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## **EFL STUDENTS' DEMOTIVATION: A PORTRAIT OF TEACHING ENGLISH IN AN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL**

**Vandela Iqbal Mubarak, Arina Shofiya**

*State Islamic University (UIN) Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung,  
East Java, Indonesia*

*vandela34@gmail.com, arina.shofiya@gmail.com*

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### **Abstract:**

*In an English language learning it demands the students to understand vocabulary, grammar, and several language skills. Consequently, the students must have sufficient motivation to concentrate in English class. If not, demotivation emerges and becomes a factor of unsuccessful learning. In relation to demotivation, this research investigates: [1] the factors contributing to the demotivation among students at the Islamic Boarding School of Tremas Pacitan in learning English and [2] the strategies used by students at the Islamic Boarding School of Tremas Pacitan to minimize demotivation in learning English. This research used a descriptive qualitative approach. The subjects of the research were 8B students of the Islamic Boarding School of Tremas Pacitan. The data were collected by conducting observation and doing an interview. The findings revealed that the factors causing learning demotivation that were divided into intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic factors had found personal belief and students' boredom, while extrinsic factors such as teaching methods; classroom conditions; and less adequate facilities. Knowing that, extrinsic factors are more arisen than intrinsic factors. Moreover, students' strategies to minimize learning demotivation were such as self-studying; asking friends for help; and ignoring their humiliating*

*classmates. It is recommended that English teachers need to improve learning methods and facilities that support learning English.*

**Keywords:** *demotivation, factors, strategies, English teaching*

## INTRODUCTION

Issues of English language teaching needs serious attention. The first reason is English becomes a compulsory subject from high school to university level. English language in Indonesia is still considered one of the most important foreign languages to be learned (Suparsa et al., 2017). Second, students can get a lot of advantages if they master English. It has been regarded and used for global communication (Rao, 2019). A lot of concepts need to be understood by the students such as vocabulary, grammar, and several language skills which they have their challenges to be learning. Consequently, the students must have sufficient motivation to take full focus to join English class.

In learning a foreign language, the most significant factor which is influencing the students' success or failure is students' motivation (McDonough, 1983). Motivation is one of the main reasons for the success of the learning process. According to Melendy (2008), learning motivation refers to a process that starts with a need and leads to behavior that moves an individual towards achieving the goal. Hence, it can be concluded that motivation is part of a person's feeling that will pursue him/her to achieve certain goals in their life.

Not all educational institution has an easy process to reach the learning target of English class. According to Wathoni, et., al (2021: 146) that process is still difficult to be applied in several schools in Indonesia, and consequently, most English students cannot achieve good English ability. One of the factors causing unsuccessful learning is students' low motivation in learning English which is called "demotivation". Demotivation is a situation that causes a lot of

problems during the process of learning a language, and it may lead the learner to complete rejection. demotivation in language learning can reduce or diminishing the motivational basis of a behavioral intention or an ongoing action (Dornyei, 2001a: 143).

The existence of demotivation as a psychological problem that is experienced by EFL students in learning English has been considered the focus of several previous studies. A study by Adara and Najmuddin (2020) proves that online learning is one of the demotivational factors. In addition, Wang and Guan (2020) denote that teacher-related factors, self-related factors, and institution-related factors are the main causes of psychological demotivation. Muflihah (2019) shows eight factors causing students' demotivation in bilingual classes such as lack of language ability, language experience, the factor of lecturers, task factor, lack of interest, environment factor, friend factor, and facilities. Meanwhile, Wathoni et.al. (2020) finds out that the cause of students' demotivation is their lack of ability to use English, especially in mastering vocabulary and its pronunciation. Other factors were learning contents and materials, teachers, and failure experience.

The result of the preliminary study reveals that mostly the students at Islamic Boarding School of Tremas Pacitan show demotivation in learning English. Such demotivation appears in various forms such as feeling sleepy and even sleeping in English class, chit chatting with friends, and making complain English is difficult and the teacher is not creative in teaching. Moreover, the teacher adds the information that the atmosphere of the class is not conducive since there is no fan which the researcher also had proved it when doing observation in the classroom. Hence, the present study is intended to investigate the factors causing the students' demotivation and their strategies to minimize the demotivation so learning becomes fun.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Demotivation

Demotivation, which Deci & Ryan (1985) described as motivation, is not devoid of motivation, they claimed. Demotivation and motivation are two distinct ideas in this regard. Demotivation is defined by Dornyei (2001) as “relevant external forces” that lessen or dilute the motivation to study. Undoubtedly, doing a demotivation study will be of utmost importance because many teachers see that their students are demotivated in many educational scenarios in their regular classrooms (Ghadirzadeh, 2012). Motivation is unquestionably a major problem when learning a second language so it enables students to put out a genuine effort to become fluent. Demotivation, or “another side of motivation” has recently become more prevalent in second language learning.

