

An Exploration of 11th Grade Students' Intrinsic Motivation in Learning English in SMKN 1 Bukittinggi

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Abstract : This study examines the level and factors influencing students' intrinsic motivation in learning English at SMKN 1 Bukittinggi, specifically among 11th-grade students who struggled to meet academic standards and showed low interest in independent learning. An explanatory sequential mixed-method approach was employed, using questionnaires and interviews. The instruments were tested for construct validity and test-retest reliability. Results showed that the majority of students had moderate intrinsic motivation, with 12% displaying high motivation, 79% moderate, and 9% low. Key factors identified were strong character traits such as integrity and responsibility, self-awareness, mental resilience, and effective coping strategies for overcoming failures. These findings suggest that students' intrinsic motivation is influenced by personal qualities and their ability to handle challenges, which play a crucial role in their engagement and persistence in learning English as a foreign language.

Keywords: Intrinsic Motivation, Learning English

Abstrak : Penelitian ini mengkaji tingkat dan faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi motivasi intrinsik siswa dalam belajar Bahasa Inggris di SMKN 1 Bukittinggi, khususnya pada siswa kelas 11 yang seringkali gagal memenuhi standar akademik minimum dan menunjukkan minat rendah dalam belajar Bahasa Inggris secara mandiri. Pendekatan metode campuran eksplanatori sekuensial digunakan, dengan pengumpulan data melalui kuesioner dan wawancara. Instrumen diuji untuk validitas konstruk dan reliabilitas uji ulang. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar siswa memiliki motivasi intrinsik tingkat sedang, dengan 12% kategori motivasi tinggi, 79% sedang, dan 9% rendah. Faktor utama yang mempengaruhi motivasi mereka meliputi karakter kuat seperti integritas, tanggung jawab, kesadaran diri, ketahanan mental, dan strategi koping yang efektif untuk mengatasi kegagalan. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa motivasi intrinsik siswa dipengaruhi oleh kualitas pribadi dan kemampuan mereka dalam menghadapi tantangan, yang berperan penting dalam keterlibatan dan ketekunan mereka dalam belajar Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing.

Kata kunci: Motivasi Intrinsik, Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris

1. INTRODUCTION

Motivation is a critical determinant of students' achievement throughout the learning process, particularly in language acquisition. Educators are encouraged to implement diverse strategies to sustain student motivation, including providing constructive feedback, acknowledging accomplishments, and fostering a nurturing classroom atmosphere. Enhanced motivation in students' lives increases their potential for academic improvement (Genta, 2024). The presence of motivation-especially intrinsic motivation-correlates with students' enjoyment of learning and their active engagement in classroom activities (Uno & Mohamad,

2022). Motivated learners typically exhibit greater concentration, accountability, and eagerness to learn. Anita and Kardena (2001) conceptualize motivation as the encouragement derived from individuals or groups that propels one to achieve desired goals through beliefs, drives, needs, passions, or psychological mechanisms. Dewi (2017) characterizes intrinsic motivation as students' engagement in learning driven by the intent to apply knowledge for future career prospects, academic performance, and rewards.

According to Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory, intrinsic motivation refers to the inherent desire to participate in an activity for its own sake, independent of external incentives or pressures (Deci & Ryan, 2017). This form of motivation is particularly significant in English language learning, where curiosity, interest, and personal fulfillment motivate students to practice and enhance their skills. Empirical studies indicate that intrinsic motivation facilitates sustained learning, fosters resilience, and cultivates a deeper comprehension of the subject matter (Nurhidayah, 2020; Susanto, 2018). Irwandi (2015), in the journal article "Achieving Good Grade And Good Heart: A Strategy of Developing Soft Skills In English Language Teaching," posits that altering students' motivation in second language learning constitutes a component of soft skills development. This underscores the importance for educators to nurture students' motivation, particularly intrinsic motivation, during the learning process. Conversely, extrinsic motivation is influenced by external factors (Fitriani & Reflinda, 2024).

Despite the recognized importance of intrinsic motivation, many students encounter difficulties in sustaining it. Preliminary observations and interviews conducted at SMKN 1 Bukittinggi between May and July 2024 revealed several challenges. Firstly, some students did not achieve the minimum academic threshold in English despite regular attendance and apparent classroom participation. Achievement Goal Theory suggests that students oriented toward mastery goals tend to attain higher performance due to increased engagement and goal-directed behavior (Chazan et al., 2022). Secondly, issues concerning responsibility were apparent; some students admitted to copying assignments from peers or completing tasks during school hours rather than at home. From the teachers' perspective, such behavior is prevalent and indicative of diminished intrinsic motivation. Harmer (2007) explains that motivation shapes students' responsibility and willingness to complete tasks autonomously; a lack of intrinsic motivation often leads to avoidance of effort and reliance on shortcuts. Thirdly, students' interest in English varied considerably. Some reported paying attention

primarily to avoid reprimands rather than out of genuine interest, indicating that external pressures rather than internal motivation were driving their engagement. Expectancy-Value Theory posits that students are motivated when they perceive both competence and value in the task (Jones & Hite, 2020). Without personal relevance, intrinsic motivation is unlikely to develop.

