

## Undiscovered voices: Motivation and demotivation factors in learning English among Indonesian orphan students

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### ABSTRACT

This qualitative descriptive research aimed to investigate factors of motivation and demotivation in learning English among Indonesian orphan students. There were eight participants who live and study in an Indonesian orphanage. They were randomly chosen in this research. The data were mainly collected through individual semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion (FGD) sections. All interviews and FGD sections data were recorded, transcribed, analyzed, and divided into several themes and subthemes. Further, member checking was done to develop the trustworthiness of the research. The research revealed that internal and external factors were positively related to motivation and demotivation in learning English among Indonesian orphan students. Further, suggestions and policy recommendations were all offered to related parties to support and give equal educational facilities to all students since they have the same right for education.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Motivation plays an important role in achieving specific goals. Cook and Artino [1] stated that motivation is defined as a process in which target-oriented activities are initiated and maintained. Therefore, high level of motivation could also help learners to overcome the problems that they face in learning process that leads them to success [2]. On the contrary, demotivation is believed to give negative effect in learning causing a decrease of motivational level. In this view, ones with superior skills would also experience difficulties in achieving their goals without high level of motivation. Similarly, Ushioda and Dörnyei [3], stated that demotivation, or the “specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioral intention or on ongoing action.” Thus, it shall clearly be concluded that any factors affecting the decrease of motivation among learners are considered as demotivators.

Studies on motivation and demotivation factors among English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) student have drawn high attention among researchers in a past few years. They revealed that motivation and demotivation factors occurred in many circumstances or conditions. For instance, some studies have revealed motivation factors which include to have bright career [4]–[8]; to get good score in the school [4], [9]; to help them in travelling or studying abroad [4], [5], [9]; personal interest [10], [11]; interesting material [9], [12]; and classroom experience [7]. Whereas, other studies have identified demotivation factors, such as teachers’ competence [13]–[21], classroom characteristics [13]–[15], [22], negative attitude of classmates [14], [17], and lack of facilities [17], [20], [21].

Although there are plenty of studies conducted in relation to the topic of English motivation and demotivation factors, there are limited studies published in the context of Indonesian students. Further, it is very limited in the context of Indonesian orphan students. Therefore, the current research proposes to fill the gap to explore and analyze motivation and demotivation factors among Indonesian orphan students from their perspectives to enrich and broaden research horizons in the context of Indonesian English teaching and learning process. Thus, this research was lead under one main research question: what are motivation and demotivation factors among Indonesian orphan students?

Motivation can be divided into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation [23]. Intrinsic motivation is characterized as the natural, inherent drive to seek out challenges and new possibilities which are associated with cognitive and social development. Intrinsic motivation includes the desire of students themselves to learn, without the need for external inducements. Meanwhile, extrinsic motivation comes from external sources. Extrinsic motivation includes those rewards and inducements external to students. In addition, Ushioda and Dörnyei [3], also makes a distinction between extrinsically motivated behaviors and intrinsically motivated behaviors in language learning. He states that extrinsically motivated behaviors are actions which drive individuals to perform activities to receive some extrinsic reward e.g., good scores; while intrinsically motivated behaviors are behaviors whose rewards are internal e.g., the joy of doing a particular activity.

Different motivation theorists give different classifications of motivation. Huitt and Dawson [24] distinguish between the basic types of motivation: integrative and instrumental. Integrative motivation is characterized by the learner's positive attitudes towards the target language group and the desire to integrate into the target language community. According to previous studies [25], [26], the most successful students are those who like the people that speak the language, admire the culture and have a desire to become familiar with the society in which the language is communicated. In contrast, instrumental motivation is characterized by the desire to obtain something practical or concrete from the study of a foreign language. In this case, the purpose of language acquisition is more practical and necessary, such as applying for a job that demands to speak a foreign language, meeting the requirements for university graduation, reading technical materials or achieving higher status. Furthermore, the previous studies have also discovered that motivation factors mainly because the students want to have bright career [4]–[8], to get good score in the school [4], [9], to help them in travelling or studying abroad [4], [5], [9], personal interest [10], [11], interesting material [9], [12], and classroom experience [27].

