

# **FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENTS' LOW MOTIVATION AT A TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION INSTITUTION: A CASE STUDY**

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## **Abstract**

The motivation of students determines the success of an institution in producing prospective competent teachers in their profession. However, the students' performance for the subject Budgeting was low. Informal observation also indicated that students were not enthusiastic in the learning activities. The study aimed at researching factors that caused students' low motivation in lecture participation. A total number of respondents involved were 32. Data of the research were collected through a questionnaire, interviews, observation, and document review. Findings revealed that the factors that caused students' low motivation were (1) lecturers' inability in the teaching and learning process especially in giving assignments either individually or in groups; (2) lack of available learning resources; (3) students' difficulties in understanding the assignments given especially Forecasting Budget. It is suggested that during the teaching process, lecturers should consider the level of difficulties students have either individually or in groups when they give out materials/assignments, and provide them with learning resources available. The most important thing is that lecturers can create situations or conditions that can increase students' motivation.

## **Introduction**

Learning motivation is very important in improving students' achievement. At the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FTTE) of Sriwijaya University, Palembang, Indonesia, where the subject of Budgeting in the Economics of Education Accounting Program is taught, the students generally demonstrated a low level of participation in lectures. A continuous low level of learning could hamper the success of the institution in producing prospective teachers with high performance and abilities in their future profession. This situation could be caused by their lecturers or the students themselves. Therefore, a lecturer himself or herself must possess teaching approaches that motivate and meet students' need. There are many forms of motivating students. Lecturers can increase students' motivation by giving praises, group or individual assignments, and even punishments (Winkel, 1992:96).

Rapport can also be fostered through stimulating and meaningful teaching and learning activities, conducive learning environment such as moderate competition among students and appropriate learning material available. Imam Sayono (1993:15) stated that a student who could not follow a learning process is called a student with learning difficulties. There are differences between potential learning ability and actual learning achievement. They could be experienced by students of any subject including the subject on Budgeting. Next, Oemar Hamalik (1996:139) stated that there are four dominant factors which cause learning difficulties. They include factors such as (1) the student himself, (2) the school, (3) family, and (4) society. From the four factors, it can be said that learning motivation is the whole student's internal mental activator power which stimulates the learning activity, guarantees learning activity's persistence, and directs the learning activity to achieve its objective. Hence, learning motivation determines the success or failure of a teaching process.

From the last three years research reports, it was found students' achievement in Budgeting was low as compared to other subjects offered at the institution. For the Second semester of the year 2004/2005, only 20.24% of the students could perform satisfactorily in the subject. Informal observation indicated that students less enthusiastic in the teaching and learning activity of budgeting. It raised a question: Why were students less motivated in the teaching and learning process of Budgeting? To find answers and solutions, it was necessary to conduct a research investigating the factors that contributed to the students' low level of motivation in Budgeting teaching and learning, as part of the Economics of Education Accounting Program at the Teacher Training and Education Institution (TTEI).

## **Literature Review**

Learning motivation is something which causes, directs, and forces us to perform a learning activity. Hawi (1992:12) stated that learning motivation is a situation which stimulates the teaching and learning process. In the process, a lecturer should have special ability in giving assignments individually or groups and provide available learning resources so that the teaching and learning process would run well. Win Kel (1997:92) stated that learning motivation is the whole student's internal mental power which stimulates and activates learning activity. If Win Kel's idea about motivation is reviewed carefully, it is clear that in the teaching and learning process, motivation not only comes from the lecturer, but more importantly should come from the students so that the teaching and learning process will run smoothly and in accordance with the syllabus as well as the teaching material available for each subject.

Motivation has a very important function in an activity. It will affect not only the strength of the activity but also its objective. Sadiman (1994:32) stated that the higher and more significant an objective, the greater the motivation should be. When the person's motivation is greater, the person will have a stronger willingness to carry out the activity. Hence it can be said that the objective of the activity, the components of the activity and the behaviours of the individuals are closely related and they form a related unification.

The motivation process follows the following steps: (1) one condition which is formed from the pushing powers (pressure, motive, need, and willingness which stimulate dependence, (2) the progress of the activity or behaviours which are directed to achieve an objective which at the end decreases or removes the pressure to perform, (3) the achievement of the objective and the decrease or disappearance of the pressure.

From the steps above, motivation has a role in directing an activity and in keeping someone closer or away from achieving the objective or target. If a target or an objective is something wished on by an individual, motivation plays the role in keeping it closer (approach motivation). Since motivation is a complex condition, it is possible that motivation has a role in keeping the target closer or away (approach-avoidance motivation).

