

**STUDENT MOTIVATION IN CHOOSING THE ENGLISH EDUCATION MAJOR
AT THE FACULTY OF TADRIS AND TARBIYAH UIN FATMAWATI SUKARNO
BENGKULU BASED ON COHORT 2024**

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the motivations of students in choosing the English Education major at the Faculty of Tadris and Tarbiyah, UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu, cohort 2024, and to analyze their influence on academic achievement. This research employed a qualitative descriptive design using in-depth interviews with three students representing both male and female perspectives, supported by observations and relevant document studies. The findings reveal that student motivations differ according to gender: female students are primarily driven by intrinsic factors, such as personal interest in English, enjoyment of learning, and the aspiration to become educators, while male students tend to emphasize extrinsic factors, including career prospects, financial independence, and parental support. Some students exhibit a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, where personal interest is reinforced by external encouragement. Motivation was found to significantly impact academic achievement: intrinsic motivation fosters deep engagement, active participation, and additional learning efforts, whereas extrinsic motivation promotes goal-oriented behavior, discipline, and consistency in completing assignments. Understanding these motivational differences and their effects on academic performance is crucial for educators to design supportive learning environments that meet diverse student needs and enhance overall academic success.

Keywords: student motivation, English Education

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi motivasi mahasiswa dalam memilih jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di Fakultas Tadris dan Tarbiyah, UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu angkatan 2024 serta menganalisis pengaruhnya terhadap prestasi akademik. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian deskriptif kualitatif dengan wawancara mendalam terhadap tiga mahasiswa yang mewakili perspektif laki-laki dan perempuan, didukung oleh observasi dan studi

dokumentasi terkait. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa motivasi mahasiswa berbeda berdasarkan gender: mahasiswa perempuan didorong terutama oleh motivasi intrinsik, seperti minat pribadi terhadap bahasa Inggris, kesenangan dalam belajar, dan keinginan menjadi pendidik, sedangkan mahasiswa laki-laki cenderung menekankan motivasi ekstrinsik, termasuk prospek karier, kemandirian finansial, dan dukungan orang tua. Beberapa mahasiswa menunjukkan kombinasi motivasi intrinsik dan ekstrinsik, di mana minat pribadi diperkuat oleh dorongan eksternal. Motivasi terbukti berpengaruh signifikan terhadap prestasi akademik; motivasi intrinsik mendorong keterlibatan mendalam, partisipasi aktif, dan usaha belajar tambahan, sedangkan motivasi ekstrinsik mendorong perilaku berorientasi tujuan, disiplin, dan konsistensi dalam menyelesaikan tugas. Pemahaman terhadap perbedaan motivasi mahasiswa dan pengaruhnya terhadap prestasi akademik sangat penting bagi pendidik untuk merancang lingkungan belajar yang mendukung dan meningkatkan keberhasilan akademik secara keseluruhan.

Kata kunci: motivasi siswa, Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris

A. Introduction

Higher education in Indonesia is currently confronted with complex challenges, ranging from curriculum relevance to labor market demands to the persistent issue of low student motivation. In the era of globalization and rapid technological progress, graduates are expected not only to master theoretical knowledge but also to acquire practical skills, adaptability, and critical thinking competencies (World Bank, 2020; OECD, 2021). However, many students experience academic stagnation, diminished motivation, or even regret regarding their chosen field

of study. One major contributing factor is the tendency to select a major without careful consideration or sufficient information (Utomo & Wijayanti, 2022).

The decision to choose a study program has become increasingly strategic as the job market undergoes rapid transformation. Global economic shifts, digitalization, and workforce competition require students to be selective and forward-looking in determining their academic pathways (Siregar & Prasetyo, 2023). Among the study programs experiencing rising popularity is English Education. According to

the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud, 2023), the number of applicants for English Education programs increased by 15% in 2023 compared to the previous year. This reflects greater awareness of the importance of English proficiency in the global job market, while also raising an important question: What truly motivates students to choose this major?

At UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu, the English Education program (Tadris Bahasa Inggris) combines linguistic competence with Islamic values, aiming to produce graduates who are not only proficient in English but also possess strong ethical and spiritual foundations. This distinctive integration enables students to contribute meaningfully to both educational and social sectors. Nevertheless, preliminary observations and interviews with students in the 2024 cohort revealed diverse reasons for choosing the program. Some admitted following friends, others were influenced by parents, while a few were motivated by curiosity or a desire to secure university

admission. Such findings highlight the necessity of examining the underlying motivations of students in this context.

In educational psychology, motivation is commonly defined as the internal process that activates, guides, and sustains behavior in achieving goals (Slavin, 2018; Ormrod, 2016). It is generally classified into two categories: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation refers to internal drives such as interest, curiosity, and personal satisfaction, while extrinsic motivation stems from external influences including parental expectations, peer pressure, financial considerations, and career prospects (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ali, 2024). Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986) further emphasizes the role of self-efficacy and environmental factors, whereas Eccles and Wigfield's Expectancy-Value Theory (2002) posits that students' academic choices are shaped by their expectations of success and the value they place on certain tasks. These theoretical perspectives are essential for analyzing student decision-making in major selection.

Several studies in Indonesia have examined students' motivation in choosing academic programs. Safitri (2023), for example, found that students in the Hajj and Umrah Management program at UIN Walisongo Semarang were motivated by both intrinsic factors, such as personal interest, and extrinsic factors, such as career prospects and social influence. Similarly, Prastiwi (2023) revealed that expectations of future career opportunities strongly shaped students' decisions in the same field. International research also supports the significance of motivation; Ishikawa (2023) demonstrated that motivation strongly predicts persistence and achievement among language learners. Despite these contributions, limited research has been conducted on student motivation in English Education programs, particularly within Islamic higher education institutions.

Given these realities, this study seeks to investigate the motivations of students in choosing the English Education major at the Faculty of Tadris and Tarbiyah,

UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu, focusing on the 2024 cohort. Specifically, it aims to identify intrinsic and extrinsic factors influencing their decisions and to analyze how these motivations reflect their academic engagement and expectations. The findings are expected to enrich the understanding of student decision-making in higher education and provide valuable insights for curriculum development, academic guidance, and institutional strategies.

B. Research Methodology

This study employed a qualitative descriptive method, which was deemed suitable for exploring the motivations of students in choosing the English Education program. A qualitative approach allows the researcher to describe social phenomena holistically, focusing on students' experiences, perceptions, and personal reasons rather than relying on numerical data. According to Bogdan and Taylor in Safitri (2023), qualitative research produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from observed participants. This

method was selected because the aim of the research was not to test or prove a particular theory, but to describe and analyze the intrinsic and extrinsic factors influencing students' decisions.

The study was conducted at the English Education Department, Faculty of Tadris and Tarbiyah, UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu, located in Pagar Dewa, Bengkulu City. The participants were third-semester students from the 2024 cohort. They were selected using purposive sampling based on specific criteria, namely being active students with sufficient academic experience to provide relevant insights into the research topic. In total, three students were chosen to participate in this study. Data were primarily gathered through unstructured in-depth interviews, allowing the researcher to follow a flexible interview guide and explore participants' responses more deeply. Additional data were obtained through observation of students' academic activities and documentation such as institutional archives and study records, which supported and validated the interview findings.

Data analysis was carried out using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which involves three steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Sugiyono, 2016). During data reduction, the raw information collected from the field was simplified and classified to focus on the most relevant aspects of student motivation. The data were then displayed in descriptive narratives and tables to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusions were drawn by comparing participants' statements with theoretical frameworks and previous studies, followed by verification to ensure accuracy. To establish the validity of the data, triangulation of sources, techniques, and time was applied. Information obtained from interviews was cross-checked with observation and documentation results. In addition, supporting materials such as institutional documents were used to strengthen the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.

C. Finding and Discussion

- a. Factors influencing student motivation in choosing the English Language Education major at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu.

The results indicate that students' decision to choose the English Language Education major was influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Intrinsic factors appeared to be the most dominant, as many students expressed genuine interest and curiosity toward English. One participant stated, *"I have loved English since high school. I want to improve my skills and become a teacher who inspires others to learn English."* Another explained, *"I was curious to study English more deeply at the university level."* These responses suggest that personal passion, enjoyment, and self-development were central motivations for students in selecting this major.

