# The recognition of prior learning students' perceptions in the effectiveness of online learning classes for enhancing their learning motivation

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**Abstract**

*The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) program offers society the opportunity to pursue a bachelor's degree in a significantly shorter period than a regular program. The RPL program recognizes the credits and skills acquired by student candidates before their enrollment in the program. Despite its flexibility, the effectiveness of the RPL program is still underexplored. This study proposes two research objectives: to investigate the perceptions of RPL students regarding effective learning, and to identify factors enhancing RPL students' motivation in online learning. Based on interviews on RPL students' perceptions of online learning effectiveness, it can be concluded that various factors significantly influence the success of online learning processes. This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design, with the participants were 5 students. The primary instrument was a semi-structured interview, developed to deeply explore RPL students' perceptions and learning motivation regarding the effectiveness of online learning. The steps of data processing, such as data collection, data transcription, initial reading and noting, coding the data, grouping the codes into themes, and interpreting the themes, it is called thematic analysis patterns. Supporting factors, such as a stable connection, full interaction, interesting delivery of material, media communication, sharing the lecturer's achievements, the lecturer's strategy booster, and a systematic schedule, played crucial roles in enhancing students' learning enthusiasm. The findings of this research could serve as a reference for designing curricula and developing teaching methods that are more relevant and responsive to the characteristics and challenges faced by RPL students. Indirectly, this research also contributed to efforts to improve the quality of education and ensured the success of the learning process.*

***Keywords:*** *effectiveness; motivation; online learning; perception; RPL program*

## INTRODUCTION

The digital era has begun to dominate all sectors, including education (Ra, 2023). The rapid advancement of technology has brought positive impacts to various groups of society, including those who aspire to pursue a Bachelor's degree in a way that is effective, flexible, and interesting (Prayudi et al., 2021). Establishing the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) program presents many significant benefits for anyone or a community, for instance, allowing an optional access method to formal learning, shortening the time and money in gaining qualifications, providing useful skills for jobs, and boosting career opportunities, confidence, and motivation (Andersson et al., 2013; Raciti et al., 2024). Motivation is an essential factor in the learning process. Learning achievement is based on whether or not the students are motivated (Filgona et al., 2020). Learning is an activity or process undertaken by an individual as an effort to improve the quality of life or to bring about a positive and relatively permanent change (Emda, 2019). In this paper, the authors present the perspectives of RPL students from an English Education Study Program at a university in

Semarang on how they sustain their motivation during the online learning process to complete their studies.

RPL recognizes an individual's learning achievements obtained through preceding formal, non-formal, or informal training, and/or working experience. These learning outcomes are designed to provide an opportunity for individuals at the appropriate qualification stage, as outlined in the Indonesian National Qualifications Framework (KKNI). Finally, they can be applied for various functions, including achieving a formal degree or qualifying to be a lecturer, trainer, or coach in higher education institutions. To make certain that the implementation of RPL achieves its supposed targets, increasing access to higher education and improving the relevance and quality of education, studies, and devotion to the society of expert practitioners, the Directorate General of Learning and Student Affairs, Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education, has issued strategies for the implementation of RPL. Those recommendations are intended to make sure that universities perform RPL efficiently, based on regulations, and with quality assurance (Kemenristekdikti, 2016). This program helps many people from various backgrounds or career experiences to develop their learning quality and obtain official recognition from the university.

In Indonesia, RPL is implemented through numerous higher education institutions that offer accredited study programs, classified as A (excellent) or B (good), and produce graduates. These institutions must undergo a registration phase, evaluation, and recognition of credits. The definition of Recognition of Prior Learning, as RPL, within the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, based on the regulation chapter 1 section 1 number 41 of 2021, illustrates that the government is trying to reduce the dropout rate of school/college for numerous reasons or causes (Nasir, 2022; Ulinuha & Alfinuha, 2023). Indonesian citizens are encouraged to take as much as possible to learn and improve their qualifications, making themselves more competent in society, their careers, businesses, and industries. This aligns with the qualifications of life skills, such as decision-making, problem-solving, entrepreneurship, critical thinking skills, realistic skills, learning strategies, informal communication skills and dialogue, formal communication and presentation, empathy and tolerance, creativity, flexibility, adaptability, and many others (Nasir, 2022). The RPL program begins with an assessment, which enables individuals to demonstrate their competence in society, their careers, businesses, and industries. This process is carried out by a team of assessors who have direct experience in the relevant field. The purpose of this assessment is to identify and evaluate the work that prospective RPL participants have already achieved, so that it can be recognized and awarded in the form of appropriate credits. The assessor team can be composed of lecturers, representatives from associations, or industrial sector representatives. The outcome of this assessment process is credit recognition, which allows RPL students to bypass the need to take equivalent courses based on their work experience (Junaidi & Irwanda, 2023; Maria, 2020). Although this program is shorter than the regular program, the candidates must pass the document screening by the assessors. They should wait for several days to receive the results of the document selection and to obtain the credits for accepted learning.