On the other hand, demotivation is an issue that has been the focus of attention in the area of language learning and teaching. Demotivation factors might happen due to some situations. Past studies have identified some major factors which influence students' demotivation such as teachers' competence [13]–[21], classroom characteristics [13]–[15], [22], negative attitude of classmates [14], [17], and lack of facilities [17], [20], [21]. Whereas, Dörnyei and Ushioda [28] figured out that the demotivation among the learners extracted nine factors: i) Teachers' attitude and teaching method; ii) Lack of facilities available at school; iii) Lack of self-confidence; iv) Negative attitude towards the foreign language studied; v) Foreign language study as a compulsion; vi) Interference of other foreign languages which the students are studying; vii) No positive attitude towards the English spoken communities; viii) Group attitude; and ix) Course books studied in class. These factors have contributed a lot in the field of demotivation research, as many students go through demotivation, they lose both integrative and instrumental motivation to continue their efforts in learning English [29].

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted using a qualitative method with a descriptive design to explore the motivation and demotivation factors in learning English among Indonesian orphan students. A qualitative method was chosen in order to inform a complete understanding of research problems academically. According to Creswell [30], qualitative research was carried out in a natural setting without manipulating the data. In this research, researchers focus on the participants' point of view, exploring participants' experiences and finally provide rich narrative descriptions.

Further, this study was conducted in one orphanage in Yogyakarta, Indonesia where orphan students who come from all different areas of Indonesia study. There were eight orphan students (four males and four females) who participated in this research based on voluntary basis. Further, the participants' name involved in this research were pseudonyms in order to protect their privacy. The participants' ages were between 14 and 16 years old as indicated in Table 1.

This study utilized individual semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion (FGD) as the main instruments to collect the data. The researchers used a semi-structured interview in order to get in-depth data and information from the participants. The researchers adopted and adapted some interview as well as FGD questions from some related studies [4], [5], combine, and edit them to make it more suitable and

relevant with the purpose of this research. The interview sessions were conducted in the first occasion and then followed by FGD. The interview and FGD sessions were carried out in local language to give the participants a free room to argue and explore their opinions and share their experiences.

For data analysis, the researchers transcribed all interview and FGD data manually. Then, the transcripts were carefully read a few times to do the coding and divided into suitable themes. Further, member checking was also done to establish the trustworthiness of the data. Member checking exist when all transcript data were given back to the participants to make sure the data transcribed was what they said. The participants were also given chance if they would change their minds after they read the transcription.

Table 1. Background of the participants

| No | Pseudonym | Age | Learning English period |
|----|-----------|-----|-------------------------|
| 1  | OS1       | 14  | 2 years                 |
| 2  | OS2       | 14  | 2 years                 |
| 3  | OS3       | 15  | 3 years                 |
| 4  | OS4       | 14  | 2 years                 |
| 5  | OS5       | 14  | 2 years                 |
| 6  | OS6       | 14  | 2 years                 |
| 7  | OS7       | 16  | 3 years                 |
| 8  | OS8       | 15  | 3 years                 |

### 3. RESULTS

This research revealed that both internal and external factors positively influence motivation and demotivation of orphan students in learning English. Further, the findings also revealed that most motivation factors to learn English came from within the students themselves. Meanwhile, most demotivation factors came from external factors. Table 2 and Table 3 show the factors of motivation and demotivation.

