disengagement.

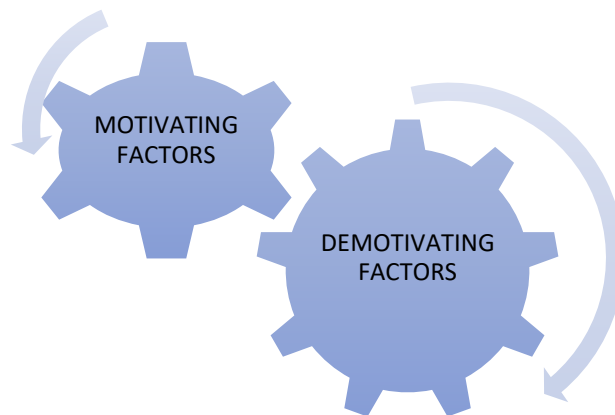


Figure 1- Conceptual Framework of the Study  
Motivating and Demotivating Factors for Learning

### **Methodology**

In this part, the methodology utilized is to tackle and to response on the questions outlay below:

RQ1: What is learners' perception on the motivating factors that influence their learning process?

RQ2: How do learners perceive the demotivating factors that influence their learning process?

RQ3: Is there a relationship between motivating and demotivating factors in learning process?

In this study, the targeted respondents are undergraduate students from public and private universities, which are UiTM Johor Campus Pasir Gudang and UNITAR International University, respectively. This study aimed to investigate the motivating and demotivating factors among undergraduate learners. A purposive sample of 120 learners responded to the online survey. A 5 Likert-scale survey (5 = Always, 4 = Very Often, 3 = Sometimes, 2 = Rarely and 1 = Never) is employed to analyse learner's preception. The instrument of this survey is a combination of two questionnaires which is rooted from Pintrich and DeGroot (1990) and Campos et al. (2011) to reveal the variables as tabulated in table 1 below. This survey has 3 sections. Section A has items on the demographic profile such as age, programs (either Social Science or Science & Technology) and level of education (diploma or degree). Section B has 24 items on motivating factors and section C has 16 items on demotivating factors.

Table 1

*Distribution of Items in the Survey*

Part	Component	Construct	Sub-Component	No Of Items	Total Items	Mean
B	Motivating Factors (Pintrich & DeGroot (1990))	Value Components	Intrinsic Goal Orientation	4	12	.895
			Extrinsic Goal Orientation	3		
			Task Value Beliefs	5		
		Expectancy Component	Students' Self-Efficacy	5	7	.890
			Control Beliefs for Learning	2		
Affective Components			5	.884		
C	Demotivating Factors (Campos,et,al., 2011)	Exhaustion		8	16	.865
		Disengagement		8		
TOTAL NO OF ITEMS					40	.933

Cronbach alpha is a test to measure the reliability of instruments and the value greater than of 0.7 is acceptable of all constructs. As in table 1, the result of Cronbach alpha for motivating factors assessed via value components is at 0.895, followed by expectancy component at 0.890 and a Cronbach alpha of .884 for affective components. Meanwhile, a Cronbach alpha of .865 for demotivating factors; thus, revealing a good reliability of the instrument chosen/used. Further analysis using IBM SPSS statistics 28.0 is carry out to answer the research questions for this study.

**Findings***Demographic Profile*

Table 2

*Percentage for Age*

1	18-20	65%
2	21-23	30%
3	24-26	5%

Table 2 shows that the age of students is divided into three ranges of age. The first range is 18 to 20 years old, the second range is 21 to 23, and followed by the range of 24 to 26. With 120 total respondents among students, the highest percentage of respondents with the highest score was 65%, found among students aged 18 to 20. The second-highest percentage was found among students aged between 21 to 23 years old, at a rate of 30%. On the other hand, the lowest percentage was found among students aged between 24 and 26 years old, which accounted for 5%, equivalent to 6 respondents.

Table 3

*Percentage for Program*

1	Social Science	78%
2	Science & Technology	22%

Table 3 presents the survey results in two program categories: social sciences and science and technology. The highest percentage of social science respondents constituted 78%, equivalent to 94 total respondents, and 22% of respondents come from science and technology backgrounds.

Table 4

*Percentage for Education*

1	Diploma	89%
2	Bachelor	11%

Table 4 summarizes the respondents' educational background, which consisted of two levels: diploma and bachelor's degree. Responses from diploma-level students indicated the highest percentage result at 89% equivalent to 107 respondents, followed by bachelor's degree students, at only 11%.

*Findings for Motivation factors*

This section presents data to answer research question How do learners perceive the motivating factors that influence their learning process? In the context of this study, motivating factors are measured by (a) value components (intrinsic goal orientation, extrinsic goal orientation, task value beliefs), (b) expectancy components (students' perception of self-efficacy, control beliefs for learning) and (c) affective components.