Nowadays, the RPL program can be applied through online learning (Sudargo et al., 2021). The online system is expected to help students acquire knowledge and learn more easily without the need to attend campus in person (Sitorus & Sipayung, 2022). College students can replay E-Learning recordings, as lecturers record the learning process and share the link with students (Octaberlina & Muslimin, 2020). Besides that, the lecturers aim to sharpen students' critical thinking skills by giving them a task every week (Rahman et al., 2022). Online learning offers a diverse range of learning styles. Students can be more confident in addressing the issues they face in a digital classroom, where they may not be brave enough to explore their ideas with the instructor face-to-face in a real classroom. In the future, online learning must evolve to meet the full range of learning needs and adapt to diverse backgrounds. Along with it, some students still declare that face-to-face learning is more enjoyable than online learning (Lie et al., 2024; Palupi & Raharjo, 2020). Online learning is a solution for acquiring knowledge and networking without gathering in a physical

classroom. Students can learn from afar and work or complete their activities from their own place, flexibly.

There are many definitions of "online learning," reflecting the various practices and technologies that might be in use on the internet. Ally (in Anderson, 2013, p.17) described it as: "… using the internet to access the materials; to have interaction with the content, teacher, and other learners; and to acquire support during the learning procedure, to collect the understanding, to create private meaning, and to develop from learning experience". In this thesis, the term "online learning" is used to cite the definition from Ally, while combining the difference used by Bates. Online studying, as defined in this thesis, is a form of distance education that is mediated by using technology, in which learners are geographically separated from their institution (Andersson et al., 2013; Zúñiga, 2022). Thus, online learning is the result of technological advancement that can address the challenges of the times.

The system of teaching and studying tended to be monotonous (Durryiah & Zuhdi, 2018); as a consequence, it brought about student boredom. This case had a significant impact on the learners' motivation to learn English throughout the pandemic. The learners' low learning motivation may be indicated by their attendance records and participation in class discussions on WhatsApp. Furthermore, a decrease in students' EFL learning motivation may result in lower learning performance due to monotonous studying and their inability to grasp the subject well. In numerous cases that the researcher discovered within the school, there were at most 6 to 7 of the 13 college students who joined online learning using WhatsApp. If this situation continues, it can cause students' worry while learning English. This condition cannot be taken lightly, especially when English instructors set high expectations for Indonesian learners to achieve better English mastery (Hidayati, 2016; Putra, 2021). Monotonous learning is a cause that reduces learners' motivation to understand the material; it needs to be addressed to increase their learning motivation. The teacher should be creative and attractive in the learning process.

Motivation and self-confidence in studying English have constantly been the centre of interest among instructors and researchers. Modern society is continuously changing and developing new technologies (Tsymbal, 2019). Motivation is a critical subject matter in language learning. It is also a way to address the serious issues and to measure students' enthusiasm for online learning. To recognize students' online motivation and cultivate college students' skills in English effectively can enhance the grade of English online learning and teaching (Ming & Liu, 2020). Both motivation and self-confidence are crucial in the learning process to prevent inactive learners from mastering the subject.

Now, students' motivation is the focus of many studies. It has been determined that learning motivation can stimulate students' learning interest and enhance their learning efficiency. Because motivation is a crucial factor in students' success in learning English, English instructors must incorporate the concept of motivation into their teaching, thereby supporting their outstanding achievements (Zhang & Shao, 2021). Learning motivation is a crucial factor that influences the effectiveness of learning foreign languages for beginners. Theoretical studies on learning motivation originated in Western psychology and are often linked to human needs. Environment, family, and the students themselves all contribute to the formation of learning motivation (Lie et al., 2024). According to Cahyani et al. (2020), there are two factors that influence students' learning motivation: internal and external factors. The internal factors include aspirations, goals, students' abilities, individual conditions, and psychological aspects affecting motivation, such as talent, intelligence, attitude, perception, and interest. Meanwhile, the external factors consist of the learning environment, the school social environment, the community social environment, the family social environment, non-social environments such as the natural environment, and instrumental factors. High motivation enables learners to perform well in their studies; they must manage both internal and external factors effectively to achieve their goals.

