

INDONESIAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' DEMOTIVATING FACTORS IN LEARNING ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

Demotivation is a condition that occurs when a person begins to lose motivation or enthusiasm to do something and achieve specific goals. This demotivating condition can occur in various aspects of life, one of which is related to study. This study is aimed to investigate the demotivation factors of EFL High School students in learning English. Two students from a public high school in Indonesia were interviewed. The data were collected using two session interviews. The first session interview was about the external demotivation factors, and the second was about the internal factors of demotivation. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis in which prominent themes were determined based on the frequency of their emergence. This study found two factors influencing students' demotivation: external and internal. The external factors include teacher factors, attitudes towards peers, negative attitudes towards the target language and everything related to the target language, the target language as a compulsory subject, and textbooks and teaching materials. As for the internal factors, there are low self-esteem and a lack of self-confidence and interest. This study encourages teachers to create a supportive learning atmosphere and adjust teaching practices to minimize learning demotivation.

Keywords: *demotivation, high school students, internal and external factors*

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INTRODUCTION

Demotivation is a condition that occurs when a person begins to lose motivation or enthusiasm to do something and achieve specific goals. This demotivating condition can occur in various aspects of life, one of which is related to study. Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) stated that students with above-average abilities would not be able to continue their learning process if their motivation was low. Wang and Littlewood (2021) studied the causes of demotivation among 40 advanced university students in Hongkong and provided suggestions for overcoming them. Their research revealed that demotivation occurred due to several factors. The negative attitude of teachers toward their students was the most common cause of demotivation.

On the other hand, the thing that motivated students to learn English came from the character of the students themselves, such as how much they wanted to learn English. Their research showed that internal and external factors contributed significantly to students' demotivation. The internal factors include students'

anxiety about speaking English, lack of self-confidence, and lack of intention to learn English. The external factors of demotivation were the teacher's negative attitude.

Akay (2017) also researched the demotivation factors of high school students in English classrooms. His research aimed to fill the gap from the previous study about the same topic and suggested how to re-motivate the EFL class students. He used an explanatory design to conduct his research, and the participant consisted of 579 (five hundred seventy-nine) students. The results revealed that students lost their motivation to learn English from primary to high school, mostly during high school. In addition, the 12th-grade students were the most demotivated among the other high school students. Hence it can be interpreted that the learners lost their motivation as they progressed.

Alavinia and Sehat (2012) researched the main reasons for Iranian high school students' lack of motivation in learning English as a foreign language. Their findings were most EFL learners did not take English lessons diligently, they only took mandatory classes to pass the final exam. It also revealed that the teacher's teaching method, attitudes, and behavior toward the students were the main factor in motivating the students. Whereas lack of teaching equipment and an improper learning environment were the dominant factors of demotivation

In the Indonesian context, Adara, Puspahaty, and Nuryadi (2021) investigated the demotivation factors of high school EFL students during the Covid-19 pandemic. Their findings show that inadequate school facilities as the most prominent demotivation factor for EFL high school learners. Their participants admitted that they were not given access to use school facilities during the English learning process even though their school has adequate facilities such as computers and wi-fi networks. Online learning is also a salient factor in demotivation. The interaction between teachers and students felt lacking when doing online classes, making students bored and gradually demotivated. There have been studies on demotivation in a high school context, but such research still needs to be conducted. Therefore, this study is aimed to answer the following research question: What demotivating factors influence two EFL high school students in learning English?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) researched factors of motivation to motivate language learners. The research was conducted in Hungary, and various English language teaching institutes participated in this research. The research showed that there are top 10 motivational factors that can improve EFL learners' motivation in learning languages. First is setting a personal example for the students from the teacher's behavior. The second is creating a comforting and relaxed classroom atmosphere. The third is presenting the material properly. Fourth is to maintain a good relationship with the students. The fifth is to increase the student's self-confidence in their linguistic skills. The sixth is to make the classes enjoyable. Seventh is promoting learner autonomy among students. The eighth is to personalize learning material so that material becomes relevant to the students' daily lives. The ninth is to increase students' motivation to achieve their goals. The tenth is to make students familiar with the target language.

