Social Studies Students' Motivation in Online Learning during COVID-19 Pandemic

John Erwin Prado Pedroso, PhD,[1*], John Patrick B. Magbato[2], Vivienne Louise B. Lopez[3], Joseph James P. Llorico[4]

[1,2,3,4] West Visayas State University, Iloilo City 5000, Philippines
*Corresponding Author: johnerwin.pedroso@wvsu.edu.ph

Abstract: This study described the experiences of social studies students as well as how they managed to stay inclined to learn given the struggles, they faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, it looked at how social studies students have faced challenges but are still actively pursuing their own dreams during the pandemic. This research employed a qualitative-narrative approach, involving five (5) social studies students. As data collection techniques, students were asked to write narratively using Gibbs reflective cycle. The findings revealed that students' motivation to continue learning during the COVID-19 pandemic was divided into three main themes, each with its own set of categories and subcategories. The three themes and categories described were: (a) personal, with categories of challenges, self-determination, satisfaction and religious commitment; (b) social, with categories of relationships, inspiration, and well-being; and (c) environmental, with categories of breaking in/conditioning and amenities. The themes and categories showed that these social studies students got their inspiration to learn during the pandemic. According to the findings, these students were intrinsically and extrinsically motivated and dedicated to their studies. The majority of these students were spurred by their individual goals, not by a controlled motive, an incentive, a consequence, or a regulation. This study proposes that students be prepared to be more resilient and to build the ability to be hopeful and motivated to succeed and transcend any of life's hardships by defining how they achieved to motivate themselves.

Keywords: Motivation, Social Studies Students, Online learning, COVID-19 pandemic

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has created an extremely fast expanding health crisis with drastic implications throughout 2020 (Gomez-Salgado, Andres-Villas, Dominguez-Salas, Diaz- Millanes, & Ruiz-Frutos, 2020). Djidjou-Demasse, Michalakis, Choisy, Sofonea, & Alizon (2020) uttered that most countries quickly implemented public health control measures known as non- pharmacological interventions in response towards the COVID-19 outbreak; and adopted a school closure strategy (Ebrahim, Ahmed, Gozzer, Schlagenhauf, & Memish, 2020). Thus, COVID-19 pandemic has caused the largest disruption of education in history, having already had a near universal impact on learners and teachers around the world, from pre-primary to secondary schools, technical and vocational education and training institutions, and also universities (United Nations, 2020). Whereas, the physical education facilities were closed down, students evicted from their dormitories, and shifted to online instruction (Hartocollis, 2020). Courses moved from in-person learning to online learning, predominantly using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) (Woolliscroft, 2020). Yet these measures could not be easily enforced and as a result, it created many issues due to a significant proportion of the curriculum being used, which was not originally planned for online or remote learning (Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust, & Bond, 2020); similarly, instructors and students,

many of whom had no prior experience teaching or taking online course, were suddenly faced with the additional burden of remote learning (Lederman, 2020) like they were not equipped for online learning or digital use (Quezada, Talbot, & Quezada-Parker, 2020). Moreover, Assuncao Flores & Gago (2020) emphasized that many students did not have the required devices, internet access or resources needed to study remotely online. Some learners and educators were not familiar with the digital platforms and online programs that they were required to use at such short notice (Rasmitadila, Aliyyah, Rachmadtullah, Samsudin, Syaodih, & Nurtanto, 2020).

The quick move to working and studying from home created various concerns in the education sector, particularly in higher education, where university students faced considerable challenges in their learning process. Schiff, Zasiekina, Pat-Horenczyk, and Benbenishty (2020) explored the practical challenges and concerns that university students encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic in two countries: Israel and Ukraine, with two large samples of university students from both countries. The students' main practical obstacles in both nations were fears about their family's health and their learning tasks, according to the findings. The degree of exposure and challenges in both countries differed, according to the study, but the link between them and the various students' concerns appears to be strong. More specifically, regular publicity to the media's threat to the community linked to their heightened anxiety and harmed their learning.

In Asia, Huang, Tlili, Chang, Zhang, Nascimbeni, & Burgos (2020) looked into the Chinese government's pandemic education policy, concentrating on how the government transformed the entire curriculum and implemented online learning approaches to provide continuous learning even schools were halted. They identified several impediments to fast reform, including: first, unpreparedness, in which teachers had not primed their learning materials to assist them to tweak to online learning, and such prepping was time-consuming; secondly, teachers/students' confinement, which left them flustered and powerless; and lastly, a need for a suitable instructional method to keep students motivated and engaged during the lengthy time of e-learning, particularly due to the sheer time constraints.