Based on the explanation above, the writers found several previous studies researched by different authors to explore the effect of online learning on college students and their motivation to learn English. For starters, Cahyani et al. (2020) found that online learning decreased college students' motivation to learn English. External and internal factors, which include learning circle, learning time, and instrumental assistance, all contributed to a loss of motivation in online learning. The distinction between this study and the previous research is in the researcher's focus on both the positive and negative impacts of online learning. In the meantime, the previous studies focus on resource troubles and the factors that influence the students' motivation. Secondly, Zuniarti et al. (2015) researched the types of motivation college students generally have and the level of college students' motivation to study English. The study found that the majority of college students' motivation was characterized as standard to accurate, with a few college students falling into the best and low classifications. Furthermore, most college students are driven by an inner urge to stimulate their curiosity. The type of motivation in this research differs from Zuniarti's. Previous studies focused on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, whereas this study focused on other types of motivation: integrative and instrumental (Suhartina et al., 2022). The research objective is to understand the perception of RPL students regarding the effectiveness of the online program and the factors enhancing their learning motivation in online learning classes. Based on the research objective, this study addresses the following research question: How do RPL students perceive the effectiveness of the online program? And what factors enhance RPL students' learning motivation in online learning classes?

The research on students' perceptions of RPL effectiveness in online learning to enhance their motivation is crucial because it provides in-depth insights into the experiences and needs of RPL students in this digital era (Filgona et al., 2020). By understanding their perceptions, educational institutions can identify strengths and weaknesses of the online learning model and develop more effective strategies to improve student motivation and engagement (Pradana, 2023). Furthermore, the findings of this research could serve as a reference for designing curricula and developing teaching methods that are more relevant and responsive to the characteristics and challenges faced by RPL students. Indirectly, this research also contributed to efforts to improve the quality of education and ensured the success of the learning process, especially for those who utilize recognition of prior learning to accelerate their competency achievement.

## METHOD
### Research Design
This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore the perceptions of English Education students enrolled in the RPL Program regarding the effectiveness of online learning in enhancing their learning motivation at UNISSULA. Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the researcher collects real-life, in-depth data from various sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports). It reports a case description and case themes (Creswell, 2013). This approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the students' experiences and perspectives, providing valuable insights into the factors that influence their motivation in the online learning environment.

### Respondents
The participants in this study were 5 RPL students from batch 2, selected purposely based on the following criteria: active participation in online learning during the past semester and willingness to share their experiences in depth. The selection of participants also took into account the diversity of student backgrounds to obtain a range of perspectives. The participants' occupations are course owner, gadget technician, English tutor, school counselor, and private employee. Their ages range from 25 to 39 years old. They have been studying for 1 year and 6 months in the RPL program. All respondents had experience in learning and teaching English. Data were collected through semi-

structured interviews. The interviews were conducted online via WhatsApp calls, using a set of questions that explored their perceptions of the effectiveness of online learning, as well as the supporting and inhibiting factors, and their impact on learning motivation. The interview was conducted for approximately 36 minutes and was recorded to facilitate data transcription.

## Instrument

The primary instrument used in this study was a semi-structured interview, developed to explore in depth RPL students' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of online learning in enhancing their learning motivation. This type of interview allowed for flexibility in data collection, enabling researchers to adjust follow-up questions based on participants' responses. The interview guide focused on the following aspects: students' experience with online learning, their perception of online learning effectiveness, managing learning motivation, the suitability of online learning for RPL students, and suggestions for improving the online learning system. This study posed 5 questions to understand the perception of online learning effectiveness and 5 questions to identify the influencing factors that enhance RPL students' motivation in online learning. The questions are:

The perceptions of online learning effectiveness

1. What are your opinions about the online learning system implemented in the RPL program? (Suhainah & Setyowati, 2021)
2. Do you feel that the material delivered online is easy to understand? Why? (Suhainah & Setyowati, 2021)
3. What are the main challenges you face during online learning? (Suhainah & Setyowati, 2021)
4. In your opinion, are the interactions between lecturers and students in online learning effective? Please explain! (Ong & Quek, 2023)
5. How do you evaluate the use of learning media or platforms? (Alfadda & Mahdi, 2021)