On the other hand, various researchers conducted studies on the causes of demotivation in EFL students. Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) stated that students

without enough motivation, even students with superior capabilities, cannot achieve the learning process in the long term. Lack of motivation in students makes them less successful in their language learning process.

Trang and Baldauf (2007) also researched the demotivation factors in Vietnamese EFL students. Their research consists of three main focuses: demotivation reasons, influence in different degrees of demotivation, and how students overcome their demotivation. Their findings on students' demotivation reasons show that demotivation is a common phenomenon among students. Demotivation occurs when there is a long pause to learn English and causes students' motivation to decrease over time. It also showed that there are 14 categories of demotivation, which are classified into two groups. First is the internal attributes, usually associated with students' self-confidence when learning English. The second group is external attributes, composed of students' learning environment, factors from the teacher, and other external attributes.

It also can be seen on Song and Kim (2017) researched the influences of demotivation and remotivation in Korean high school EFL students. Their study showed that various factors influenced students' demotivation of learning English. The participants lost their interest in learning English in junior high school. The external factors included their teacher's teaching methods, the change in their study methods, the textbooks that made them bored, the difficulty of learning English, and their decreased score when learning English. The studies suggested that the students had to look on the positive side to learn English and reduce their negative thinking. From the results of their research, the participants very rarely saw their benefits when learning English for their future, social pressures such as seeing their peers use English better than them greatly affected their motivation when learning English, even to the point of making them hate English as a subject.

Many studies have been conducted to analyze students' motivational changes in learning English. Ghazvini and Khajepour (2011) researched Iranian high school students' motivation and attitudes toward learning English. The research consists of 123 participants which are 63 female and 60 male students in their second academic years from two different high schools. A questionnaire instrument with 18 questions was used for the development of this research.

The mother tongue was used in the questionnaire, due to students' differences in social and economic backgrounds, learning environment, and differences proficiency levels in English. Their research aimed to find various types of motivation needed by students to learn the language and to find out how students' attitudes (positive and negative) toward learning English. The result showed that the female subject prone to bilingualism than the male. They think that it is important to speak two different languages. As for gender, the result showed that female students have the integrative motivation to learn English. On the other hand, male students have the instrumental motivation to learn English.

Astuti (2017) researched demotivating factors in Indonesian high school EFL learners. Her findings show several demotivation factors in English learning in high school students. Teachers' unfriendly behaviors, fewer various learning activities, discouraging feedback from their teachers, and a monotonous learning environment atmosphere. Most of the participants said how the teacher conducted and explains the lessons is very important for students' motivation to study. This indicates that teachers' behaviors can demotivate their students when teachers

show unfriendly behavior. Participants reported that they liked it if the teachers teach with an informal style, it created a relaxed classroom atmosphere. Students reported they preferred learning materials and activities that have some examples related to a modern teenager's life, it can help them easy to understand and memorize them. Students also said that they liked practicing their English skills rather than just listening to their teacher's explanation.

There are two factors of demotivation among EFL learners, external and internal. According to Dörnyei (2001), demotivation is caused by several external factors, such as teacher factors (teachers' teaching method, unfriendly behaviors, and discouraging feedback from their teachers). Undesirable teaching environment (students feel uncomfortable in class due to their teaching environments like a desk, chairs, and class temperature). Decreasing confidence (students' confidence in learning decreased because of several factors such as discouraging teacher feedback and feeling insecure with their classmates whom they think have better English skills than them). Negative attitude towards the target language (students feel English is not essential for them because they use their mother tongue or their native language). The target language is a compulsory subject (students feel forced to learn English because English is one of the compulsory subjects in school). Interference of another foreign language under learning (students learn English at the same time as learning other foreign languages so that the process of learning English becomes disrupted). Negative attitudes towards the native country associated with the target language (students have a negative response: *annoyed, lazy, and angry* when learning English). Attitudes towards peers around (fellow students often ridicule their lack of English skills). Textbooks and teaching materials (students feel bored with the learning material given by the school).