As there are many factors that contribute to motivation such as pressure, motive, need, and willingness, a person can have a choice in selecting the stronger factor to be used in an activity. The strength of a motive or need is very subjective or situational. It differs from each individual and situation. The motive of wishing to have books for a student is different from each individual depending on for instance the person's vocation such as a scientist, teacher, businessman, farmer or trader. Students will have different motives when they produce testaments, final exams, or in writing thesis or not to do any assignments at all. The force of a motive or motivation depends on three things: the basic power of strength of a motive, size of

Expectation or desire which will be fulfilled by the motive, and size of the satisfaction anticipated by an individual. The force of motivation can also function in activating or increasing an activity. If the force of a person's motivation is strong, he or she will carry out an activity seriously, and the activity will have direction and be done enthusiastically. The possibility of the activity achieving success would be bigger. On the other hand, if a person's motivation lacks force he or she will do his or her task half-heartedly and lacking direction. The chances are the task will not be successfully completed or lacks quality.

### **The Teaching and Learning Activity of the Budgeting Subject**

The budgeting course requires students master the skill of interpreting and formulating various budgets available in the economics and financial system of a company. In short, should be able to produce general descriptions of budget, forecasting budget, sale budget, production, raw material, direct manpower budget, administration cost budget, budget variables, credit and supply budget, fixed asset change budget, debt and money supply, and writing budget reports. From this descriptions, in other words the Budget subject needs high teaching and learning motivation because it requires students not only to learn theories, but they are also required to go to companies in order to be able to make various types of budgets available in the company as well as forecasting budgets. The lecturer, therefore, must be able to assign appropriate assignments in groups or individually to develop and enhance the skills mentioned above.

### **Source of Motivation**

In terms of the source of motivation, Syaodi (2003:65) states that there are six categories of values which directly function as motive. They are social, political, religious, esthetic, and science. From this statement, it can be understood that individuals in general are members of society who hold and support all value but certain individuals at certain times may give priority to values or certain values. An entrepreneur or economist will give priorities to economic values. To look at motivation from the economic perspective one will have to give priority to economic principles or values as compared to other values. A politician will give priority to political values. The interest in politics comes from the motivation to hold power or political position is greater than other values or motivations. The same thing happens to a religious man, scientist, artist, and social man. They will give priority and are motivated to apply certain principles and values of religion, science, arts and community in their work and life.

The prioritizing of values to somebody will be motivation for his/her action. Human beings develop in line with the development of his/her personality and as well as his/her motives. Erikson cited in Syaodih (2003:66) divided the whole personal development into eight stages. Each stage is indicated by one main characteristic of his/her personality which implies a motive. They are:

**First Stage.** 0 – 1 years old: The behaviour of baby is based on the motivation to believe or not to believe the people around him or her.

**Second Stage.** 1 – 2 years old: Autonomy of feeling of embarrassment and doubtfulness.

**Third Stage.** 3 – 5 years old: Initiatives of being guilty.

**Fourth Stage.** 6 – 11 years old: Being diligent and modest.

**Fifth Stage.** 12 – 18 years old: Self identify in sharing roles.

**Sixth Stage.** 18 years old: The beginning of adult age, being close and isolated.

**Seventh Stage.** Adult age, develops rapidly.

**Eight Stage.** Advanced age, personal integrity and decision.

From the eight stages of personal development, this study will focus more on the sixth and seventh stages since individuals should be strongly related to their peer groups. However, students in the Budgeting subject are not closely related with their peer groups. They are selective and are closely related only with certain people who share similar views or are strongly related with other people, but their relationships are not that close. The seventh stage is adult age. An individual in this stage has reached the peak of his/her abilities. He/she has broad knowledge and many skills and his/her individual development is rapid. Although he/she has broad knowledge and many skills, not all skills or sciences can be mastered equally. The stage of his/her knowledge and skill is still limited. To do or learn certain things, there are still a lot of problems faced by adults. And at this stage, he/she has started studying at institution of higher learning and some of them are taking 'difficult' subjects such as Budgeting.

## Factors Affecting the Teaching and Learning Process

Learning occurs when a stimulating situation affects a student in such a way that his performance changes from the time before experienced the situation to the time after he has experienced the situation (Gagne, 1977:84). In the process of teaching and learning activities, students should know that teaching and learning activities is a process that creates the occurrence of a change in behaviour and/or skill. To what extent the change can be achieved or whether it is successful or not depends on factors such as the individual lecturers, students and society. The individual factors among others include maturity/growth, intelligence, practise, and personality of the person; the social factors are family, teachers and their teaching styles, teaching media, environment and opportunities, and social motivation.

Besides the above two factors, there are other factors which influence the process and learning output. In this case, we can analyse the learning process with the analysis approach system. With this system, we can see various factors that influence the process and learning output as illustrated in Figure 1.