The influencing factors enhancing RPL students' motivation in online learning

1. Does online learning affect your enthusiasm or motivation to study? Why?(Wanner & Palmer, 2015)
2. Do you feel more independent in learning through the online system? Please explain! (Sumbawati et al., 2020)
3. How do you maintain high learning motivation?(Anggraeni et al., 2024)
4. Does the flexibility of time in online learning help you become more motivated? (Wanner & Palmer, 2015)
5. Are there any specific strategies from lecturers that you think successfully increase your motivation? For example, quizzes, discussions, case studies, and so on. (Xhaferi & Xhaferri, 2022)

## Data analysis

The data collected were identified, analyzed, and reported by using thematic analysis patterns. The steps such as 1) Data collection, data was gathered through in-depth interviews during online learning sessions with RPL students, 2) Data transcription, all interviews notes were completely transcribed, 3) Initial reading and noting, the transcribed data was read repeatedly to understand the content and to identify sentences or quotes that reflect students' perceptions of online learning effectiveness and their motivation, 4) Coding the data, important sections were marked with relevant codes, 5) Grouping codes into themes, similar codes were grouped into main themes, and finally 6) Interpreting the themes, a detailed discussion of each theme was conducted, supported by direct quotes from participants, to understand students' perceptions comprehensively. This process was carried out systematically, following the stages of data analysis to achieve accurate and comprehensive results.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The research aimed to explore the perceptions of RPL students regarding the effectiveness of the online program, as well as to identify the factors that influence their perceptions of the program's efficacy in enhancing their learning motivation. This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. The respondents in this study were 5 RPL students from batch 2, selected purposely based on the following criteria: active participation in online learning during the past semester and willingness to share their experiences in depth. The primary instrument used in this study was a semi-structured interview. The steps included data collection, data transcription, initial reading and noting, coding the data, grouping the codes into themes, and interpreting the themes.

### RPL Students' Perception of the online learning effectiveness in enhancing their learning motivation

The interview process provided many insights into RPL students' perceptions of the effectiveness of online learning in enhancing their learning motivation. The respondents' arguments can be summarized as follows.

The first question for understanding the perception of the effectiveness of online learning is, what are your opinions about the online learning system implemented in the RPL program?. Based on an interview with R1, one of the respondents interpreted the definition of learning effectiveness. R1 said: "*Effectiveness, in my opinion, is when the material delivered in the design is achieved, conveyed, and understood by the students*". Various interrelated factors significantly influenced perceptions of learning effectiveness. R1 added his perception,

> "*When talking about effectiveness, it's not just about looking at the delivery process but also considering students' readiness. Students' readiness, such as different backgrounds and varying levels of busyness, means that online learning effectiveness for some people might be effective, but for others it may not be.*"

R2 had the same idea as R1; he said, "*Relatively, it seems that it hasn't been truly effective yet, because most of the students are also working, and some even have other classes during the scheduled class time.*" It also strengthened the opinion from R3, she said, "*I find it difficult to manage my time because during RPL learning via Zoom, I sometimes get distracted by my phone or relatives visiting the house, so I can't fully focus on the learning process*". R4 shared his perception about effectiveness, she said, "*Even though it is conducted online, we still have to be able to manage our time. For example, on Saturdays, I have many activities, but I still need to attend lectures whenever there is a Zoom class*". R5 closed the statement about effectiveness by saying, "*During the weekend at home, with children and a husband around, spending a whole day from morning to evening makes it quite difficult to study.*"

Based on the first question, all respondents agreed that the effectiveness of learning online depends on time management and students' conditions. If the student can arrange the time well, the online class can be effective for them, but if they have no structured time, they will miss or focus less on the online class. The students have to stay healthy to join the class till the end.

The second question is, do you find the online material easy to understand? Why?. R1 shared his experience, said, "*It is easy to understand because I already have a strong foundation in English. Therefore, I can easily follow the learning process when the lecturer delivers the material in English.*".

R2 had another opinion; he shared,

> "*Some parts are easy, while others are still difficult, as some lecturers deliver the material entirely in English. The use of academic vocabulary makes it somewhat challenging for me to understand fully. However, most of the content is easy to comprehend. My enthusiasm for studying depends on whether the material is interesting or not to learn. Additionally, it depends on how the lecturer or teacher delivers the material, whether in an engaging or unengaging manner*".