Table 2. Factors of motivation

| Motivation                          |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Internal                            | External                                    |
| 1. Personal interest                | 1. Good grade for exam                      |
| 2. Positive attitude toward English | 2. Social encouragement                     |
| 3. Better future                    | 3. Helping in traveling and studying abroad |

Table 3. Factors of demotivation

| Demotivation                        |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Internal                            | External                                  |
| 1. Influence of mother tongue       | 1. Poor facilities and teaching materials |
| 2. Negative attitude toward English | 2. Teachers' competence                   |
| 3. Lack of confidence               | 3. Classroom environment                  |

#### 3.1. Motivation factors

##### 3.1.1. Internal motivation

Based on the interview and FGD sessions, it is revealed that there are three major motivations among Indonesian orphan students (personal interest, drive their positive attitude toward English, for a better future). Based on the data, most participants agreed that learning English is basically enjoyable. Further, they also admit that to be able to speak English is a great achievement for them since the language is not commonly spoken in their surroundings.

*"I am happy to be able to speak English because I think it is amazing."* (OS3)

*"When we speak English, even though we know there are still so many mistakes, we feel proud."* (FGD)

Those data show how participants have personal interest in English as they feel proud to be able to speak English. In addition, they also admit that being able to speak English is enjoyable. This situation drives and increases their positive attitude toward English which increase their effort to be a successful English learner.

*“...We love to learn English, so we spend our time studying about its vocabularies in our spare time individually and communicate with it.” (OS4)*

Furthermore, the most important finding which motivated all orphan students to learn English is their awareness toward their future. All the participants cannot deny that their dream to have a good job and to have a happy family in the future is the strongest motivation to learn English.

*“... I hope English could help me to have better future, maybe to have a good job.” (OS5)*  
*“Personally, I learn English because I want to have bright career in the future and having a happy family.” (OS1)*

### 3.1.2. External motivation

Besides internal motivation, the data was also revealed three major external motivation in learning English among orphan students (good grade for exam, social encouragement, and traveling and studying abroad). Some of the participants cannot deny that they learn English to get good grades for their school exam which was done once in every end of a semester. Further, social encouragement given by their surrounding is also an important factor which maintain participants' motivation in learning English. The participants admit that their orphanage is sometimes visited by many people to help and give motivation to them to study hard.

*“...We study English also for having a good grade for our school examination” (FGD)*  
*“Some people visiting us and advise the importance of English for our future” (OS4)*

Another important factor that cannot be ignored that motivates the orphan students in learning English is because they believe English can help them to achieve their dreams to be able to travel and study abroad.

*“Maybe one day I have an opportunity to go abroad to travel or to study overseas and my English ability could help me in the communication” (OS6)*  
*“I really hope to be able to go abroad, that is why I learn English” (OS2)*  
*“...We do not know the future, but we can prepare from now, maybe we could get scholarship to study in another country” (FGD)*

It can be seen that based on the findings, factors of motivation among orphan students which drive them to learn English are both from internal and external.

## 3.2. Demotivation factors

### 3.2.1. Internal demotivation

Ironically, even though the participants have high internal and external motivation in learning English, there were also some internal and external demotivation factors that should be well anticipated by related parties to keep orphan students' motivation high. It is mainly because these internal and external demotivation potentially decrease their motivation all the time. Based on the interview and FGD session, it is revealed that there are three major internal demotivation (influence of mother tongue, negative attitude toward English, and lack of confidence). However, the internal problems which demotivate orphan students can be well overcome by the participants.

*“...sometimes it is hard for me to speak English because it is so hard to pronounce.” (OS4)*  
*“I agree that in many English words are hard to pronounce, I have to practice again and again.” (FGD)*

This situation, the influence of mother tongue, directly leads the participants to the second internal demotivation which is negative attitude toward English.

*“Yes, it really makes us stress sometimes because there are so many words which are difficult to pronounce, but we always practice together.” (FGD)*

The last internal demotivation factor expressed by the participants is their lack of confidence in practicing English. Some of them truly admit that they are shy to their friends and teachers if they are assigned to speak English. They were afraid of making mistakes in term of its pronunciation and grammar.