Learning from home did not result in the same teaching and learning experience for teachers and students as before the pandemic. Irrespective of student background, teachers and parents expressed a significant need for help as lack of certainty, lack of motivation, insecurity, volatility, and reduced autonomy and self-directedness (Germani, Buratta, Delvecchio, & Mazzeschi, 2020) has become a major issue to students as they engaged in learning activities during the pandemic crisis. Also, staying at home, worrying about being affected by the virus, changing their usual school routine, and not being able to socialize with friends affected their mental well-being (Son, Hegde, Smith, Wang, & Sasangohar, 2020). The pandemic brought the infection risk of death and led to intolerable psychological strain (Horesh & Brown, 2020). Stress is one of the factors that has an impact on students' motivation (Martin, Cayanus, Weber, & Goodboy, 2006). As the online learning was conducted from home, improper internet connection and not enough gadgets to access the distance learning caused them [students] stress. Some students with psychological hardiness suffered a loss in motivation to perform, and even worse, a few experienced a severe state of depressed mood (Cole, Field, & Harris, 2004). All of these factors mean that students are often at risk of significant learning loss (Dorn, Hancock, Sarakatsannis, & Viruleg, 2020). Hereby, as the prevalence of stress, anxiety and depression has increased in the general population due to sudden transformation from traditional face-to-face learning approach to remotely digital learning, little research has been done to examine the Social Studies Students' motivation in particular.

Hence, this current study aims to describe the motivational experiences of Social Studies Students during COVID-19 pandemic as well as what kept them motivated to learn amid challenges and limitations of online learning. Specifically, seeks to answer the research questions: 1) What are the motivational experiences of Social Studies Students during COVID- 19 pandemic? and 2) What kept Social Studies Students motivated to learn amid challenges and limitations of online learning?

Meanwhile, this study is anchored on Self-Determination Theory, proposed by Deci and Ryan (1985) to outline the research context and results. According to Self-Determination Theory (SDT), it focuses on the forms of motivation: autonomous motivation, controlled motivation and amotivation (Ryan &

Deci, 2000; Ackerman, 2020); as predictors of academic achievement. SDT has two assumptions, according to Cherry (2021): (1) people are actively encouraged to grow since forming a consistent self-worth involves awareness of obstacles and exposure to new experiences; and (2) focuses on internal sources of motivation such as a desire to learn or acquire autonomy (known as intrinsic motivation). Moreover, this theory examines the social elements that improve and detract from motivation, devising and concluding that the extent toward which basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met, as opposed to the negative influence, shapes and reinforces motivation. SDT also scrutinizes people's life goals or aspirations, displaying differential relationships between intrinsic and extrinsic life goals to performance and psychological wellbeing (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Satisfaction of these basic needs promotes the optimal motivational traits and states of autonomous motivation and intrinsic aspirations, which facilitate psychological health and effective engagement with the world (Deci & Ryan, 2015).

Additionally, the findings of this study can then be used to better understand Social Studies Students' motivation in online learning as well as how they sustain their motivation to learn during COVID-19. This study used the case of Social Studies majors, yet the lessons are applicable beyond the course's borders. By considering their motivation, we may discover what must be done to aide students achieve regardless their limits and equip them to be motivated during this challenging time. This will also help inform schools to strengthen their plans through reaching out their students to create a healthier online learning and to determine research gaps for future investigation.

METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study and Research Design

The study on social studies students' motivation in online learning during COVID 19 pandemic employed a qualitative-narrative method of research. The goal was to describe Social Studies students' experiences from their viewpoint and what kept them motivated to learn during COVID-19 Pandemic. This was accomplished by capturing the Social Studies students' narratives through written interview focusing on their experiences as motivation is concerned. This study is anchored in the theory of Self-Determination (Deci and Ryan, 1965) which focuses on the forms of motivation: autonomous motivation, controlled motivation and amotivation.

Informants

The research informants, Social Studies students, was generally selected on the basis of their credibility in providing rich descriptions of their experiences. Their willingness to articulate their experiences were provided rich information that shed light to the research problems. Purposive sampling was utilized to find informants with specific criteria needed for the purpose of this research (Pedroso, Tangco-Siason, Ortizo-Roces, & Magramo-Basbas, 2022) namely: (1) enrolled in the School Year 2021-2022; (2) officially enrolled as BSED Social Studies student; and (3) experienced motivational issues in online learning during COVID-19 pandemic. For the purpose of this study, five (5) Social Studies students within the College of Education of West Visayas State University-Main Campus was recruited to participate in the study. Further, informants were assigned pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality.

Table 1. Profile of Informants

BSED Social Studies Students	Year Level	Location	Age	Enrolment Status (S.Y. 2021-2022)
Berto	1	Santa Barbara, Iloilo	19	Enrolled
Anton	1	Sambag, Jaro	34	Enrolled
Coni	2	Jordan, Guimaras	20	Enrolled
Kwe	2	Zarraga, Iloilo	21	Enrolled
Kay	3	Pavia, Iloilo	22	Enrolled

Data Gathering Instrument

The instrument utilized was a researcher-made written interview form. In utilizing a semi-structured question following the six stages of Gibb's Reflective Cycle, students reflected on their experiences and strategies employed about descriptions, feelings, analysis, evaluation, conclusions, and actions (Pedroso, 2021) in terms of their motivation in the midst of COVID-19 Pandemic.

Data Collection Procedure

Data included for this research study was gathered in the last week of April 2022. The written interview form was done through Google Docs and was sent among the identified informants. For easier follow-up, the researchers formed a group chat via Facebook Messenger. Virtual meeting was held on a regular basis to enhance the information gathered from written interviews. The informants had three (3) weeks to complete the written interview form. The written interview form's questions, as well as the informants' responses, was written in English. Also, no one other than the researchers have access to information that the informants supplied. Thus, confidentiality was upheld. The data collection procedure included a virtual focus group discussion to validate the information supplied by each informant.