In addition, extrinsic factors also played a significant role. Parental support, social expectations, and career opportunities were often cited as external influences. For example, one student shared, *"My parents suggested this major*

because they said teaching English is valuable and needed everywhere." Another remarked, *"Nowadays English is very important. If we master it, we can get more chances, whether as a teacher or in other jobs."* Such statements demonstrate that family encouragement and the perception of English as a global skill reinforced students' choices.

Peer influence and institutional factors further shaped motivation. Several respondents mentioned that they chose the program because their friends did so as well, with one noting, *"Many of my friends also chose English Education, so I felt more confident choosing it too."* Others pointed to the program's accreditation, affordable tuition, or the inspiration gained from high school English teachers. Interestingly, a few students also connected their decision with religious and social values. As one interviewee expressed, *"I want to help students in my village learn English because I believe knowledge is also part of serving Allah."*

Nevertheless, not all choices were based on strong interest. A small number of students admitted that English Education was not their first choice, but an alternative after failing in another program. One participant reflected, *“Actually, this was not my first choice, but since I did not pass in the other program, I decided to take English Education. Now I try to adapt and like it.”* These cases illustrate how extrinsic circumstances, such as admission outcomes, can also shape students’ academic paths.

Overall, the findings highlight that motivation is multifaceted. While intrinsic interest remains the strongest factor, extrinsic influences such as parental support, peer pressure, institutional reputation, and even religious values play important complementary roles in guiding students’ academic decisions.

- b. The differences in motivation between male and female students in choosing the English

Language Education major at UINFAS Bengkulu

The study also revealed notable differences between male and female students in their motivational orientations when choosing the English Language Education major. Male students tended to emphasize extrinsic factors such as career opportunities, financial independence, and future-oriented goals. For example, one male participant explained, *“I chose English Education because I believe English is essential for the future. Mastering English will allow me to work not only as a teacher but also in fields like tourism or international business. I want to be independent and prepared for the challenges ahead.”* This statement reflects a pragmatic approach, where the choice of major is closely tied to external rewards and professional prospects.

In contrast, female students demonstrated a stronger inclination toward intrinsic motivation, often highlighting personal interest and passion for

English as the main reasons behind their decision. One female participant expressed, *"I have loved English since junior high school. My English teacher inspired me a lot. She made learning fun, and I want to be like her and inspire other students."* This account illustrates how personal satisfaction, enjoyment, and the aspiration to inspire others serve as powerful internal drivers for female students.

Some female participants also reported a blend of intrinsic and extrinsic influences. For instance, one student stated, *"My parents suggested I choose English Education because teaching is a noble profession. At first, I was unsure, but their support motivated me to focus on this major. Over time, I also developed my own interest in English."* This shows how external encouragement, such as parental guidance, can reinforce and eventually nurture intrinsic motivation.

Overall, the findings suggest that male students are more likely to view English Education as a pathway toward practical benefits and

independence, while female students emphasize passion, enjoyment, and social contribution. However, when intrinsic and extrinsic factors combine—such as personal interest supported by family encouragement—students exhibit stronger motivation and commitment to their studies.

- c. The influence of this motivation on the academic achievement of UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu students

The findings also demonstrate that motivation has a direct impact on students' academic achievement in the English Language Education program. Intrinsic motivation, such as personal interest and passion for English, encouraged students to study diligently and engage actively in learning activities. One female participant shared, *"I have always loved English, and my dream is to teach and inspire students, just like my teacher inspired me. Because of this, I try to study hard, participate in class discussions, and practice English outside of school."* This illustrates how intrinsic motivation drives

persistence, enthusiasm, and deeper engagement with learning tasks.

Extrinsic motivation also shaped students' academic behaviors, particularly among male participants. For example, one student explained, *"I focus on studying English because I know mastering it will help me get a better job in the future. I want to be independent, so I study regularly and complete my assignments because my future depends on it."* Such statements highlight how external goals, such as career opportunities and financial stability, encourage students to adopt structured study habits and disciplined learning approaches.

Some students combined both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, resulting in the strongest academic outcomes. One female participant admitted, *"At first, I wasn't sure about this major, but my parents encouraged me. Over time, I developed my own interest in English, and now I study diligently and try to participate actively."* This indicates that

while extrinsic support provided initial direction, intrinsic motivation later sustained engagement and learning satisfaction.