R3 got additional experience and knowledge during this program; she explained, "*The material can be accepted well, and I have gained a great deal of knowledge during my studies in the RPL program. While in the tutoring course, I mainly learned how to practice English in real situations; in this program, I have acquired more theoretical knowledge.*" R4 could understand the material well; she said, "*Yes, I can follow the material delivered by the lecturers, as they present it effectively. They are competent lecturers who are capable of teaching the material in accordance with their respective areas of expertise.*" R5 had a strong perception, she told, "*In my personal view, I believe that I should gain new knowledge from each subject, even the smallest piece of knowledge can still be understood.*"

Most of the students argued that it was easy to understand the material delivered by the lecturers, which was proved because they claimed to gain new material from the lecturer, even though one respondent found it difficult to comprehend the academic words because he had a limited formal vocabulary. The students could improve their understanding if the lecturers delivered it more interestingly.

The third question is, what are the main challenges you face during online learning?. R1 shared his perception about the challenges. He said, "*In my opinion, the main challenge lies in time management, as I am a teacher working from Monday to Friday and also a parent who must balance time between family responsibilities and weekend classes.*" R2 had his own idea, he said

> "*My first challenge is studying while working at the store. When the store is crowded with customers, I have to serve them while listening to the lecturer, which makes it difficult to stay focused. The second challenge is related to the internet connection, as I live in a rural area where heavy rainfall can significantly affect the signal,*" and he added more ideas about the teaching method, he said, "*The first semester system is better, because in the second semester, we study on Zoom all day long. We have 10 courses—if I'm not mistaken, 10 subjects—and we are on Zoom from morning until evening, so some courses are not effective. Why not effective? Because we also have other activities.*"

R3 added R1's perception about time management and teaching method; she shared,

> "*The main challenge is related to time, as I work full-time from Monday to Friday and have to study in this program on Saturdays and Sundays, while I also need sufficient time to rest. The most effective one is in the first semester. In the first semester, I was very diligent in doing assignments and attending Zoom classes, because the condition was not too exhausting.*"

R4 also commented as R2 and R3, she said,

> "*The challenge lies in time management. Even though the learning is conducted online, I still need to manage my time effectively, as Saturdays are already filled with many activities. In the first semester, the schedule was already proper, more effective compared to the second semester. In the second semester, I felt the schedule was still fine at the beginning, but when it got closer to exams, some lecturers' schedules clashed with other activities, so they replaced meetings with watching videos and reading learning materials, which I considered less effective.*"

R5 also complained about time management and the teaching method. She said,

> "*The personal challenge for me is overcoming a sense of laziness, as Saturdays and Sundays are usually my time to rest. From Monday to Friday, I work from morning until evening, and having classes scheduled every weekend requires me to sacrifice my rest time. In the first semester, we could interact with the lecturers almost every week. So if there was something we didn't understand, we could ask directly.*"

All respondents' opinions about the challenges in this program were setting the schedule, and they had their daily activities for weekdays and the weekend. Moreover, some respondents had a couple and kids, which is a must to share the time as a family priority, and another respondent complained of the connection. The teaching method became a focal point in this study.

The fourth question is, in your opinion, are the interactions between lecturers and students in online learning effective? Please explain!. R1 had an opinion about interactive while online learning, he said,

> *"In my view, the interaction in the online learning process has been quite good. The way lecturers engage with students and deliver the material is generally effective, although not all of them adopt such an approach. In some cases, the teaching remains lecturer-centered, where lecturers function merely as transmitters of knowledge. However, some lecturers actively encourage student discussion. Overall, I consider the learning process to be interactive."*

R2 had different opinion from R1, he explained,

> *"It is relatively apparent that online learning has not been fully effective, as many students are also working while studying. At times, their study schedule overlaps with their teaching commitments, since some students work as English tutors with unpredictable schedules. As a result, several students are unable to fully focus on listening to the lecturers' explanations."*

R3 addressed the effectiveness of the interaction depends on the lecturer; she said,

> *"The effectiveness of interaction depends on the lecturer. The lecturer teaches effectively by asking the students one by one, while another employs a lecture-based method in which students merely listen to the explanations. This approach tends to make students passive during the learning process."*

According to R4, having a full network could have a positive impact on the study, she said,

> *"Online learning can be considered effective if the internet connection is stable. A strong signal supports interaction and communication with lecturers and fellow students, whereas a weak or disrupted connection can negatively affect the effectiveness of online learning."*

Meeting with the lecturer every week was an effective way to get the interaction based on R5, she said, *"In the first semester, students were able to interact with the lecturer every week, so whenever there was something they did not understand, they could ask directly."*

According to the responses of the respondents, mostly their opinions about the effectiveness of online learning are the lecturers' approach. The lecturers are role models, key in the learning process, while other respondents comment on the schedule and the connection to the internet as the key to the effectiveness in the study.