These findings highlight a prevalent issue: students may appear engaged superficially, yet their intrinsic motivation is insufficient. This deficit influences the depth of their interaction with learning materials and may explain discrepancies between classroom behavior and academic outcomes. Based on theoretical frameworks and empirical data, this study contends that a portion of 11th-grade students at SMKN 1 Bukittinggi exhibit low intrinsic motivation in English language learning. Consequently, the research aims to assess the level of intrinsic motivation among these students and identify factors affecting their motivation in the English learning context.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-method design, as proposed by Creswell (2018), where quantitative data collection and analysis are followed by qualitative inquiry to explain the initial findings more deeply. This design allows the researcher to first assess general trends through surveys and then explore students' personal experiences and motivations in more detail via interviews.

The research was conducted at SMKN 1 Bukittinggi, a vocational school located in Bukittinggi, West Sumatra. The focus was on eleventh-grade students, a population comprising 692 students across 25 classes and 9 majors during the 2023/2024 academic year. Using cluster random sampling, the researcher selected 69 students from three different classes—XI TEI 1, XI TKP 2, and XI TGEO 1—to ensure a manageable yet representative sample of the larger group.

Data were gathered from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data consisted of questionnaire responses and student interviews, while secondary data were drawn from existing literature related to student motivation in EFL contexts. The main instruments used were a 27-item adapted questionnaire based on previous validated studies and semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions focusing on intrinsic motivation. The questionnaire used a 4-point Likert scale (ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree), and the analysis categorized students' motivation levels into high, moderate, or low based on the total scores.

To ensure accuracy, construct validity was assessed by three expert validators using Aiken's V index, and inter-rater reliability was employed to maintain consistency in interview coding and interpretation. The questionnaire data were processed in Microsoft Excel using basic statistical formulas to determine mean scores, while interview responses were analyzed through thematic analysis. This included steps such as transcription, coding, theme identification, and interpretation, enabling the researcher to identify recurring patterns related to intrinsic motivation—such as interest, autonomy, or external pressures.

This study utilized an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design as outlined by Creswell (2018), which involves an initial phase of quantitative data collection and analysis followed by a qualitative phase aimed at elaborating and contextualizing the quantitative findings. This methodological approach enables the researcher to first identify broad patterns through surveys and subsequently gain deeper insights into students' personal experiences and motivational factors via interviews.

The research was conducted at SMKN 1 Bukittinggi, a vocational school in Bukittinggi, West Sumatra, focusing on eleventh-grade students during the 2023/2024 academic year. The population consisted of 692 students distributed across 25 classes and 9 majors. Employing cluster random sampling, the study selected 69 students from three classes-XI TEI 1, XI TKP 2, and XI TGEO 1-to ensure a representative and manageable sample size reflective of the larger cohort.

Data collection incorporated both primary and secondary sources. Primary data comprised responses to a 27-item adapted questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, while secondary data were derived from relevant literature on student motivation in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. The questionnaire employed a 4-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, with total scores categorizing students' motivation levels as high, moderate, or low. The interview protocol included open-ended questions specifically designed to explore intrinsic motivation in greater depth.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments, construct validity was evaluated by three expert validators using Aiken's V index, and inter-rater reliability procedures were applied to maintain consistency in interview coding and interpretation. Quantitative data were analyzed using basic statistical functions in Microsoft Excel to calculate mean scores, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis involving transcription, coding, theme identification, and interpretation. This rigorous process facilitated the identification of recurring themes related to intrinsic motivation, such as interest, autonomy, and external influences.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative data provided a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing students' intrinsic motivation in English learning, allowing the researcher to explain and contextualize the patterns observed in the survey results. This mixed-methods approach thus afforded a nuanced perspective on the motivational dynamics within the studied student population.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Data Analysis

a) Reliability

The study employed inter-rater reliability to guarantee consistency in the classification of students' responses during the interview analysis. Two independent raters systematically coded the data according to predefined categories, and the level of agreement between them was quantified using Cohen's Kappa statistic. The resulting high Cohen's Kappa value indicated a substantial concordance between raters, thereby ensuring that the findings are both reliable and replicable. This rigorous approach enhances the accuracy of representing students' perspectives in the analysis.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis Results

Testing Criteria	Reference Value	Cronbach's Alpha	Conclusion
0.7	1.03	RELIABLE	

b) Validity

To establish the validity of the research instrument, it was evaluated by three experts, whose assessments were quantified using Aiken's V index. The results demonstrated a high level of agreement regarding the relevance of the instrument's items, thereby confirming that the instrument accurately measures the intended construct.