Data Analysis Procedure

As the informants submitted their completed written interview forms at their leisure, the researchers opted to store the materials electronically for easy access. Each written interview form was downloaded and properly labelled with the informants' names. After completed the five (5) written interview forms from five (5) informants, the researchers were steered by conventional qualitative content analysis by Hsieh and Shannon (2005) in analysing transcripts. To describe the experiences of Social Studies students' motivation in the midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the written transcripts was collected using a researcher-made data analysis matrix. The researchers agreed to highlight and give relevant codes to the informants' significant statements and phrases. Furthermore, depending on their differences and similarities, the various codes was divided into several groups. By combining pertinent codes, meaningful categories were created. The various categories were simplified and classified based on the motivational experiences of Social Studies students in the midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The analysis phase lasted between four (4) and six (6) weeks. Finally, the manuscript was provided to the informants to ensure that the data supplied is accurate.

Ethical Consideration

This study adapted the ethical considerations tackled by that of Resnik (2020) which are the avoidance of falsification, manipulation, and misinterpretation of data through objectivity, confidentiality of both the researchers and especially that of the informants, copyright and plagiarism, responsibility and accountability towards the conduct of the study, volunteerism and informed consent, and most importantly, adherence to the rule of law.

Trustworthiness

To ensure the reliability of this study, the researchers attempted to increase the validity of responses and results of the study by making sure that informants are given prior information on the nature of the research e.g., what the researchers are studying, how data will be collected, and what is the purpose of conducting this study. Building a trusting relationship with the subjects so that findings and analysis can be confirmed was also be taken into account. To avoid any inconsistencies, keeping accurate and detailed notes to determine the variations in responses was administered. Thus, to overcome biases, researchers conducted repeated written interviews at different times to compare the results for the actuality of responses, therefore providing research findings that are reliable. In maintaining the credibility of the overall study, the use of member checks in recycling of analysis back to informants was utilized. Conclusions was given to the informants and feedback was requested about the accuracy of the content. This ensures that the researcher and the informant are viewing the data consistently.

RESULT

Despite all the limitations of online learning, the Social Studies students remained motivated to learn. What was their inclination to learn? Results showed that the motivation of the social studies students fell into three (3) themes, nine (9) significant categories, and eighteen (16) sub-categories.

Personal Motivation

The first theme that emerged from the iterative was Personal Motivation. This theme included four categories and eleven sub-categories in total. The (a) Challenges, (2) Self-determination, (3) Satisfaction, and (4) Religious Commitment.

Challenges

Students were compelled to switch to online learning, with no indication of returning to face-to-face classes as COVID-19 outbreak levied school closures worldwide. This emergency situation and the sudden need to change habits and routines (Duan & Zhu, 2020) impacted students' perceptions of safety and preparedness to adapt to new learning methods, thereby leading to increased levels of anxiety and stress (Unger & Meiran, 2020). However, in this category, it reveals that despite struggles encountered, social studies students continue to foster. This category is divided into four sub-categories: (1) Impediments Faced; (2) Driven to Strive Hard; (3) Setting Targets; and (4) Confidence in Achieving Targets.

➢ *Impediments faced*

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced many of students particularly college students to move to online learning, an adjustment for many who are accustomed to in-person classes (Klawitter, 2022). It was thought that online learning would be the new interactive and immersive method to teach the new generation of students. Though, the results speak on the contrary. Adjustments, lacking of motivation, and technical issues led social studies students face such struggles or impediments. As Berto says:

"As a student accustomed to face-to-face classes, I found it challenging to adjust to the change in learning instruction."

In the same reason, he continues that:

"But my primary issue is that I sometimes lack motivation and discipline. In asynchronous classes, I have control over my schedule, which is where sloth corrupts me and, as a result, procrastination occurs."

Anton, on the other hand, mentioned that he also faced struggles in online learning that affected his mental disposition. He utters:

"As a social studies student, I have been through a lot of the different challenges brought by this new mode of learning. The most common of them are stress and anxieties, the different distractions, managing time, lack of social interaction, and academic demands."

Meanwhile, Coni reveals in his narrative that technical issue had been a concern for him, contributing to overall difficulty.

"Unstable internet connection is also a challenge that assesses my patience and decisiveness."

Some students in today's context, compare themselves, whether it may be in oneself vs. others or others vs. others. The comparison traps are all too tempting in today's online learning environment since instructors sometimes prefer to submit their work through Group Chats or Goggle Drive where the chance that anybody can see it is high. In the case of Kay, she engages in self-deprecation on occasion, which is defined as denigrating, undervaluing, and insulting oneself, or being too modest. She expresses:

"There are times that I would unconsciously practice self-sabotaging and belittle myself for not having sound reasoning as others or not being as well-spoken as others."