The fifth question is, how do you evaluate the use of learning media or platforms?. R1 had an opinion about Zoom and YouTube usage. He said,

> *"There is interaction between lecturers and students or among students through Zoom. Zoom provides visual support features such as screen sharing, which enables students to analyze the lessons presented by the lecturer in greater depth. Meanwhile, YouTube, in my view, is less effective because there are no clear procedures or firm directions for watching. For example, when a lecturer asks students to study the material for the next session, the instruction essentially gives students the freedom to watch whenever they want. As a result, students may lack the awareness to watch the video, or in some cases, the instructional videos may not be watched at all."*

R2 had the same idea with R1, he said,

> *"The use of Zoom makes learning more effective. I also teach online, so I understand how Zoom is utilized. It offers several features that support students, such as recording, which allows virtual class sessions to be saved and replayed so that students can review the lessons delivered by the lecturer."*

R3 felt like them, she said, *"It was quite effective. At the beginning of the semester, I found it to be very effective. YouTube was also effective because I frequently accessed it as well."* R4 commented on students' behavior in using the media platform, she said,

*"In learning activities conducted through Zoom, there were some students who rarely attended and were not actively engaged. Even when they did attend, they often kept their cameras off and only listened to the lecturer. However, when it came to submitting assignments, they were never late. During the assessment process, such students could still receive excellent grades, similar to those who were active, if the lecturer did not carefully examine students' participation and behavior."*

R5 was often used to zoom, she said, *"I prefer to use Zoom because more familiar with it and frequently use its features. In contrast, YouTube does not provide two-way interaction between students and lecturers, making it less effective."*

During the program, the students used online media to learn and communicate with the lecturers and peers. There were 2 websites used in this study: Zoom and YouTube. All respondents' opinions that using Zoom was more effective than YouTube, the advantage of Zoom was that respondents could directly interact and share with the lecturers and friends. Even though it needs more evaluation to increase the program.

Therefore, perceptions of learning effectiveness were highly influenced by students' time management, lecturers' approach, smooth connection, and supported media online, which were highly required to enhance the effectiveness of online learning.

## Factors Enhancing Students' Motivation during Online Learning

This study accumulated many factors enhancing students' motivation during online learning. The factors are not only from the students but also from their environment and lectures. In this change, the authors share completely the results of interviews with the students.

The first question in this part is, does online learning affect your enthusiasm or motivation to study? Why?. R1 compared online and offline learning, he said,

*"The learning method greatly influences students' learning motivation. Online learning motivation tends to be lower compared to face-to-face learning because there is no direct interaction. In face-to-face settings, interactions among students foster higher learning motivation."*

R2 had distriction idea with R1, he explored, "

*"I have a moderate level of learning motivation; whether in offline or online settings, my motivation largely depends on how interesting the learning material is. It is also influenced by how the lecturer or teacher delivers the material, whether in an engaging manner or not."*

R3 agreed with R1's statement, she said,

*"I am more interested in offline learning than online. Online learning tends to make me less motivated compared to offline learning. I feel more enthusiastic in offline settings because I can meet my peers in person and be fully prepared to engage in the learning process. In online learning, students' activities behind the screen cannot be effectively monitored by lecturers or fellow students."*

In the first semester, the students studied with the lecturer every week, because of its frequency, R4 tried to give an argument. She said, *"I felt more motivated during the first semester because students studied according to the schedule, and the enthusiasm among peers was still high."*

R5 explained that the motivation for learning comes from the students themselves. She said, *"The highest level of learning motivation comes from within oneself. Every student who enrolls in the RPL program already has their own goals. For some, the ultimate target may simply be obtaining a diploma."*

Some students explained that face-to-face learning was more interesting than an online class. It causes direct learning, providing to meet each other and gather on the spot. While another student had the opinion that higher motivation comes from how interesting the material and the lecturer's teaching style are.