*“Personally, I sometimes feel ashamed to communicate in English as mine is really bad.”* (OS8)

*“I feel shy to communicate in English, I do not know how to pronounce it correctly.”* (OS6)

*“...But we will keep practicing for our own good.”* (FGD)

### 3.2.2. External demotivation

Even though the participants claimed to be able to overcome their internal demotivation, sadly, the participants could not handle external problems which demotivate them in learning English such as teachers' competence, poor facilities and teaching materials, and class environment. In this regard, the participants admit that they have to learn English and other subjects in the mosque because they have no appropriate class for studying.

*“As you can see, we have no facilities in learning English here.”* (OS8)

*“...not only for learning English, but also for learning all subjects, our teacher only use small whiteboard, and we learn in a mosque.”* (FGD)

Lack of facilities is not the only external demotivation factor revealed by the participants. This situation is worst by incompetent English teachers in term of their educational background. In this regard, most teachers who teach in the orphanage are their seniors who devoted themselves to their orphanage. In case of English teacher, participants admit that their English teacher only graduated from English short course instead of university.

*“Basically, our teacher here is our senior; they do not have educational background as educator”* (OS1)

*“As far as I know, our English teacher here only graduated from English short course, not from university”* (OS5)

In this case, when their English teacher does not have enough experiences in teaching English worsted by the absence of school facilities to support teaching and learning process, the participants feel bored in learning English which lead them to another demotivation factor.

*“Because we do not have such good facilities here, sometimes our teachers cannot explain the material clearly.”* (OS2)

*“Our teachers most of the time only use some printed paper as material, and somehow it is boring.”* (OS7)

Another important factor which demotivates the orphan students conveyed by the participants is class environment. All the participants share their stories with the researchers that they start learning in early morning when they were still so sleepy. Therefore, the class is not effective and unproductive.

*“We learn English in the morning, and we still sleepy at that time because we have to sleep at 10 and wake up at 3 and study at 7.”* (OS3)

*“When I see my friends are sleepy, I become sleepy as well and cannot concentrate to learn English.”* (OS6)

## 4. DISCUSSION

The findings of the current research seem to be relevant with what indicated by Mufah and Galea [23] that motivation can be divided into intrinsic and extrinsic and so does demotivation. Furthermore, the findings of the previous studies were also relevant with this research which revealed that motivation factors in learning English occurred because of some factors such as personal interest [10], [11], to have a bright future [4]–[8], to have a good grade for exam [4], [9] and to help them in travelling or studying abroad [4], [5], [9]. Interestingly, there were some new findings revealed in this study as factors of motivation among orphan students which are positive attitude toward English and social encouragement.

The first motivation factor in learning English conveyed by almost all participants is their personal interest [10], [11]. This is because English is not widely spoken in participants' environment since English is considered as a foreign language in Indonesia. Therefore, the participants strongly believed that English is a new and an amazing language to be mastered. Thus, the participants are proud when they are able to speak English. In this regard, they are motivated to learn English to show to other students as well as their surroundings that they are able to speak a foreign language fluently. This situation is classified by Ushioda and Dörnyei [3] as feeling of joy in learning because no one forces them to learn English.

Another important finding of the orphan students, motivation in learning English is their attention toward their future. All the participants cannot deny that they have to prepare many things, including mastering English to have a bright career in the future [4]–[8]. Additionally, by mastering English, they will also get good grade for their exam in the same time [4], [9]. The participants tell their stories to the researchers that they want to have a good job and a happy family in the future, not like what they experience in the orphanage. Therefore, the same stories will not be repeated to their children. Through mastering English, the participants really hope that their English ability could help them to achieve their dream. They also believe that as an international language, English could help them in many situations such as pursuing scholarships, studying at a university, and reading many important books written in English.