## (a) Value Component

Table 5

*Mean for intrinsic goal orientation (4 items)*

Value Component	Intrinsic goal orientation	Mean
	MFVC1	3.6
	MFVC2	3.6
	MFVC3	4
	MFVC4	3.9

Table 5 displays the average mean score for the intrinsic goal orientation value component, which comprises of four items. Item number 3, which had an average score of 4, received the highest score. This shows that most students agree that understanding course content is important to achieving satisfaction and achieving intrinsic goal orientation. Other than that, one of the intrinsic goal orientations for students is choosing course assignments, with a mean average score of 3.9. Meanwhile, students who prefer class work and course materials as part of their intrinsic goal orientation have an average mean score of only 3.6.

**Table 6**

*Mean for extrinsic goal orientation (3 items)*

Value Component	Extrinsic goal orientation	Mean
	MFEG1	4.5
	MFEG2	4.5
	MFEG3	4.3

Furthermore, based on the findings shown in Table 6, it appears that most students believe and agree that getting rid of a good grade and an improvement in their overall grade point average is the most effective method for achieving extrinsic goal orientation. There was a mean value score of 4.5 for this particular item. Another component that contributes to extrinsic goal orientation is students who want to demonstrate their abilities to their family and friends. The average score was only 4.3, which represents agreeing with this opinion.

**Table 7**

*Mean for task value beliefs (5 items)*

Value Components	Task value beliefs	Mean
	MFTV1	3.6
	MFTV2	4.2
	MFTV3	4.2
	MFTV4	3.9
	MFTV5	4.3

Table 7 displays the results of an analysis of five items related to task value beliefs. The mean score was calculated to determine the importance of each item to students. The highest mean score of 4.3 indicates that most students consider understanding the course's subject matter very important. Additionally, students agreed that the course material is useful for their learning, as indicated by the mean score of 4.2 for both items related to the importance of course material. However, only item number four received a score of 3.9, indicating that students have a neutral opinion for the course's subject matter. The lowest mean score was assigned to item number one, which reflects students' opinions regarding their ability to transfer what they learned from one course to another within the same program.

(b) Expectancy Component

**Table 8**

*Mean for students' perception of self-efficacy (5 items)*

Expectancy Component	Students' Self-Efficacy	Mean
	ECSE1	3.8
	ECSE2	3.6
	ECSE3	4
	ECSE4	3.7
	ECSE5	3.9

The research reveals a generally high level of self-efficacy among students within the academic program studied. The findings indicate that students believe they will receive



excellent grades, with a mean score of 3.8, suggesting a strong sense of academic competence. Confidence in understanding complex materials is slightly lower but still robust at 3.6, indicating a positive perception of cognitive ability. The highest confidence level is in performing well on assignments and tests, scored at 4.0, reflecting a strong belief in task-specific abilities. Mastery of skills being taught in classes is rated at 3.7, highlighting a good level of skill acquisition confidence. Overall success in courses, considering various challenges, is optimistically viewed at 3.9. These results suggest that students' positive perceptions of their academic abilities may significantly contribute to their motivation and engagement in the learning process.

Table 9

*Mean for control beliefs for learning (2 items)*

Expectancy Component	Control Beliefs For Learning	Mean
	ECCB1	4
	ECCB2	4.2

The analysis of control beliefs for learning unveils a strong conviction among students regarding their influence over learning outcomes through dedicated effort and effective study strategies students scored their belief in learning material effectively through proper study methods at 4.0. Even stronger was the belief that hard work would lead to understanding the course materials, rated at 4.2. This conviction in the efficacy of effort and strategy underscores a key motivational factor, suggesting that students who believe they can control their learning outcomes are likely to be more engaged and persistent in their educational pursuits.

(c) Affective Component

Table 10

*Mean for (c) affective component -reversing (5 items)*

Affective Component	Affective Component	Mean
	AC1	3.4
	AC2	3.1
	AC3	3
	AC4	3
	AC5	2.8

This table highlights the affective challenges students face during evaluations, particularly exams, focusing on anxiety and its manifestations that concerns about underperformance relative to peers during tests received a mean score of 3.4, indicating moderate worry about comparative performance.

Anxiety related to specific test items that could not be answered was scored at 3.1. The fear of the consequences of failing was noted at 3.0, suggesting a prevalent concern about failure among students. General unease and upset feelings during exams were also rated at 3.0. Physical symptoms of anxiety, like a fast heartbeat, were the lowest but still significant at 2.8. These findings indicate a moderate level of test anxiety, which could act as a demotivating factor by impairing performance and reducing overall engagement with the learning material.

*Findings for Demotivating Factors*

This section presents data to answer research question 2- How do learners perceive the demotivating factors that influence their learning process? In the context of this study, demotivating factors are measured by (a) exhaustion and (b)disengagement.