Table 2: Validity Analysis Results

Statements	Validator 1	Validator 2	Validator 3	Σs	n(c-1)	V	Description
S1-S27	130	135	121	305	324	0.9	Very High Validation

The intrinsic motivation of students at SMK 1 Bukittinggi was examined, revealing a generally moderate level of motivation across various sub-variables. These sub-variables

were assessed through students' responses to a structured questionnaire, with mean scores indicating that most areas reflected moderate intrinsic motivation. To classify the overall motivation level, the mean scores from the questionnaire were calculated and interpreted to determine whether students' motivation in learning English was high, moderate, or low. This scoring classification provides a systematic framework for understanding the motivational status of the students in relation to their English language learning.

OPTION	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	615	34
Agree	1043	57
Disagree	155	8
Strongly Disagree	21	1
TOTAL	1834	100

 Table 3 : Students' Frequency in Learning English

Table 3 illustrates that 34% of the students expressed strong agreement, 57% agreed, 8% disagreed, and 1% strongly disagreed. These findings indicate that the majority of students demonstrate a positive level of intrinsic motivation toward learning English.

Interval	Categories	F	%
96	High Motivation	13	19
67 S/D 96	Moderate Motivation	40	58
69	Low Motivation	16	23
TOTAL		69	100

Table 4 : Students' Intrinsic Motivation in Learning English

Table 4 indicates that the intrinsic motivation of eleventh-grade students at SMKN 1 Bukittinggi predominantly falls within the moderate level. This suggests that, overall, students exhibit a moderate degree of intrinsic motivation in their English language learning.

2. Data Description

To investigate the underlying causes of low intrinsic motivation in learning English among eleventh-grade students at SMK 1 Bukittinggi, the researcher conducted interviews with 13 students selected based on their questionnaire responses. The qualitative data revealed several critical factors contributing to diminished intrinsic motivation. These included inconsistent learning habits, as many students perceived English as excessively difficult; limited self-awareness, with few students engaging in reflective practices about their strengths and weaknesses; and a narrow worldview, where some students failed to recognize the practical value of English for their future careers. Additionally, a lack of mental complexity was evident, often attributable to minimal exposure to English in home or peer environments. Furthermore, students exhibited passive responses to academic setbacks, frequently ignoring errors rather than using them as learning opportunities. Collectively, these factors contributed to the observed low levels of intrinsic motivation.

Conversely, the data analysis indicated that most students at SMK 1 Bukittinggi possess a moderate degree of intrinsic motivation toward learning English. This motivation is fostered by strong character habits, heightened self-awareness, and an expansive worldview that acknowledges English as a global language. A supportive learning environment further enhances their motivation. Moreover, students' intrinsic interest, curiosity, enjoyment of learning activities, and the desire to acquire knowledge serve as additional motivational drivers.

These findings align with broader research identifying both internal and external factors influencing students' motivation in English language learning. Internal factors such as self-efficacy, personal goals, and cognitive engagement have been shown to enhance motivation, while external factors including family and school environments also play significant roles. The interplay of these elements underscores the complexity of motivation and highlights the need for multifaceted strategies to support learners' intrinsic motivation in EFL contexts.

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The data analysis indicates that the majority of students at SMKN 1 Bukittinggi demonstrate a moderate level of intrinsic motivation to learn English. Several factors contribute to this motivation. First, strong character habits, such as integrity and responsibility, play a crucial role in fostering sustained engagement. Second, students' self-awareness enables them to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses, facilitating more effective learning strategies. Third, a broad worldview, wherein students perceive English as a global language, enhances their appreciation of its relevance. Additionally, a supportive

environment, particularly encouragement from family members, provides essential reinforcement for continued learning.

Beyond these factors, students' intrinsic motivation is further augmented by their interest, curiosity, and enjoyment in learning activities. Elements such as well-structured teacher discourse, opportunities for active participation, and positive self-reflection contribute to making the learning experience more engaging and rewarding. Moreover, the students' intrinsic drive is fueled by their desire to acquire knowledge and improve their skills, which motivates them to persist in learning English.

These findings are consistent with existing research highlighting the multifaceted nature of motivation in language learning. Internal factors-including personal interest, selfefficacy, and cognitive engagement-are significant motivators, while external influences such as family support and educational context also play important roles. Recognizing these diverse factors is essential for developing effective strategies to enhance students' intrinsic motivation in English language learning contexts.

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