Demotivation is studied as the reverse of motivation because of its detrimental impact on language learning. According to Raštegaar et al. (2012), the occurrence of demotivating elements in learners may be the root cause of every failure in second language learning (Kaivanpa-nah & Ghasemi, 2011). They also stated that when pupils lack motivation, language learning can become more challenging and boring. Demotivation, according to Falout et al. (2009), is another factor that may affect teachers' motivation as well as students' attitudes and behaviors. A lack of enthusiasm for language study by motivated students could prevent them from meeting learning objectives. Furthermore, demotivation is regarded as a complicated problem that can happen to numerous foreign language learners.

### Intrinsic and Extrinsic Factors

Intrinsic and Extrinsic demotivation are the kinds of factor sources that influence the difficulties in learning English felt by most of EFL students. All students should find studying engaging,

especially when learning a second language like English, in order to achieve the learning objectives. The effective evolution of the learning environment is necessary to motivate students to learn. According to Meshkat and Hassani (2012), five factors affect whether or not students are motivated to learn English, including the educational content and materials, the teachers' expertise and teaching methods, the school's accommodations, the student's intrinsic motivation, and test results. The learning materials and content have the biggest impact on motivation. To avoid demotivation in learning, the textbook, handouts, teaching materials, and lesson plan should all be appropriately and artistically produced. Moreover, Khusyabaroh (2018) the most prominent demotivation includes learning contents, materials, and facilities also the results indicated that uninteresting topics of learning materials, learning contents, lack of facilities such as videos, tapes, DVDs, CDs, and computers demotivate the students.

According to Kushabaroh et al. (2018), student characteristics account for the highest percentage of demotivating factors. They go on to say that this was due to the difficulty of memorization, low English scores, lack of priority given to the lesson, shyness, lack of practice chances, prohibition on the use of cellphones, hate of English, and lack of motivation to study English. The approach and how engagingly the learning materials are given to the students have an impact on their characteristics of students. For instance, students have trouble memorizing language and are hesitant when performing in front of the class. Teachers may alter their approach to instruction and improve the ability of their course materials. Dealing with the above description, it is needed to know clearly the forms of the intrinsic (students' low interest, personal believe, student boredom, students' anxiety, and lack of self-confidence) and extrinsic (teacher's behavior, classroom interaction, course-book, classroom condition, teaching methods, and less adequate facilities) demotivation that mostly happened by students

in learning English.

### **Strategies to Minimize Demotivation**

In order to overcome students' demotivation in English class, there are several findings had been found by previous researcher. Han et.al. (2019) note that the first strategy is personal endeavor. The forms of this strategy can be categorized as doing practice, self-studying, facilitating from internet, doing research, using social media, and self-talking

Second strategy is asking for assistance. The forms of this strategy type are asking friends for help, and asking teachers for help. Teachers and classmates can both offer emotional support to students who are worried or demotivated (Aldwin, 1994). Peers may support each other by discussing their motivational issues and sharing their motivation solutions (Ushioda, 2001). Similarly, by providing attributional feedback, teachers can assist students identify the root causes of their achievement and boost their self-efficacy.

Third is changing attitude/perspective. This type refers to thinking positively, focusing on advantages rather than disadvantages that occurs in learning process. Faizah (2017) supports that positive thinking emphasizes the need to control negative emotion because the negative emotion may block the cognitive process.

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

The approach of this research was qualitative. It is an approach to explore and understand the meaning of individuals or groups ascribed to a social human problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Then, the research design was descriptive qualitative. According to Karasar (2009) Descriptive research is used to describe a current situation that existed in the past or exists now in the way it is.

### **Subject of the Study**

In order to set the research work well, the researcher needed a help from research subjects to obtain the relevant data based on the research problems. There were three stages to select the research subjects. The first was done by preliminary study. The second, the researcher did observation by those above criteria particularly demotivated factors point. Therefore fieldnotes were made by researcher to ensure the result of observation. Then the researcher got the most demotivated students in Class 8B. There were 3 males and 2 males. The last stage was interview. The most demotivated students (5 students) would be selected to have some interview for several clarifications.

### **Data Collection**

The data of the present research were related with statements or descriptions indicating or suggesting demotivation showed by research subjects and their behavior. The data were collected by using observation and interview. The researcher did observation by joining the classes where the students showed the demotivation during the lesson. To confirm the data from observation, interviews were conducted to the selected students who could give rich information regarding their demotivation.

