

# Motivation to Learn Malay Language among Students During Covid-19 Pandemic

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## Abstract

This study was conducted to identify the level of learning motivation of form two students to learn Malay during the Covid-19 pandemic. A total of 63 students were involved in the survey using this questionnaire. A total of 32 items taken from the previous study were used to measure the level of learning motivation among students using a five-point Likert type ordinal scale. The questionnaire went through a pilot study process and had a high reliability value as the recorded a Cronbach Alpha value is,  $p = 0.91$  for a total of 32 items. The findings of the study were analysed by descriptive statistics, ie based on the values of frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. The results of the study showed that the form two students had a moderate level of learning motivation with an overall mean value of 3.57 and a standard deviation of 0.52. Therefore, it can be concluded that learning Malay language subjects online has affected the level of learning motivation among students and a more effective teaching and learning method needs to be planned to overcome this problem.

**Keywords:** Malay Language Subjects, Learning Motivation, Online Learning, Covid-19 Pandemic, Secondary School

## Introduction

Motivation in teaching and learning is important because it will have an impact on achievement (Ishak & Talaat, 2020). Generally, motivation is divided into two parts, namely intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Anderman & Anderman, 2010; Jantan & Razali, 2002). Pupils are said to have intrinsic motivation when they are inclined to learn willingly (Anderman & Anderman, 2010). Extrinsic motivation is when students are motivated by a reward or to avoid any penalty that forces them to learn (Anderman & Anderman, 2010) or motivation that stems from the outside and is closely related to reinforcement (Abdullah 2009; Jantan & Razali, 2002). The difference between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is that the intrinsic motivation involves internal factors of individuals that motivate them to learn, while extrinsic motivation involves external factors as its motivators (Jusoh et al., 2016). Learning motivation is different from intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Bropy, 2010; Lumsden, 1994). Learning motivation is leans more towards cognitive experience, which is the ability of students to use and relate information to current knowledge. Bropy (2010) summarizes learning motivation as a quality of students' cognitive involvement in the learning

process that helps them understand the needs of a learning process. Learning motivation is closely related to students' desire to participate in the learning process (Lumsden, 1994). Pupils who are motivated to learn want to strive, appreciate, enjoy learning and benefit from the learning carried out (Shaari et al., 2005).

Learning motivation is also said to be a major problem when conducting teaching and learning activities in the classroom (Shaari et al., 2005). This is because motivation is able to motivate and direct a person as well as maintain behavior in a matter (Mok, 2008; Hassan & Mohd, 2004; Hashim et al., 2004). Masri (2006) states that motivation is the drive in a person to do something with high enthusiasm, diligence, and patience in order to achieve goals at an excellent level. Therefore, it can be said that motivation is an important element that drives the teaching and learning activities of a subject. Without motivation, effective learning does not happen.

The Malay language subject is the focus of the study because this subject is one of the subjects that must be taken by students throughout their studies at the primary and secondary school levels. In fact, since 2013, Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) candidates are required to at least pass the Malay language subject to qualify for a certificate.

As one of the important subjects in the education system in Malaysia, students supposedly need to have high learning motivation to master this subject. Motivation to learn Malay depends on the learning style and teaching strategies practiced and applied by teachers. A good learning style can stimulate students to improve their level of academic achievement (Zin et al., 2021). Inevitably, the whole world has been shocked by the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic which has led to a shift from face-to-face learning styles to online learning styles. To prevent the widespread spread of this virus in Malaysia, the Ministry of Education along with various other parties have decided to implement teaching and learning sessions online (Daud et al., 2021). The Ministry of Education Malaysia had to change the method of teaching and learning (PdP) online by introducing guidelines for the implementation of teaching and learning at home (PdPR) for the guidance of teachers. This effort is to prevent the spread of epidemics and ensure that students do not fall behind in lessons (Hamzah & Mahamod, 2021). Online teaching and learning demand the use of technology as a new alternative to replace face to face learning. This new norm uses mediums such as Google Classroom, Google Meets, Zoom, Webex and such to facilitate the online learning process.