The second question is, do you feel more independent in learning through the online system? Please explain!. R1 was forced to learn individually, as his statement, *"Each assignment requires students to complete the work individually, which compels them to study independently.".* R2 had the same statement as R1, he said, *"Willingly or not, we still have to study independently and search for learning materials on our own, whether from websites or books."* R3 shared her independently learning, she said, *"In completing assignments, it is neither at the invitation of peers nor with their assistance; I complete them on my own. Watching videos is also based on my own initiative."* R4 had opinion that submitting assignment is part of independent online learning, she said, *"Assignments are the personal responsibility of each student, and if they are not completed on time, the consequences must be borne individually. Assignments also serve as a substitute for attendance."* R5 shared the same idea with R4, she said, *"Assignments given by lecturers encourage students to review previously learned lessons, revisit the material, and read it again. I believe that 90% of us engage in similar practices as part of independent learning."*

Doing the assessment was the way for the students to learn individually. With this approach, the students had to review and dig more information of the knowledge. The assignments consisted of answering questions, reading materials, and watching YouTube videos.

The third question is, how do you maintain high learning motivation?. R1 had the targets to complete his study, as he said, *"to maintain motivation, the key is to adopt a mindset focused on graduating quickly and achieving good grades. Therefore, even in online learning, I must set specific targets, such as aiming for high grades and earlier submission of assignments."* R2 was flashback to his first intention to improve his motivation, he said, *"Returning to my initial intention, what is my goal in completing higher education? I wish to make my parents proud and to advance my future career, thus reconnecting with my original purpose."* R3 has the same statement as R1, she said, *"To maintain motivation, I remind myself of the goal to graduate on time. If I have my laziness, my studies will be disorganized."* R4 added R2's statement, she said, *"returning to each student's original intention, students have paid a significant amount for their education. If their purpose is merely to obtain a diploma, they will lose out."* R5 had an opinion about financial and time, she said, *"Returning to the original intention, we should avoid wasting time and financial resources."*

Having good motivation is the crucial thing for successfully studying. Based on the interview, reminding the first intention or target study could improve the learning motivation. On-time graduation, excellent grades, proud parents, and financial resources are the factors to maintain their high motivation.

The fourth question is, does the flexibility of time in online learning help you become more motivated?. R1 got a positive impact from this program, he said, *"Yes, it helps me to be more motivated in learning. As both a teacher and a father, the flexibility of time is very helpful and enhances my learning motivation."* R2 also has the same idea as R1, he said, *"Yes, it is very helpful because I can manage my time flexibly. I can continue running my store while listening to the subject delivered by the lecturer."* R3 had a different opinion about the flexibility of the time. She said, *"I am motivated because one of the advantages is flexibility, and students are not required to rent accommodation near the campus, which makes it more cost-effective."* R4 was motivated by the flexibility of time; she didn't need to stay near the campus to take the course, she said. *"In terms of time and effectiveness, I would not be able to manage face-to-face learning because it would require traveling, leaving my children and husband, staying overnight, and enduring a long commute."* Flexibility of time had a positive impact on motivation for R5, as she said,

> *"Online learning is more advantageous for working individuals who are constrained by time, as they must work from Monday to Friday. Unlike regular classes that require daily attendance on campus, this model offers significant benefits for pursuing higher education online. It is rare to find universities that implement such programs."*

Flexibility time in this study provided the respondents with many advantages, among others, they could do other activities while studying, didn't have to stay near the campus, and saved more on expenses.

The last question is, are there any specific strategies from lecturers that you think successfully increase your motivation? For example, quizzes, discussions, case studies, and so on. R1 explained his experience in the online class. He said,

> *"Assignments from lecturers, such as dividing students into groups and giving them topics for presentations, in my view, are also effective strategies to enhance students' motivation and enthusiasm for learning. This approach also fosters active interaction between lecturers and students. Furthermore, when lecturers ask questions to students, it further increases their learning motivation."*

R2 preferred discussion and interaction with each student and lecturer, he said, *"I enjoy participating in discussions, and the lecturer assigns presentation tasks either in groups or individually. Learning materials that capture my interest usually increase my motivation to study.* R3 answered as a simple thing; she said, *"I enjoy engaging in discussions, similar to Mr. Zuhri's method."* R4 was interested in listening achievement by the lecturers as her booster motivation. She explored her experience, *"The lecturers are well-established in their fields, and many of them have experience studying and working abroad. This in itself serves as a source of motivation for students. For example, Mr. Kur often shares his experience of receiving recognition for his Scopus-indexed publication, which also serves as a form of motivation."*

R5 was interested in the teaching style of the lecturer. She shared, *"Before the class, the lecturer shared a Google Form link containing three questions related to the material being discussed, and during the Zoom session, the lecturer answered all the students' questions."*

To upgrade the students' motivation, the lecturers had to use many strategies. For instance, giving an assessment, discussing the material in groups, career achievements, lecturers' experiences, and strategy using technology.