Overall, the findings suggest that intrinsic motivation fosters creativity, enjoyment, and active participation, while extrinsic motivation promotes discipline, goal orientation, and consistency. When these two forms of motivation interact, students show higher persistence, better performance, and greater satisfaction in their studies.

D. Discussion

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the complex nature of student motivation in choosing the English Language Education major at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations were identified, and their interplay significantly shaped students' academic engagement and performance. Intrinsic motivation, reflected in personal interest, curiosity, and passion for English, was shown to be

the dominant factor among many students. This is consistent with Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which emphasizes that intrinsic drives foster persistence, resilience, and deeper engagement with learning activities. Students who selected the program based on personal passion expressed stronger satisfaction and showed proactive involvement in their academic pursuits.

At the same time, extrinsic motivation also played an important role, particularly in relation to career prospects, parental encouragement, and peer influence. These findings align with Expectancy-Value Theory, which highlights how individuals weigh the perceived benefits of their academic choices, such as future employment opportunities and social recognition. The study further confirmed the significant role of family in shaping educational decisions, which resonates with the Indonesian cultural context where parental guidance is highly influential. Peer support and the presence of inspiring teachers also reinforced extrinsic motivation, demonstrating how social environments shape students' academic pathways.

Gender differences were also evident in students' motivational orientations. Male students tended to emphasize extrinsic outcomes, such as career opportunities, independence, and financial security, whereas female students were more strongly driven by intrinsic factors, including personal interest in English and the aspiration to inspire others as teachers. This distinction is consistent with previous studies that suggest men are often more pragmatic and future-oriented, while women place greater emphasis on relational and value-based considerations in education. However, cases where intrinsic and extrinsic motivations complemented each other, particularly among female students, produced the most positive academic outcomes, underscoring the importance of integrating both motivational drivers.

The influence of motivation on academic achievement was clearly demonstrated in this study. Students with strong intrinsic motivation engaged more actively in class discussions, independent study, and supplementary learning activities, while extrinsically motivated students displayed disciplined study habits and

goal-oriented behavior. The combination of these motivations proved to be the most effective, as students who experienced both personal passion and external support reported higher satisfaction and stronger academic performance. These findings suggest that motivation is not static but dynamic, shaped by personal, social, and institutional factors.

Overall, this study highlights that understanding students' motivational profiles is crucial for improving educational strategies in the English Language Education program. By acknowledging the diverse interplay of intrinsic and extrinsic factors, as well as gendered differences, educators and administrators can design targeted interventions to enhance engagement, provide mentorship, and strengthen both academic and career preparation. In doing so, the program can better support students in achieving not only academic excellence but also long-term professional fulfillment.

D. Conclusion

This study investigated the motivations of students in choosing

the English Language Education major at the Faculty of Tadris and Tarbiyah, UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu, cohort 2024. The findings revealed that students' decisions were influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, with intrinsic motivation such as personal interest, curiosity, and passion for English emerging as the dominant driver. Extrinsic motivations, including parental encouragement, peer influence, program accreditation, and career opportunities, also played an important role in reinforcing students' choices.

Gender differences were evident, as male students generally emphasized extrinsic benefits such as independence and future employment, while female students prioritized intrinsic factors, including personal enjoyment and the aspiration to inspire others. However, cases where intrinsic and extrinsic motivations interacted produced the most favorable academic outcomes, highlighting the importance of supporting both motivational dimensions. The study further demonstrated that motivation significantly influenced academic

achievement. Intrinsically motivated students displayed greater persistence, active engagement, and creativity in their learning, whereas extrinsically motivated students exhibited disciplined, goal-oriented study habits. Students who benefited from both forms of motivation achieved the highest levels of performance and satisfaction, underscoring the dynamic interplay between personal interests and external reinforcement.

In conclusion, motivation represents a key determinant of students' academic choices and performance in higher education. Understanding the diverse motivational factors—ranging from personal passion to family expectations and cultural values—provides valuable insights for educators and administrators. Strengthening both intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of motivation through targeted guidance, mentorship, and institutional support can enhance student engagement, retention, and success in the English Language Education program.

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