### **Data Analysis**

The data were analyzed after being collected through observation and interview. The researcher employed Miles, Huberman and Saldana's approach to assess the data obtained. By following the theory of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), the data were analyzed through three steps, namely, data condensation, data presentation (data display), and drawing conclusions or verification. The process of selecting, concentrating, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming data were referred to as data condensation.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the result of online in-depth interview and observation to the research subjects of the research, the researcher presents the findings and discussions of the research in the following:

### 1. Factors of Demotivation

In this section, the researcher presented the data in the field dealing with the factors that contribute to the demotivation among students at Islamic Boarding School of Tremas Pacitan in learning English. The data were taken from the result of the observation in the form of field notes and interview in the form of interview transcript which had already found originally from the field. There were five subjects namely Student 1 (S1), Student 2 (S2), Student 3 (S3), Student 4 (S4), and Student 5 (S5) who were indicated as the demotivated students in English class based on the process of observation which done twice and interviewed by researcher to obtain the depth information related with factor of demotivation.

Based on the result of investigation, it was found that there were 5 factors causing the students' demotivation in learning English. They were intrinsic factors such as personal belief (F2) and Students' boredom (F3), while extrinsic factors such as teaching methods (F7); classroom condition (F9); and less adequate facilities (F11).

Table 1. The factors of demotivation

STUDENTS	FACTORS				
	Intrinsic		Extrinsic		
	F2	F3	F7	F9	F11
Students 1	√	√	√	√	√
Student 2	√	√	√	√	√
Student 3	√	√	√	√	√
Student 4	√	√	-	√	√
Student 5	√	-	-	√	√



The table above shows that external factors outnumbered and are experienced by students than internal factors. It means that the students' demotivation is more due to outside factors. The situation in the class or the physical condition in the classroom caused the students not being motivated in the learning process. Therefore, English teachers need to improve and even construct learning methods and facilities that support learning English and schools need to improve class facilities adequately.

It is found out that the students experience demotivation in English class. The factors of students' demotivation are divided into several points. They are intrinsic factors such as personal belief and Students' boredom, while extrinsic factors such as teaching methods; classroom condition; and less adequate facilities. Therefore, it is very necessary to discuss them in this part with connecting them to the relevant theories about demotivation's factors.

The first factor is personal belief to English lesson. The result of interview showed that the students believe that English is a difficult subject and it is hard for them to learn. The differences between English and Indonesian especially in term of grammar and vocabulary cause the students lose their motivation. As result, they tend to be passive and gave no response to the teacher's instruction. The belief is considered to influence the behaviour and choices of students and teachers in the teaching and learning process (Cephe & Yalcin, 2015). This factor makes the students judge negatively toward English in the first place. Then, Pratama (2020) supports that motivation and expectation as the most affecting factor causing personal belief about language learning. Therefore, every English teacher should be aware of the students' belief and make sure they have positive beliefs not the negative ones (Ismiati, et al., 2018).

The second factor causing demotivation is students' boredom. The class situation is often boring for the students. The teacher's

teaching strategies were often solely on using lecturing or question and answer only which caused student's boredom. In addition, English was taught in the midday or afternee so they students were already tired and sleepy. This finding confirms Ur as cited in Zahro' (2018) that the difficulties in learning English are because most of students getting bored quickly which this can be happened due to sometimes the teacher provides too long passage and it must be well interpreted by the students. In addition, Sa'diyah (2016) that there are several problems faced by students while they have English test such as boredom, anxiety, lack of motivation, and frustration.

The third factor is the way how the teacher delivers the material or is known as no fun teaching methods. The students seem not motivated in learning because the methods were not fun and monotonous. The use of teaching methods were limited to traditional ones such Grammar Translation Method and audio Lingual Method. According to Meshkat and Hassani (2012), five factors affect whether or not students are motivated to learn English, including the educational content and materials, the teachers' expertise and teaching methods, the school's accommodations, the student's intrinsic motivation, and test results. Arai (2004) and Hasegawa (2004), as cited in Keita Kikuchi, state that teacher's behavior have shown that teachers often discourage students from learning English, for instance the teacher has low communication competence, no teaching methods, and static class. This is in line with Johnson (2008) that students are demotivated towards their learning process due to teachers' behavior with the students that is the teachers do not have a good leadership quality, then students will be more demotivated towards learning process.