It is acknowledged that the use of information technology in education facilitates more effective learning despite some constraints (Hairia'an & Dzainudin, 2020). These are the constraints that can affect the motivation level of students to learn a subject. Therefore, these constraints need to be identified and overcome to produce effective teaching and learning activities.

### **Research Methodology**

This study is a preliminary survey study to identify the level of learning motivation among students studying Malay language subjects as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Teaching and learning activities which previously could be carried out face to face, has to be carried out online, now. The effect is not only on students, but teachers also receive the same effect in implementing effective teaching and learning. Therefore, this study was conducted to identify the extent to which changes in teaching and learning activities affect learning motivation among students, especially for Malay language subject.

The measurement of this learning motivation variable uses a questionnaire developed by Meyad (2014). There were 32 items with three negative items (item 10, item 18, item 27) and the scale used was a five-point Likert type ordinal scale, i.e., 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree. Based on the pilot study, this learning motivation measure has a high reliability value (0.91). Therefore, this questionnaire is suitable to be used to measure the variables of learning motivation among form two students on the aspect of Malay language composing skills.

This questionnaire was distributed to 63 form two students in Johor. The selection of the study sample was made purposefully when all the samples that were in both classes and taught by the same teacher were selected as the study sample. The completed questionnaire forms were then processed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Data were analysed to obtain frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation.

### Discussion of Findings

Table 1 shows the demographic information of the study sample, i.e., in terms of gender and race. It was found that the number of study samples according to gender is not much different, while in terms of race, more than half are Malay students. This was followed by 18 (28.6%) Chinese students and only 2 (3.2%) people of other races.

Table 1  
*Study Sample*

Variable (n=63)		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	32	50.8
	Female	31	49.2
Race	Malay	33	52.4
	Chinese	18	28.6
	Indian	10	15.9
	Others	2	3.2

Table 2 shows the mean value and standard deviation for each item of learning motivation. The discussion of the findings of this section is made based on three levels, namely the level of low learning motivation (1.00 - 2.33), moderate level of learning motivation (2.34 - 3.67) and high level of learning motivation (3.68 - 5.00).

Table 2

*Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Learning Motivation*

No.	Item	Mean	SD	Motivation Level
1	I enjoy learning Malay	3.87	1.04	High
2	Learning Malay is like a hobby for me	3.13	1.02	Moderate
3	I like learning Malay	3.79	1.03	High
4	Malay is one of the important subjects	4.17	1.04	High
5	Malay is useful to learn	4.19	1.11	High
6	I try to study hard in Malay class	3.98	0.92	High
7	I want to learn Malay because it will help me in business in the future	3.79	0.88	High
8	Learning Malay is important because it can broaden my perspective	3.65	0.99	Moderate
9	Learning Malay is important because it can make me a more knowledgeable person	3.84	0.99	High
10	I study Malay simply because it is a compulsory subject	2.83	1.28	Moderate
11	I study Malay because I want to get a good grade	3.97	0.97	High
12	I learn Malay because it helps me understand Malay books and movies	3.71	1.05	High
13	I am learning Malay because it will help my future career	3.86	1.09	High
14	I learn Malay based on a pre-planned schedule	2.87	1.09	Moderate
15	Although Malay homework is a bit tiring, I still try my best to complete it	3.46	1.09	Moderate
16	I do Malay assignments according to a pre -planned schedule	2.79	1.10	Moderate
17	Although there is no homework, I try to learn Malay outside of class time	3.14	1.03	Moderate
18	I do Malay assignments solely so as not to fail	2.73	1.13	Moderate
19	I am actively involved in Malay language classes	3.40	0.99	Moderate
20	I spend more time learning Malay than other subjects to achieve success	2.95	0.68	Moderate
21	Success in Malay requires me to sacrifice other activities that I like to do	3.06	0.95	Moderate
22	I have to sacrifice a lot to succeed in Malay Language	3.17	1.03	Moderate
23	To succeed in Malay, I need to spend a lot of time learning	3.41	1.07	Moderate
24	I expect to be successful in Malay Language	3.65	0.94	Moderate
25	I believe I can get an excellent grade in Malay	3.95	0.91	High
26	Having considered the difficulty of the Malay language and the skills I have, I think I can do my best in this subject	3.56	0.93	Moderate
27	I am worried that I may not be able to get good results in Malay	3.16	1.18	Moderate