Furthermore, Fallouts (2009) research on demotivation internal factors showed that Low self-esteem (lack of confidence from the students has a significant impact on his/her learning process), the gap in English proficiency among the learners (students feel there is a considerable difference in English skills between the student and his/her friends), lack of confidence and interest (students lacking interest in learning English), Failure experiences during the learning process (students often experience failure when learning English, thus making them lose interest in learning English).

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was designed as a descriptive qualitative study. A descriptive qualitative study is a type of research that describes a phenomenon, population, or situation being researched. A descriptive study focuses on answering the what, when, where, and who questions of the research problem (Kim, Sefcik, and Bradway, 2017).

In this study, two participants were recruited following a purposive sampling technique Both are male high school students experiencing demotivation based on their studies progress told by their teacher from an interview. Both participants are from 11th Junior high school in Yogyakarta. They had English learning experiences from elementary to high school, and as time passed, they were demotivated while learning English in the classroom. When first learning English, they have no problem learning the target language. However, their learning motivation decreases as their learning level increases due to several

factors affecting them. The researcher first interviewed the English teacher at the school about the students in her class whom she thought had demotivating factors (lack of confidence, interest, and annoyance when learning English). After getting the names of the two students suspected of being demotivated, the researcher immediately met them after school hours and determined an interview schedule for each student. The researcher also asked for each student's WhatsApp number to make it easier to contact them. Students selected as participants meet the criteria for demotivating factors from Dörnyei's (2001) and Falout's (2009) theory.

Data were collected using two-session interviews on 24 November 2022 and 28 November 2022. The interviews lasted for thirty minutes (Ilham) and twenty-five minutes (Reza). Ten interview questions were designed based on the demotivation theories. The interview questions items are shown in table 1. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Then, the data were coded, categorized, and thematized following Braun andClarke(2006).

Table 1. Interview Questions

No	Interview Questions
1	Tell me about how your teacher teaches in class?
2	How is the teaching and learning atmosphere in your class? What makes you uncomfortable studying in class?
3	What causes you to lose your enthusiasm for learning English?
4	What is your attitude towards English?
5	What do you think about English as a compulsory subject?
6	When you are learning English, you are also learning another foreign language? If so, what did you do when you learned these two languages?
7	Have you ever received negative comments while studying English?
8	How do you feel about your classmates who are better at speaking English than you?
9	What do you think about the learning materials provided by your school? Such as textbooks, teacher materials, etc
10	How do you feel when you fail an English exam, and how do you react to it?

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Based on data analysis, it was found that two factors influence student demotivation, external and internal factors. External factors include teacher factors, attitudes towards peers, negative attitudes towards the target language and everything related to the target language, the target language as a compulsory subject, and textbooks and teaching materials. As for internal factors, there is low self-esteem and a lack of self-confidence and interest. The finding was illustrated in table 2.

Table 2. Prominent themes and tally

Prominent Themes	Tally
Teacher Factors	6
Attitudes Towards Peers Around	5
Lack of Confidence and Interest	4
Negative Attitude towards the Target Language	4
Low Self-Esteem	2
Negative Attitudes Towards the Native Country Associated with the Target Language	2
The Target Language as a Compulsory Subject	1

Based on the data obtained, the most prominent demotivating factor is the teacher factor. Two participants, Ilham and Reza, mentioned that the teacher always used English when teaching, and they needed help understanding what the teacher was explaining. This can be seen from the excerpted interview as follows:

The teacher always uses English when she teaches in the class, and I cannot understand the material at all (TF/001/Reza)

The teacher is cool but also annoying because he always uses English in class and likes to make me stand up to read texts in English (TF/001/Ilham)

The teacher factor was most mentioned in the interview process, followed by negative responses from fellow students, lack of confidence and interest, negative responses to the target language, low self-esteem, negative responses to the target language related to student's native language, the target language as a compulsory subject, the last is textbooks and teaching materials.