## Discussion

Learning is considered effective if the ultimate goal of the learning is achieved, which is that students understand the message conveyed by the teacher or educator, so it can be interpreted that students' understanding of the material delivered in the classroom is achieved (Novitasari, 2022). Such success largely depended on the role of the lecturer in conveying the material, which might be active or passive in processing, depending on the pedagogical approach implemented.

Students' readiness (Rofiin & Fauzan, 2022), including their prior knowledge background (Harun et al., 2013) and level of engagement in learning activities, also significantly influenced the achievement of learning objectives. An effective learning model tends to be two-way communication in learning, encouraging students to actively communicate not only with lecturers but also with their peers, thereby fostering an interactive and collaborative learning environment (Nisa et al., 2025). Effective learning is characterized by the ability to achieve learning objectives optimally, whereby students comprehensively understand the material delivered. Such success largely depends on the role of the lecturer in conveying the material, which may be active or passive in processing, depending on the pedagogical approach implemented (Sinambela, 2008).

The supporting factors that impact learning motivations are good connections, active interaction, interesting subject delivery, an effective learning platform, lecturers' inspiration, formal uniformity, and lecturers' approach (Rahmawati, 2016). Conversely, the hindering factors of learning motivation are unstable internet connectivity, student fatigue, students' limited language, packed schedule, sudden schedule changes, limited proficiency in operating campus website platforms, and lack of self-confidence and feelings of shame. The primary challenge faced by students in online learning involves their ability to manage their time and other activities to prevent scheduling conflicts, which can hinder the effectiveness of the learning process. Furthermore, students must also be able to overcome feelings of laziness and maintain self-motivation to stay

focused and productive while engaging in online learning. Students who have high self-confidence will be able to manage their learning well without depending on others (Pratiwi & Laksmiwati, n.d.).

In addition to internal factors, external obstacles also play a role in reducing the quality of online learning, especially for students who face difficulties in comprehending the material delivered by lecturers, particularly when the content is presented in academically-oriented English. Geographical conditions, such as remote areas, along with infrastructural factors like power outages and signal disruptions caused by the rainy season, significantly interfere with internet connectivity stability (Sitorus & Sipayung, 2022). This reduces the effectiveness of learning activities and increases obstacles for students to follow the learning process optimally.

Overall, students' perceptions of the online learning system based on recognition of prior learning experience indicate that such recognition can provide motivation and boost learning enthusiasm. However, to achieve better outcomes, it is necessary to develop online learning strategies and methods that enhance interactivity, ensuring that students remain motivated and enthusiastic in pursuing knowledge through digital learning.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the interviews regarding students' perceptions of prior learning recognition and the effectiveness of online learning, it could be concluded that various internal and external factors significantly influence the success of online learning processes. Supporting factors such as stable connection, full interaction, interesting delivery of material, media communication, sharing lecturer's achievements, the lecturer's strategy booster, and systematic schedule played crucial roles in enhancing students' learning enthusiasm. Conversely, obstacles such as internet connectivity issues, fatigue, changing learning methods, and lack of self-confidence serve as the main barriers that affect motivation and learning effectiveness.

The experience during the first semester showed that direct interaction between lecturers and students could improve learning effectiveness, while fatigue and a packed schedule tend to decrease students' motivation and learning outcomes in subsequent semesters. However, frequently changing learning systems every semester can create uncertainty and diminish students' motivation to participate in the learning process consistently and enthusiastically. Learning motivation significantly influences the effectiveness of the learning process. When students possess high motivation, it facilitates their absorption of the material presented, encourages active participation in academic discussions, and enables them to independently prepare for understanding the subject matter to be covered in subsequent classes. Maintaining consistent motivation during the learning period is crucial for RPL students to achieve a timely graduation successfully. One approach to sustaining learners' motivation is by recalling their basic intentions when they first joined.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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