28	I am sure I can understand the most difficult things or materials in Malay	3.29	0.85	Moderate
29	I am confident that I can understand the basic concepts taught in the Malay language class	3.63	0.90	Moderate
30	I am confident that I can understand the most complex grammatical structures in Malay class	3.41	0.93	Moderate
31	I am confident that I can do my best job in Malay assignments and tests	3.79	0.83	High
32	I can definitely master the skills taught in the Malay language class	3.97	1.00	High
<b>Overall</b>		<b>3.57</b>	<b>0.53</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

The findings showed that the level of learning motivation among form two students to learn Malay was at a moderate level,  $M = 3.57$ ;  $SD = 0.53$  with 13 items recording a high level of motivation and 19 items recording a moderate level of motivation. The range of mean values recorded is between 4.19 to 2.73.

Two items recorded the highest mean value, namely item 4 "Malay is one of the important subjects" ( $M = 4.17$ ;  $SD = 1.04$ ) and item 5 "Malay is useful to learn" ( $M = 4.19$ ;  $SD = 1.11$ ). This shows that students are aware of the importance of learning Malay language subjects. Pupils also agreed that learning Malay can make them more knowledgeable ( $M = 3.84$ ;  $SD = 0.99$ ), but this subject is less able to expand their views ( $M = 3.65$ ;  $SD = 0.99$ ) when it recorded a moderate mean value.

The students studied were also found to have moderate learning motivation in terms of active involvement in Malay language classes ( $M = 3.40$ ;  $SD = 0.99$ ) and spend more time learning Malay language compared to other subjects to achieve success ( $M = 2.95$ ;  $SP = 0.68$ ).

They were also found to have moderate learning motivation in completing assignments. Pupils were found to be less committed on schedule planned in advance to complete assignments ( $M = 2.79$ ;  $SD = 1.10$ ) and their lack of effort to review these subjects outside of school hours ( $M = 3.14$ ;  $SD = 1.03$ ).

Although students are confident of being able to obtain excellent grades in this subject ( $M = 3.95$ ;  $SD = 0.91$ ), they have a moderate level of motivation in understanding the most difficult things or materials in the Malay language class ( $M = 3.29$ ;  $SD = 0.85$ ), understood the basic concepts taught ( $M = 3.63$ ;  $SD = 0.90$ ) and understood the most complex grammatical structures ( $M = 3.41$ ;  $SD = 0.93$ ).

Therefore, it can be concluded that the change in teaching and learning activities, namely from face to face to online has affected the level of learning motivation among the students studied. In this regard, a more appropriate teaching method is necessary as an alternative to the existing teaching and learning methods of Malay language subjects. This is to overcome the constraints faced during online teaching and learning.

## Conclusion

It can be concluded that the drastic changes that occurred in the national education system due to the spread of Covid-19 have had an impact on the learning motivation of form two students in learning Malay language subjects. Although students still show high confidence in being able to achieve excellent results in this subject, the constraints of online learning to some extent, have affected their learning motivation.

In the situation of this country, the implementation of online teaching and learning at home is seen as a little difficult to execute effectively due to Internet access problems, lack of appropriate and adequate devices and so on. Internet access problems can be attributed to geographical factors as not all areas are able to have good Internet access. This problem does not occur in urban communities, but for students in rural areas, villages or hillside areas, and forested areas will face this problem. It is undeniable that there are many Internet facilities offered, but it still cannot cope with this constraint. It is possible that students in the city face the same problem when subscribing to low-speed internet due to high cost of living factors, family socioeconomics and so on. Therefore, to overcome this problem, various aspects need to be taken into account and not just involving the teacher's teaching style alone. These constraints need to be overcome from various angles so that students are motivated to learn and not left behind in obtaining the learning they deserve.

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