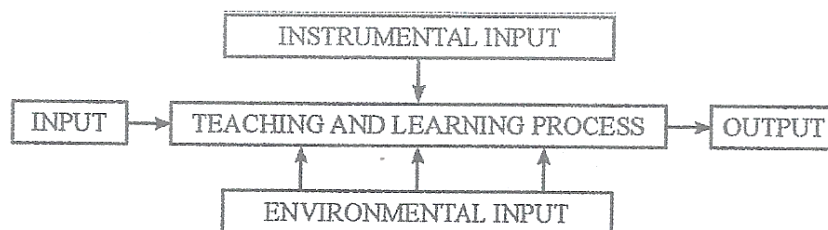


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Learning Motivation

The situation of teaching and learning activities includes input which is similar to raw material that should be processed, such as providing certain learning experiences in the teaching and learning process. It is affected by environmental factors which are called environmental input, and a set of factors designed and manipulated (instrumental input) for the purpose of achieving the desired output. These factors interact with one another to produce certain output.

## Methodology

A case study was considered the most appropriate in this study. This study was conducted on the Economics of Education Accounting Program. The respondents of this study were students who took Budgeting. There were altogether 32 respondents. The data was collected from two groups of students who said that they were happy to take the subject and those who said that they were facing problems such as difficulty in understanding both the individual assignments given by the lecturer. A questionnaire with 30 questions about learning motivation and its problems with a Likert scale of four alternatives for instance extremely like, like, rather like, and dislike, was utilized. The research instrument consisted of 30 items. Items 1 to 10 measures motivation for teaching and learning activities; items 11 to 20 measures motivation for giving assignments; and 21 to 30 measures motivation for the social environment.

Interviews, observation and document review were also employed in this study. The researchers also had meetings to discuss the progress of the study and to review ideas, opinions and reflections of individuals and the team as a whole. The data collected was analysed for its content. The analysed data were then concluded to describe factors causing students' low level of motivation in participation in Budgeting teaching and learning.

## Findings and Discussions

Table 1 illustrates the overall factors affecting the level of motivation of students in the Budget Subject taught as part of the Economics of Education Accounting Program at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FTTE) of Sriwijaya University, Palembang, Indonesia.

**Table 1: Components for Factors Affecting Student Motivation in Percentage**

Factor	Total Sample	Percentage (%)
N	32	
Motivation for teaching and learning activities		
Teaching and learning process		60
Teaching media and learning resources		40

Factor	Total Sample	Percentage (%)
Motivation for giving assignments		
Group work		43
Individual work		57
Motivation for social environment		
Family		58
Individual social environment		25
Competition		17

It was found that only 60% of the respondents like the teaching and learning process whereas only 40% of the respondents like the teaching media and learning resources used by the lecturers. This implies a relatively low level of liking for the teaching and learning activities overall. As for the assignments given, 57% of the respondents prefer individual work as compared to 43% of the respondents indicated family support and encouragement, 25% indicated individual inner motivation; and 17% indicated preference for competition as a motivating factor.

Data collected from interviews, observation, and document review further indicated that the factors that caused students' low motivation in Budgeting teaching and learning activities were caused by lecturers' inability to give clear instruction in giving assignments either individually or in groups to be carried out at companies; the lack of learning resources available; and places of practise. Students' inability to master the skill of forecasting was due to the inability of students to follow lecturer's instruction. They did not have any initiatives in conducting their activities in the teaching and learning process in *Budgeting*.

In terms of the sources of motivation, from the dynamics of individual behaviors, the characteristic of motivation are grouped into three types. They are: (1) fear motivation. An individual does an action because he/she is afraid that somebody else commits a crime or a threat from his/her friends who like to commit crimes. Someone may like to play taxes or obey the traffic laws but it is Not because they realize it as an obligation but he/she is afraid of being



Penalized;(2) incentive motivation. An individual does an action in order to get incentives. The kinds of incentives can be in the forms of: honorarium, bonus, prize, admiration, certificate, reward, promotion, salary rise, et cetera; (3) attitude motivation or self-motivation. It is intrinsic motivation, coming from the individual himself/herself. Attitude is also a motivation because it shows someone's interest toward a subject. Someone who has positive attitude toward something will show greater motivation towards the subject. This motivation is from his or her interest in the subject because of pleasant or happy feelings, and because of other subjective factors.

## **Conclusion**

As part of the Economics of Education Accounting Program at the Teacher Training and Education Institution (TTEI), students have to take the subject Budgeting. However, students demonstrated low motivation in the teaching and learning process of this subject which is a major and important subject. To find answers and solutions, it was necessary to conduct a research investigating the factors that contributed to the students' low level of motivation in Budgeting teaching and learning.

It can be concluded that the factors causing students' low motivation in the teaching and learning activities of Budgeting are as follows:

- a. Lecturers' inability in the teaching and learning process especially in giving assignments either individually or in groups;
- b. Lack of learning resources available in the form of devices and teaching media;
- c. Students' inability to understand assignments given especially in *Forecasting Budgeting*.

## **Recommendation**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- a. Lecturers should consider the level of students' difficulties understanding materials or assignments given.
- b. Lecturers need to improve the learning resources
- c. Lecturers should be able to create the teaching and learning condition that can improve students' motivation.

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