Further, due to the rapid shift to distant instruction or online learning, students fell into disarray. As learners are accustomed to face-to-face classes, online learning has become a challenge for Kwe. She says:

"I admit that I found difficulty in giving my best in my activities and outputs not like during those face-to-face times where I juggle numerous exams every day with extracurricular activities at the side."

She continues that:

"I sometimes lose courage to perform my best in order to get high grades during this new mode of learning where we are in the midst of a pandemic."

➢ *Driven to Strive Hard*

Despite impediments faced, social studies students remained motivated to learn online from home during COVID-19 pandemic. The impediments faced increased their determination to learn, even though they struggled. As Coni utters:

"This did not extinguish my blazing enthusiasm to surmount the deficiencies. I have utilized the lacks as ways to work a little harder."

Anton, meanwhile, expressed that because he witnessed the struggle and hardships of some of the members of his family, he was driven to strive harder in online learning. He says:

"I witnessed the struggles of my two siblings on their journey to reach their dreams and that also lift my spirit up to aim and reach my own dream. Furthermore, the different experiences of struggles and hardships that I had been through keep me going."

He continues:

"At a very young age, my parents had given me responsibilities to take care of. I also witnessed the struggles and hardships of my parents to support us and our needs. These experiences remind me to not back down nor get weakened by any challenge that I encounter. These experiences also make me try harder so that someday my own family won't suffer and have to experience the same struggles and hardships I had."

➢ *Setting Targets*

Another personal aspiration is that social studies students were challenged to have a career choice when they graduated and make their parents proud of them. Kwe expressed her desire to be an educator in her narrative. She pushed herself to be able to do well despite all the limitations she had encountered.

"My ambition to become a teacher motivated me to learn throughout the COVID- 19 pandemic, so although learning was hindered and learning was done online, I always encouraged myself being able to learn autonomously for the sake of my goal about becoming a teacher."

➢ *Confidence in Achieving Goals*

A real conviction in your innate goodness and value, as well as your talents and desire to grasp through in the face of difficulties, are the foundations of confidence (Esimai, 2019). Empowering that conviction to propel and perpetuate the quest of your goals is what confidence is all about. Kay expresses:

"At times, I would give up and choose my second option for completing a task since the first always seemed laborious, but I am always certain that the original plan would work brilliantly."

Coni, on the other hand, is confident also to achieve his goals and to end with dramatic victories.

"I have started to join in academic and personal battles and looking forward to end with dramatic victories."

Self-determination

Self-determination is also one of the categories that prompted the researchers and conclude that the intrinsic drive of social studies students was what sustained them continuing despite the limits of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. This category is divided into three sub-categories: (1) Accept Responsibility; (2) Fulfilling Tasks; and (3) Positive-Internal Motivation.

➢ *Accept Responsibility*

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, remote-learning students are running into all sorts of barriers to learning. Instructors are seeing that previously learned study strategies and habits are falling by the wayside as a result of too much unstructured time and relatively isolated campus living therefore creating challenges for even the best-equipped and disciplined students (Bresnick, 2020). But it demonstrates that, in the midst of all the turmoil, properly arranging tasks helped establish a pattern and generate structure, which then in turn serves as a reminder of a task to be complete Kay conveys that:

"To keep me on track, I write daily to-do lists on a corkboard directly in front of my desk, where I usually sit during the day. This way, I am continuously reminded of the tasks that need to be accomplished."

In the same way, time management is one major issue among students in higher education; it influences how they perceive and utilize time in a way that allows them to juggle their academic tasks accordingly (Macan, Shahani, Dipboye, & Phillips, 1990; Alhasani, Alkhawaji, & Orji, 2022). As Kay continues:

"By practicing time management, I could allocate my time very well on things that I prioritize the most."

➢ *Fulfilling Tasks*

Practicing effective time management strategies can result in fulfilling the tasks. As Lay and Schouwenburg (1993), as cited in Alhasani, Alkhawaji, and Orji (2022), research shows that improved perceived control over time has a significant positive impact on students' perceptions and attitudes towards work and life, promoting productivity and minimizing stress levels. Kay says:

"Now that I have learned that I have the time on my hands, I can make time for my school work, do household chores, and squeeze in a bit of my time meeting my friends."

➢ *Positive-Internal Motivation*

Positive-internal motivation starts with a feeling of purpose, or understanding why you're doing what you're doing. Knowing your personal basic principles will greatly assist you in answering the question "Why am I doing this?" Hence, Anton utilizes this kind of motivation during COVID-19 pandemic. He says:

"I know for myself that I'm strong and motivated enough to face and deal with these difficulties. I have so much that motivates me and keep me going despite the hardships that I am experiencing amidst this pandemic."

Satisfaction

The next category emerged is satisfaction, sense of fulfilment. After seeing the reality presented by the social studies students in their essays, the researchers created this category: they were motivated to learn as long as they stayed to feel positive, be happy, and love themselves. This category is divided into three sub-categories: (1) Thankful; (2) Positive Thought; and (3) Self-appreciation.

➢ *Thankful*

Students in social studies stated that studying made them joyful, as they felt motivated to learn despite the various drawbacks of online learning. Coni shared that despite challenges faced, he is thankful that this pandemic taught him to be optimistic and adaptable. He states:

"This new normal teaches me to be hopeful and versatile."