The fourth factor is Classroom condition. Another reason for students' demotivation is classroom condition which is not supporting for them. The class atmosphere is also quite important to engage the learning process. This is in line with Vogely quoted in Pan (2016)

that the cause demotivation is from learners' physical surroundings, such as a too hot or too cold room particularly when a room is too noisy, lacks oxygen or is small and cramped, consequently, one of the effects of environmental distraction can suddenly make students' concentration gone. Moreover, male students are the most demotivated than female due to discomfort of classroom. Mostly male students feel discomfort because of the heat temperature of room (Praštiyo, 2020). Losing concentration is also supported by Anandari (2015) that when the students with discomfort condition would tend to be easy losing the concentration in learning English. Therefore, managing the class to be comfortable from the first is needed.

The last factor is less adequate facilities. The school lacked of facilities because the focus is on its function as religious school. As such, the facilities are given more for religious teaching rather than for general knowledge teaching. This is talking about learning media which only using whiteboard, marker even no projector, laptop, sound system and others. The students claim that insufficient modern media in the classroom cannot reach a fun learning process. According to Dornyei & Ushioda (2011) unsupportive teaching equipment use has been claimed as one of the factors of demotivation students in English class. In line with that, Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) also indicated 'inadequate school facilities as the least demotivating factors. As a result, less adequate school facilities could make the students feel demotivated when learning English. While, good facilities in fact could help the students maintain their motivation hence they would feel supported when the facilities were properly provided (Suhartinah, 2021).

## **2. Strategies to Minimize Demotivation**

The second research finding was dealing with the students' strategies (Ss) in order to minimize demotivation in learning English. The data were from the result of the observation in the form of field note and interview in the form of interview transcript which had

already found originally from the field. The subject that observed and interviewed was students at the Islamic Boarding School of Tremas Pacitan. There were five subjects namely Student 1 (S1), Student 2 (S2), Student 3 (S3), Student 4 (S4), and Student 5 (S5).

Based on the investigation, it was found three strategies to to minimize demotivation in learning English. They were self-studying (Ss2), asking friends for help (Ss6), and ignore humiliating of classmates (Ss9). The findings of strategy can be clearly presented in the following table.

Table 2. The strategies to minimize demotivation

STUDENTS	STRATEGIES		
	Ss2	Ss6	Ss9
Student 1	√	√	-
Student 2	√	√	√
Student 3	√	√	√
Student 4	√	-	√
Student 5	√	√	-

This research finds several appropriate strategies and mostly used by students to minimize the feeling of demotivation namely self-studying; asking friends for help; and ignore humiliating of classmates. The first strategy is Self-studying. This strategy is mostly done by the students categorized into two, namely working task and bring the dictionary. Both are the forms of strategy to enhance their learning motivation. According to Kondo and Ying-Ling (2004) adds preparation or self-studying refers to attempt at controlling the impending threat by improving learning and study strategies (studying hard, trying to obtain good summaries of lecture notes) to increase students' subjectively estimated mastery of the subject matter, and reduce the less motivation in the language class. Furthermore, the analysis indicated that the students who are aware of their insufficient

language skills try to cope with demotivation by doing more practice and studying harder (Turhay. 2019).

The second strategy is asking friends for help. This strategy is aimed to reduce demotivation is done by asking friends for help. According to Ushioda (2001) peers may support each other by discussing their motivational issues and sharing their motivation solutions. It is proved that the existence of classmates can offer emotional support to students who are worried or demotivated (Aldwin, 1994). Moreover, Turgay (2019) highlights that low ability students mostly overcome demotivation experience in learning process by asking either friends for help to get more understanding about the task.

The last strategy to minimize demotivation is ignore humiliating of classmates. Classroom environment sometimes is hard for some students who got bullied or mocked by their classmates. Han et.al. (2019), students utilize this strategy to bring them to ignore humiliating or unfavorable attitudes of teachers or classmates, and think positively to deal with demotivation. In line with that, Turgay (2019) states that in order to deal with other students' humiliating and negative attitudes, demotivated students mostly try to ignore them.

## CONCLUSION

It turns out that demotivation is not only caused by internal factors but also external factors. Even external factors are more dominant than internal factors. Therefore, English teachers need to improve and even construct learning methods and facilities that support learning English and schools need to improve class facilities adequately. In addition, the teacher must also understand how to convince students that English is fun to learn.

Regarding the strategies to minimize demotivation, the students have several strategies to minimize it including self-studying, asking friends, and ignore humiliating of classmates. First, self-studying are

mostly done in form of preparation before English class and bringing also open the dictionary. Second, asking friends for certain conditions especially when the students don't know about the meaning of English words and translation of English sentences. The last strategy is ignoring humiliating of classmates.

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