The negative responses from fellow students that can cause demotivation becomes the second most prominent theme. The excerpt interview also can be seen as follows:

When the teacher asked me to read some English text in class, my classmates often mocked and laughed at me when I misspelled some words (ATPA/006/Ilham)

I don't particularly appreciate speaking or writing in English in front of the class because my friend always laughs at me (ATPA/002/Reza)

The third prominent theme that can be seen in table 3 is the need for more confidence and interest in students. The excerpt from the interview can be seen as follows:

I cannot speak English, and because of that, I don't understand the lesson. It's boring (LCI/003/Ilham)

English is difficult to understand, especially when I am asked to read texts in English that I cannot read, and it makes me lazy to learn English (LCI/001/Reza)

The fourth prominent is the negative attitudes towards the target language. The two participants have a similar problem with English words. They have the same thought about English words that is hard to understand. It can be seen from the excerpt below:

English words are messy, and it's challenging to understand them (NA/004/Reza)

I once stopped studying for remedial English because when I saw the text my motivation to study immediately disappeared, the English language structure is so hard to understand. (NA/009/Ilham)

The fifth is students' low self-esteem. From the results of the interview, it is known that both participants have low self-esteem. Reza is afraid to say words in English. On the other hand, Ilham is afraid that he will be asked questions in English. The results of the interview can be seen in the excerpt below:

I don't like it when the teacher asks me to read sentences in English because I'm afraid I pronounce them wrong (LS/001/Reza)

When I met foreigners, I immediately walked away because I was afraid of being asked questions in English (LS/005/Ilham)

Discussion

Teachers' factors play significant roles in students' demotivation. Various reasons, such as teacher factors may cause students who feel inconvenienced in learning. In an educational or learning process, the teacher is one of the most critical components because they are considered capable of understanding, exploring, implementing, and ultimately achieving educational goals. As Ahmad (2021) proposed, the teacher's attitude influences the learning process, and teachers who constantly lecture too much are the number one demotivating factor among the students. The teacher is always dependent on the textbooks also plays a significant role in demotivation factors. The students feel bored and not engaged during the learning activity because they only listen to their teacher speak in front of the class. In addition, Harmer (2010) proposed that they classified the teacher into several roles. The roles of the teacher are: controller (the teacher is in charge of the class, organize students, tell things to students, etc.), organizer (organize the student and various activities in the classroom), and assessor (the teacher provide feedback, correction, and grading students). Teachers become the second parents of their students at school. They have to make their students well-educated. Attitudes, traits, knowledge, and how the teacher teaches will determine the success of their students. Therefore, the teacher becomes a part that significantly influences the learning process in the classroom. The influence of the teacher in the learning process in the classroom is closely related to the professionalism of the teacher itself.

Demotivation related to peer factors. Students' motivation to learn English decreased over time because they were frightened by the derision response of their classmates. Interview results showed that their classmates always laughed at them for the wrong word spoken or the bad writing in English. In a similar study conducted by Han, Tulgar, and Aybirdi (2019), two factors of demotivation by their peers during the learning process. Firstly, the competition among their peers makes them feel discouraged and stressed. The second is that they constantly get humiliated by their friends when they try to speak English in front of the class. Lamb (2004) affirmed that peers could influence students' motivation through social comparison; they will compare themselves with their peers. Students often compare themselves with others who are most similar in age, abilities, and interests. Students whom their peers often accept with good social skills especially have positive academic achievement motivation.

Conversely, students who are rejected are at risk of having achievement problems, including getting low grades and dropping out of school. Peers can be a good influence, can also be a bad influence. For example, peers who are a good

influence are friends who encourage good qualities such as honesty, fairness, cooperation, and life clean from negativity such as drugs and alcohol. Conversely, peers who are a terrible influence will encourage their friends to engage in criminal behavior, aggression, and other anti-social traits.