Meanwhile, Kay is also thankful that she established routines and strategies that guide her on this online setup. She expresses:

"I can confidently claim that I have established routines and strategies that have assisted me in easing the academic burdens I have experienced, am experiencing, and will experience."

➢ *Positive Thought*

Positive thinking assisted social studies students in staying on track throughout this difficult time. Many students underlined the necessity of remaining positive in their mindset. Berto shares:

"...reminding myself of my aspirations. I just tell myself that I have a dream and that I need to work hard to attain it. I want to have things that I don't have. I want a comfortable life. I desired a brighter future. Correspondingly, my motivation surged up and I got back to my work."

In the same reason, Anton also utters that thinking positively reminded him to keep going during this trying times. He says:

"But I chose those words to remind me to always weigh my choices, it motivates me to choose what's the best thing to do at every crossroads."

Kay, in her case, recites affirmations. She shares:

"...recite daily affirmations. I always carried a journal with me, and I've been writing my thoughts out every day."

She continues:

"Every day, or at least when things seem heavier than expected, I use self- affirmation to keep myself fueled."

➢ **Self-appreciation**

The study also discovered that social studies students pampered themselves with little gifts or the like. They gave a simple present to commemorate their life triumphs or any accomplishment, regardless how small or spectacular it was, like what Anton shares:

"Whenever I complete tasks that I deem onerous, I prefer to reward myself with little treats such as things I enjoy doing, such as cooking my favorite meal or watching movies."

Religious Commitment

The last category, which was part of the phenomenological theme of personal is religious commitment. The students were motivated by their religious devotion as revealed in their narratives. This category has only one sub-category which is making (1) Prayer as a weapon.

➢ **Prayer** *as a weapon*

"Talking to God" is perhaps the most fundamental definition of prayer. Prayer is not idle reflection or contemplation; it is a direct communication with God. Social studies students became grateful after talking to God since it helped them maintain their desire and retain their dreams alive. Berto shares:

"I am a believer, and I have faith that there's someone that guides me on this path I am taking. All I have to do is pray, and meditate to keep this motivation and dream burning."

In the same way, Coni says:

"Prayers are my strong weapons to fight and defend against distress, frustration, and fatigue."

Social Motivation

With motivation recognized as a multidimensional construct, there are numerous factors that influence how it is perceived by individuals. Students' unique lived experiences impact their perceptions and motivations (Reash, 2021). The second theme emerged is social. This theme

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included three categories: (a) Relationships, (2) Inspiration, and (3) Well-Being; and four sub-categories.

Relationships

Anxiety, stress, and in some cases, trauma is prevalent as we live through the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the negative impact of pandemic to learning motivation of students, people have what is known as a "social brain," which is in charge of managing social interactions. Social intelligence can be developed by being aware of the impact that social relationships have on both individuals and others. This intelligence is involved in the comprehension of perceived stimuli, which allows for balanced and positive social relationships (Quilez-Robres, Moyano, & Cortes, 2021). Strong relationships can dramatically enhance students' level of motivation and therefore promote learning (The Education Trust, 2021). In this category, (1) Family and Friends is one sub-category that was identified.

➤ *Family and Friends*

The COVID-19 outbreak has ravaged all societal domains, including education. Home confinement, school closures, and distance learning impacted students, teachers, and parents' lives worldwide (Zaccoletti, Camacho, Correia, Aguiar, Mason, Alves, & Daniel 2020). Despite these, this study shows that students demonstrated how they supported each other. They repeatedly emphasized the importance of their family and peers and how they had become stronger together. However, previous researches addressed the challenges of parents in meeting the needs of their children. A few parents had lost their jobs in this difficult time. Students have discussed how often they could not study because they had to help their younger siblings learn (Raheim, 2021). Though, the results speak on the contrary. Almost all informants explicitly stated that their parents were their key reasons behind their motivation and a form of strength. They had very optimistic feelings towards their parents, aspirations, and how hard they needed to work to make their parents proud of their achievements which led social studies students remain motivated to learn during the pandemic. As Kwe said:

"My one and only motivation will always be my parents. They are my anchor that keeps me going and molds me to become stronger every day."

In addition, he continues that:

"Even if I'm very tired and drained off and whenever I see them, I find my will to continue and to keep on going and it seems that my strength is being recharged."

Many Social Studies students have also pointed out how their friends and classmates had driven them to continue learning in this unprecedented time. They found encouragement and enthusiasm by staying in touch and spending time together virtually. This is justified as to what Coni states:

"Apart from my high scale of intrinsic motivation, heartfelt messages and support of my family and friends are efficient suppliers of extrinsic motivation."

In the same reason, Kay adds:

"...taking some time to have deep talks with my close friends."

Inspiration

The Center on Education Policy (CEP), an independent advocate for public education and better outcomes within the public school system, has highlighted motivation as a cornerstone of student success. In a recent report, the organization noted that, "motivation can affect how students approach school in general, how they relate to teachers, how much time and effort they devote to their studies, how much support they seek when they're struggling, how much they attempt to engage or disengage their fellow students from academics, [and] how they perform on assessments," among other factors. If the students felt lost, they would look for inspiration. Inspiration is a form of motivation that comes from social contact or learning from others about success, stories and thinking (Raheim, 2021). Thus, (1) Inspiration is one category created from the data with one sub-category, (1) motivational quotes and advices.