Table 11

*Mean for (a) Exhaustion*

Demotivating Factors	Exhaustion	Mean
	DFEX1	3.6
	DFEX 2	3.8
	DFEX 3	3.6
	DFEX 4	3
	DFEX 5	3.3
	DFEX 6	3.2
	DFEX 7	3.2
	DFEX 8	3.7

Table 11 displays the results of an analysis of eight items related to exhaustion. The mean score was calculated to determine the importance of each item to students. The highest mean score of 3.8 indicates that most students need more time to relax and feel more better than in the past. Most students stated that they can manage the amount of work, rated at 3.7.

In addition, students feel tired before the day begins and students can tolerate the pressure of their studies as indicated by the mean score of 3.6 for both items. Some of students feel that they have enough energy for their leisure activities after classes as noted at 3.3 in the mean score. While, at the mean score of 3.2, students usually feel energized after classes and at the same time, students usually feel worn out and weary after my classes. The lowest mean score was assigned to item number four, which reflects on students' opinions regarding their emotion during class as they often feel emotionally drained during classes.

Table 12

*Mean for (b) Disengagement*

Demotivating Factors	Disengagement	Mean
	DFDE1	3.7
	DFDE2	3
	DFDE3	3.1
	DFDE4	3.9
	DFDE5	3.3
	DFDE6	3.6
	DFDE7	3.6
	DFDE8	3

Mean score tabulated in the table 12 displays the results of an analysis of eight items related to disengagement. The mean score was calculated to determine the importance of each item to students. The highest mean score of 3.9 indicates that most students found their

study to be positive challenging. While some students stated that they always find new and interesting aspects in study, rated at 3.7.

Moreover, students feel that this is only thing (studying) that I can imagine myself doing now and they feel more and more engaged in their study as indicated by the mean score of 3.6 for both items. For item DFDE 5 with mean value of 3.3, found that Over time, students can become disconnected from this type of routine. Meanwhile, at the mean score of 3, student found that they tend to think less during classes and attend classes almost mechanically. The lowest mean score was assigned to item number three and eight, that contemplated on students' perceptions of their disengagement as they talked about their study in negative ways and sometime, they felt sickened by study task.

#### *Findings for Relationship between motivating and demotivating.*

This section presents data to answer research question 3- Is there a relationship between motivating and demotivating factors? To determine if there is a significant association in the mean scores between motivating and demotivating factors, data is analysed using SPSS for correlations. Results are presented separately in table 3, 4, 5 and 6 below.

Table 13

*Correlation between motivating and demotivating factors*

		MOTIVATING	DEMOTIVATING
MOTIVATING	Pearson Correlation	1	.596**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	120
DEMOTIVATING	Pearson Correlation	.596**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 13 shows there is an association between motivating and demotivating factors. Correlation analysis shows that there is a high significant association between motivating and demotivating factors ( $r=.596^{**}$ ) and ( $p=.000$ ). According to Jackson (2015), coefficient is significant at the .05 level and positive correlation is measured on a 0.1 to 1.0 scale. Weak positive correlation would be in the range of 0.1 to 0.3, moderate positive correlation from 0.3 to 0.5, and strong positive correlation from 0.5 to 1.0. This means that there is also a strong positive relationship between motivating and demotivating factors.

## Conclusion

### *Summary of Findings and Discussions*

In this study, student's motivation and burnout were investigated and to fulfil three research objectives. The first research objective on how learners perceive their motivating factors in learning. In relation to intrinsic goal orientation, it was found that students felt most satisfied when they trying to understand the content of the courses. this is consistent with

the work of Hosseini and Shokrpour (2019). For extrinsic goal orientation, students expressed that to have a good grade in class is crucially important as improving overall grade point average. Similarly, the finding of Agustina et al. (2021) and Hosseini and Shokrpour (2019) disclosed that grade point average (GPA) is significantly related to motivation. Relatively, to have a good great student need to possess in-depth understanding in the subject matter of the courses. Moreover, students perceived that they are confident in performing their test and assessment as this is due to strong effort they have put in understanding the course material. This is supported by the work of (Smith, 2022; Johnson, 2023; Lee and Nguyen, 2021). However, most students tend to make a comparison on their performance among their fellow students when they take test. This could be due to a competition to be better and having a good grade (Wan et al., 2024).

In regard to the demotivating factors in learning, it was found that students perceived that they need more time to relax and feel better after classes. Due to disengagement, they perceived that their studies to be positive challenging (Salgado and Oliveira, 2021). The last research objective of this study found that there is a significant relationship between motivating and demotivating factors. This is consistent with the work of (Madigan and Curran, 2021; Fiorilli et al., 2022).

#### *Pedagogical Implications and Suggestions for Future Research*

In today's technology driven world, various teaching techniques and aids are utilized. According to the findings of this research students face burnout in classroom. A potential study could be carried out to gauge students' motivation levels, interests and inclinations towards incorporating technology into learners' learning process. It is plausible that students might find learning is more engaging, with technology and innovation, such as gaming elements in learning and assessment. Further, it is necessary to provide a platform for counselling and therapy to students.

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