Negative attitudes toward the target language and its association connect with the demotivated students. They usually use English only during the learning process in the classroom. Getie (2020) showed that they are reluctant to learn English because their mother tongue is not their target language. Also, there needs to be better model English in their school, and the students probably need more self-confidence. Abidin et al. (2012) mention that the ability of students to master a second language is not only influenced by mental abilities or language skills but also by students' attitudes and perceptions of the target language. They also recommend that the concept of attitude can improve the language learning process, influencing students' behavioral traits and beliefs towards other languages, cultures, and societies, and this will identify their propensity to acquire the target language. Suppose a learner needs more interest and inclination to acquire the target language to communicate with others. In that case, the learner will have a negative attitude and not be motivated and enthusiastic about learning the target language. In line with this, Orfan (2020) affirms that negative attitudes toward the English language are not associated with age, gender, field of study, and first language. In addition, their English learning experience and English language center affect the negative attitudes towards the target learning the. Nunan (2000) also believes that students' negative attitudes are related to the skills and strategies that they use in their English learning process. It determines whether they can understand and absorb the material given by the teacher. Therefore, the student's attitude can be included in language learning because it can affect their performance in acquiring the target language. The teacher must consider the attitude of students towards the target language because their attitudes greatly influence their language learning process.

Low confidence and low self-esteem are two factors that also have a significant role in demotivation cases experienced by students. One of the leading causes that make students feel insecure or even unwilling to learn English because students may not have sufficient knowledge or have not mastered the material they are going to learn. Students who have low self-esteem tend to think negatively about other people's opinions about their English skills (Ushioda 2009). According to Jabor, Ghani, and Abdhussain (2017), self-confidence is considered one of the significant factors of demotivation. The learners who lack confidence or low self-esteem were generally timid and fearful during the lesson. They were unable to complete a sentence or express their opinions in class. Therefore, self-confidence in English learning is essential for many reasons. It can encourage a student to try new activities and learn, and students with enough self-confidence rarely give up. As a result, students with this ability are expected to succeed in their English classes. Schmidt (1990) confirmed that lack of confidence is caused by anxiety within the student, the anxious students are more likely preferred to teacher-centered learning compared to student-centered learning. The reason why they preferred teacher-centered learning is that the anxious students feel "safe." Anxiety more often occurred at ground-level students.

On the other hand, advanced-level students were less anxious, and they could follow the class more comfortably. In other words, teachers must make innovations in the learning process to increase students' motivation to learn. Low confidence cannot be considered a trivial problem by teachers because of its considerable impact on demotivation cases experienced by students.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study investigates the demotivating factors of learning English in Indonesian high school students. Two Yogyakarta high school students were the participants in this study. The results of this study revealed that the teacher factor is the most prominent in student learning motivation. Where the teacher factor is very often mentioned in the interview process. Both participants admitted that their learning process could have been more enjoyable because of their teacher. The teacher always uses English when she teaches the class and picks Ilham and Reza to read English text in front of the class. The second is negative responses by peer students; their classmates often laugh at them when they try to speak or write in English during the learning process. The third is the lack of self-confidence and interest from both participants. Fourth is students' negative attitude towards the target language, Ilham and Reza feel that the English language is not so important because they do not use it in their daily lives. There are also several other factors, such as low self-esteem, students' negative attitudes towards the target language related to their native country, English as a subject that must be studied at school, and textbooks and teaching materials.

This research has several limitations that should be noted. First, only two participants participated in this study, and it was only conducted in one high school in Indonesia. Future research needs more participants and school settings to broaden the scope of the data. Second, this study only used interviews for data collection and data on students who experience demotivation are only obtained from English teachers who teach in one class. The researcher suggests adding the observation method to future research so that future researchers can see and examine which students experience demotivation when learning English in class. Future studies should use questionnaires and involve more respondents to get more diverse data. Hence, future research should use these limitations to explore the demotivation factors of EFL students.

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