➢ *Motivational Quotes and Advices*

Social studies students drew inspiration from quotations and advices, as revealed in their narratives. Despite difficulties, the study found that Motivational Quotes and Advice helped Social Studies students stay motivated to learn during the pandemic. Anton shares:

"Being motivated can also motivate the younger generation to make them realize that they are capable of overcoming different challenges that this pandemic brings."

He also drew inspiration from quotations, including quotations from religion. He shares:

"Usually, on such days, I would say"All is well, everything is going to be okay," or "I trust Him, therefore I know I am in good hands"

Well-being

In the wake of the massively volatile global situation created by COVID-19, it created trauma that affect people in different ways, at the individual and collective levels, resulting in mental health challenges for many (Otu, Charles, & Yaya, 2020). Despite challenges brought about by the crisis, students stayed motivated to study remotely during the outbreak of COVID-19 due to the reason that they wanted to stay safe and keep others healthy. They were concerned not only with themselves or with those in their immediate family, but also with others in general. The final category discovered was (1) well-being which had one sub-category, (1) Staying Healthy. The study found that, while students dislike online learning, they felt a mutual obligation to control the virus by staying at home.

➢ *Staying healthy*

Given the apocalyptic speed with which COVID-19 is sweeping across the globe, the mental health care of patients, health professionals and communities is very likely to be under-addressed thus giving rise to major medium and long-term consequences. The establishment of mitigating strategies to preserve the mental wellbeing of all is a complicated, but crucial imperative (Otu, Charles, & Yaya, 2020). The gathered data revealed that social studies students learned to develop strategies to maintain their well- being that led them to improve their motivation to learn. As to what Kay states:

"...while doing the Butterfly Hug, a therapeutic method that assists in relaxing and calming the body."

She continues:

"Lastly, the most important of all, I always ensure that I take good and proper care of my mental, physical, and emotional health."

Environmental Motivation

The third theme emerged is environmental motivation. Social studies students' motivation to continue learning stems not just from personal and social motivation, but also from the society. During the COVID-19 pandemic, students exposed the vicissitudes of learning, such as how environmental conditioning and learning-promoting amenities are required to motivate students to flourish in learning despite their limits. This theme has two categories: (1) Breaking in/Conditioning; and (2) Amenities.

Breaking In/Conditioning

Students must have some resources to help them study more effectively. They require a specific environment in order to continue learning for a prolonged term. Some students like to learn in a peaceful and relaxed environment. This category has one sub-category: (1) Taking a Break.

➢ *Taking a break*

The study has denoted that by creating a conducive environment wherein one cannot just learn, but also take breaks in peace and harmony while keeping a positive environment throughout the learning process allows one to retain attention as well as propel motivation for learning. Kay shares:

"Diverting my attention into things beyond academics is what keeps my sanity in place, and this is best illustrated by how I would take breaks in between to do go out for nature walks, do my makeup and dress for nothing, watch shows of my favorite K-pop groups, and…"

In the same way, Berto shares:

"When I'm tired and unmotivated, I usually take a break from everything….getting enough rest."

Kwe also mentions that her break is watching Netflix. She shares:

"My "me time" is sometimes a "netflix and chill" vibe."

Amenities

Students must establish their learning area and atmosphere for online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. They claimed that sitting in a setting where they felt at ease could motivate them to learn. This category has one sub-category: (1) Life Saver

➢ *Life Saver*

The study further found that the definition of a learning environment is a case-to-case scenario amongst students. While some may prefer a quiet and peaceful environment, others would prefer to be in a group or within the companionship of people coupled with noise. Due to limited gadgets at home, Coni expresses that internet café was his life saver in doing and submitting tasks. With this, there is no finite definition of a conducive learning environment as the only one that can define such is the student himself/herself. He shares:

"Internet cafes become my rendezvous, where I continue my work on academic activities and other requirements."
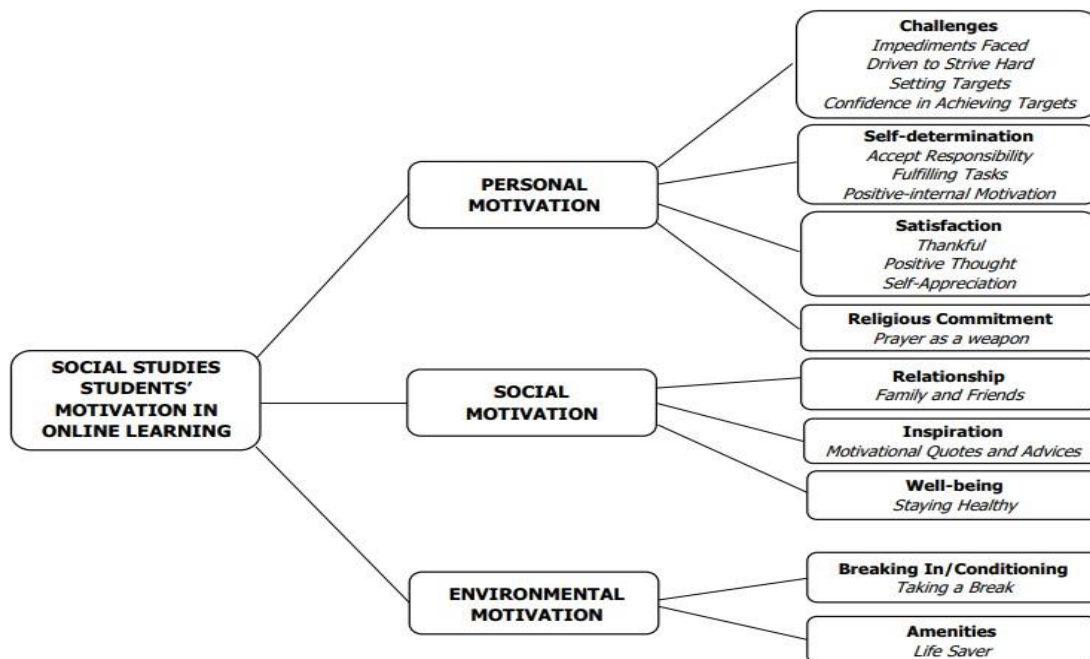

Figure 1. Social Studies Students' Motivation in Online Learning

Discussions

The menace of the virus, quick alterations in learning and day-to-day behavior, as well as obstacles encountered, all cause anyone to feel lost and succumb to depression. In this study, the social studies students indicated their discontent with online learning as well as their displeasure with all of the shifts they had experienced. Nonetheless, they were all able to foster this academic year. It is obvious from the social studies students' experiences how they had lost some enthusiasm to learn, lacked motivation, and were fatigued and weary at times, which is natural considering the conditions they

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noticed themselves in. Despite this, the social studies students did not lose hope and were adamant about learning online. Results showed that they were personally, socially, and environmentally determined.

Students discussed how their mental health was preventing them from learning online. However, social studies students showed that they were enthusiastic. The first theme which described what drove the social studies students was said they were propelled by mental toughness on their own. The majority of students were self-motivated, adamant, or self-indulgent with their actions, according to the researcher's investigation of social studies students' consensus reality. They have their own objectives that directed them in dealing with roadblocks. Controlled motivation did hardly motivate them. They were not prompted by an incentive, consequence, or restriction. Students in social studies had clearly identified their specific goals, and they all stated that these targets were their primary motivational factor. They emphasized on how determined they were to achieve their objectives no matter what and focused on the idea.

Moreover, students believe that there lies a negative impact in their motivation towards learning with the onset of online classes due to lesser social interaction, a mismatch between expectations and content, organizational problems and the organization of learning environments (Mese & Sevilen, 2021) which ultimately goes against the findings of this study, wherein clearly even despite the circumstances of online learning, students still persist through intrinsic and extrinsic factors as mentioned above. Cull (2021) notes that the anonymous feeling of the online environment can make it easier for students to withdraw, participate minimally, or completely disappear from the course to which definitely reflects a similarity in the findings of this study, wherein students feel isolated and propels them to have such intrinsic motivational factors for themselves so that they can go on and persevere in the midst of the conduct of the online modality of classes. They have a natural inclination to prioritize intrinsic, growth-oriented goals over extrinsic or guided goals. Goals provide a context through which an individual reacts to events and results in a particular pattern of cognition, behavior and control (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Furthermore, the students confirmed their learning motivations of self-efficacy, autonomy, and responsibility. They discussed their confidence in completing activities, such as learning from home. They stated that they could solve their learning's problem. Such actions demonstrated that social studies students remained tenacious and capable of overcoming the many challenges they faced throughout the pandemic. They showed symptoms of having high efficacy expectations, which was positive. Students with high efficacy expectations work hard on difficult assignments, keep striving, persevere when confronted with problems, and hope to succeed in the future. As what Rowell & Hong (2013) emphasized that students with poor self- efficacy for learning prefer to avoid undertaking assignments, avoid making an effort, and leave when they face learning problems. Additionally, having a goal is among the most critical things in keeping these students engaged. Goal setting means establishing an objective to serve as an individual's aim of action (Schunk, 2012). A student who establishes the intention of attending college must devote to studying hard and learning in order to remain successful. These goals direct the students' actions and help individuals track their learning progress and appear to improve academic achievements (Rowell & Hong, 2013).

Students' social contacts, such as their relationships with family and friends, inspiration from incisive quotations, and remaining healthy, should be encouraged to assist students continue to learn even during the stressful periods of COVID-19. Motivation does not occur solely within the individual or entirely within the setting of the individual. Rather, motivation stems from individual encounters within the classroom and the school (Rowell & Hong, 2013). The researcher deduced from the evidence that the second theme was social, and that social studies students commonly derived motivation to study from their social links. The students showed how they helped one another. They stressed the value of their friends and how much they had grown better as a group. When they were discouraged, they turned to their peers for encouragement and drive. Students place a high value on social groups which is consistent in the results shown.