Furthermore, the participants also believe that mastering English could help them travel and study abroad. This factor becomes another motivation revealed by the participants [4], [5], [9]. All the participants really hope that they can get scholarship in the future. Previous studies [25], [26] classified these motivations as external instrumental motivation. Instrumental motivation is characterized by the desire to obtain practical things in studying foreign language [25], [26]. In this regard, the participants of the current study are motivated to learn English because they want to have bright careers and pursue their degree through scholarship.

Although the participants seem to have high degree of motivations, there are some problems faced by them in learning English which could be classified as demotivation factors. For demotivation factors, the participants agree that it is mainly because of both internal and external factors which also congruent with previous research such as negative attitude toward English [30], lack of confidence [30], poor facilities and teaching materials [17], [20], [21], teachers' competence [13]–[21], and classroom facilities [14]–[16], [19]. However, one interesting finding from this research which is the influence of the mother tongue as the only internal demotivation in learning English among orphan students in Indonesia.

Firstly, the problem of the mother tongue is mainly because English is considered as a foreign language in Indonesia. Therefore, it cannot be denied that each language is unique and has different ways in pronouncing the words. Thus, most of the participants agree that English words are pronounced differently from their local and national language which is relatively difficult for them. Because of this situation, another demotivation factor occurred which is negative attitude toward English and lack of confidence in communicating with it [28]. In this regard, the participants need to have more practices in pronouncing English words to make fluent. Thus, the participants admit that this problem somehow, in some occasions, decrease their motivation in learning English. However, the participants seem to be able to overcome the problems by practicing every day with their peers.

However, even though the participants were able to handle the internal demotivation, there are many external demotivation in learning English that the participants cannot overcome. The participants share their stories that they have no facilities that may support their learning process in their orphanage [17], [20], [21]. Ironically, they have to learn in a small mosque because there is no available room for learning in the orphanage. There were only an old whiteboard and some board-markers used by their teachers to teach them every day. This situation decreases their motivation in learning English. Further, for listening material, the participants admit that their teachers only used their voices and did not any tape player or cd player. It can be said that orphan students have very poor facilities for English learning.

Sadly, the situation is worst by their incompetence English teachers in the orphanage [13]–[21]. All teachers who teach in the orphanage are not qualified. They are not a university graduate teacher majoring in English education. The orphan students are only taught by their seniors who devoted themselves in the orphanage. Therefore, their teaching methods are not as good as teachers who graduated from university. Further, with limited facilities these teachers cannot do much to improve their teaching methodology. As observed, these teachers, most of the time only used printed papers as their teaching material. With this situation, high degree of participants' motivations sometimes decreases significantly and become one of their demotivation.

Their demotivation in learning English does not stop at that point. Class environment is another demotivation in learning English as expressed by the participants [13]–[15], [22]. In this regard, all the participants share their stories that they do not have enough sleep at night due to so many activities and assignments. On weekdays, the participants are only able to go to sleep at 10 pm and have to get up at 3 am in the morning to pray, read the holy Koran and other religious activities until 5 am in the morning. Then, the participants prepare to have breakfast and continue to study in a small mosque at 7 am in the morning until 1 pm in the afternoon. Further, in their orphanage on certain days, they learn English from 7 to 8 am in the morning in which the participants still feel sleepy and sometimes are not ready to study. This situation, of course, create unproductive classroom situation for the students to study. Eventually this situation would decrease their learning motivation.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This research has given a clear picture of English teaching and learning activities in Indonesian orphanage from orphan students' point of view. Based on the findings, it is clear that motivation and demotivation factors in learning English among Indonesian orphan students are coming both from internal and external. Further, it can clearly be seen that orphan students also have high degree of motivation in learning English and have the same dreams as other students who study in public schools. However, the orphan students are not as fortunate as those students who have many facilities and well educated-teachers in their schools. Therefore, they need more effort to achieve their dreams as they have lack of facilities and incompetent teachers in their orphanage. Further, in achieving their dreams, orphan students need to boost their motivation more than other students. Therefore, it is recommended that the government and all related parties support and give equal educational facilities to all children since they have the same right for education and for their better future.

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