On the other hand, student perceptions towards school and learning can be detrimentally affected by negative social environments, such as family difficulties or peer (Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006). In

this study, some students stated how their parents struggle to meet their children's needs. During this difficult period, a few parents had lost their jobs. However, almost all of the students reported that their parents were a major source of encouragement and motivation. They had high hopes for their parents, dreams, and how hard they would have to work to make their family proud. Young, Sercombe, Sachdev, Naeb, and Schartner (2013) looked at international students in higher education adaptations. Findings revealed clear correlations between participants' academic performance, satisfaction with life in the new location and psychological well-being, and aspects of their intercultural competence, interaction with non-co-nationals, including hosts, and their language skills, which is subsequent to the findings of this study. Almost all of them mentioned the importance of social support in their learning and adaptation. Parents and teachers should be aware of the student's need for verbal or nonverbal help. Students should form strong bonds with their friends in order to assist one another in both tough times.

The statements of the informants denoted in this study is the environment. Subsequent with the findings of Rahiem (2021), students were motivated by their surroundings, the location of where they study, the atmosphere, and even the facilities. While these are highly subjective and case-to-case per student, generally the study sees the complexity of the human mind given that there is no standard or uniform learning environment for students. Structures and the learning environment also play a role toward learning in the sense that, this study found, it becomes a sense of motivation for students to learn and thrive in academics as also subsequent with the findings of Hendrix (2019) where she clearly stated that whenever one is in a comfortable environment that is conducive for learning, one has the ability to stay focused as well as stay motivated in a longer period of time. Substantially, the study further deduced that by having amenities that facilitate learning can help increase attention linked to better study habits and promote meaningful learning experiences that one can use later in life as coinciding with the statements of The School in Rose Valley (2022) regardless of the factors in the venue such as but not limited to the number of people, noise, and temperature as highly evident in internet shops people usually go to as also similar to Deci and Ryan (2008), Deci and Ryan (2000) as taken from the study of Rahiem (2021).

Further, subsequent with the findings of Terada (2018), the results showed that in terms of maintaining motivation for learning, taking breaks are vital given that these breaks lead to increase in effort for students in terms of learning which improve their ability to stay on their tasks. The same author further noted that our brains are not idle in taking breaks but rather they make students realize and make sense on why they are studying, which also can be concluded with the findings on this study. Also, taking the time to focus on oneself helps avoid burnouts (Henry, 2022) which strongly coincides with the findings of this study, noting that students take leisure time to enjoy for themselves for better productivity through doing things they regularly do for leisure. Finally, Pedroso et al. in their 2022 study highlighted the vitality of managing stress and pressure in order to effectively fulfill one's tasks and responsibilities. Moreover, the Swinburne University of Technology (2022) notes that breaks allow one to refresh his/her own mind and improve creativity while maintaining attention and motivation which concur with the findings of this study given that Social Studies students noted that these breaks, be whatever means they are such as but not limited to hobbies, entertainment, and games keep their mind together. Subsequently, the study further found out that keeping a profound sleeping schedule with enough hours during the night can lead to efficiency in study habits, which agrees with the findings of Cappello (2020) noting that sleeping improves students' ability to learn given that they are not physically and mentally tired. This denotes that by creating an environment wherein students can freely rest and at the same time learn harmoniously, motivation in learning is at its utmost peak given the implications of the statements of the participants of this study.

Disclosure statement

In summary, the study has given further insights regarding their motivational experiences and shed light on what kept social studies students motivated to learn during the tough times of the COVID-19 crisis. Most social studies students were not well-equipped with online learning methods and were forced to adapt to the change due to the crisis. Moreover, social studies students were discontented

and unmotivated as compared to traditional face-to- face classes since there are less optimal facilities for online education, lack of social interaction, and reported spending fewer hours on their studies. But, despite the lack of motivation, students still have a positive attitude towards learning. Intrinsic aspects of such include being challenged, excitement and self-determination, the delight of realizing and achieving personal goals, and religious commitment. Their peer group, their families, and their friends also motivated them. They were influenced by motivational comments and counsel, as well as by maintaining a healthy lifestyle. They were also inspired by their surroundings; the ambiance and resources at home enabled them stay focused on their studies. During the pandemic, their tenacity made them resilient, allowing them to endure and prosper in the face of hardship. They drew on their previous experiences to deal with circumstance and thrive in their academics. The COVID-19 crisis was their first school closure in almost two years, and it forced the students to study online while adjusting to new obstacles and experiences. They were unprepared, yet many of them have been flexible enough to adjust and keep moving forward. The researchers believe if they are equipped, they will probably be able to handle similar occurrences effectively if it occurs sometimes ahead. The following recommendations are based on the preceding findings and conclusions of this study; since the findings revealed that Social Studies students are facing challenges as a result of the pandemic, face-to-face classes should be gradually reinstated to provide students with a conducive environment in which they can learn more. Social presence, cognitive presence and teaching presence show the importance of interactivity and collaboration in learning, specifically in this setting is online learning since they need guidance to achieve their learning goals. Parents are encouraged to participate in their children's coping processes because they play such an important role in their child's motivation and development. Education should prepare students not only for the workforce but also to empower them to be resilient in life's trials.

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