**Demotivation: The Unseen Side of Vocational High School Students’ Motivation in Learning English**

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**Abstract:** This descriptive qualitative study aimed to investigate the demotivating factors experienced by vocational high school students in learning English. Nineteen students of Department of Graphic Production students of SMKN 4 Malang were involved as research participants. The findings revealed that the students experienced both internal and external demotivation. External demotivation was more dominant compared to internal demotivation. External demotivation fell into four themes—i.e., teacher’s behaviour and competence, teacher’s teaching method, learning environment, and the materials of English lesson; while internal demotivation fell into three themes—i.e., students’ attitude toward English, students’ experience of failure, and students’ self-esteem. It is suggested that teacher should improve their awareness of this phenomenon and expected that proper treatment from the teacher can minimize students’ demotivation in learning English.

**Key Words:** demotivation, demotivating factors, internal demotivation, external demotivation

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**INTRODUCTION**

There is a long history of motivation in language learning. It is believed that motivation is an important key in determining students’ success in learning language. Dörnyei (1998) states that motivation is considered as one of the key success factors in second or foreign language learning. Motivation can be defined as positive drives that help students to achieve their best in learning a language. It provides the primary impetus to initiate learning the second language and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process. Harmer (2001) defines motivation as a kind of an internal drive to encourage the individual to pursue a course of action. However, as important as motivation, there is another side of motivation which student has encountered: the demotivation.

Demotivation is relatively new in the field of motivation in foreign language learning. This dark side of motivation or demotivation has almost been ignored in second and foreign language learning (Muhonen, 2004). Demotivation concerns negative influences that reduce or cancel out motivation (Dörnyei, 2001b). Moreover, demotivation describes the psychological state of students who was previously motivated to learn and successfully reach sets goals, but who is now affected by internal and/or external fac-
tors that restrict his or her full progress (Bednárová, 2011, p. 29). These demotivating factors or demotives are, in fact, the “negative counterparts of motives” (Yan, 2009, p. 109). Students might encounter this phenomenon. Some studies show that students do experience demotivation.

Thi Thu Trang and Baldauf-Jr (2007) investigated 100 second-year EFL students from a University of Economics in central Vietnam. Students were asked to recall their English learning experiences, to think back across the whole learning process, and then to write a three part essay in Vietnamese. The study found out that the internal demotivating factors were students’ experiences of failures or lack of success comprised 17%, students’ attitudes toward English comprised 16%, and students’ self-esteem comprised 3%. While the external factors were teacher-related factors comprised 38%, learning environment comprised 21%, and others comprised 5%. Based on their study, the external factors likely had more contribution in students’ demotivation compared to the internal factors.

The same research was conducted by Kikuchi and Sakai (2009); they investigated the cause of demotivation in Japanese context especially for university students. They distributed 35 item questionnaire to 112 English learners. They found out that course book, inadequate school facilities, test scores, non-communicative methods, teachers’ competence and teaching styles influenced students’ demotivation.

Jung (2011) investigated the demotivating and remotivating factors in the college students’ past English learning experiences and to explore the effective English class for low level students based on the research results. The 125 students participated in a reflective student questionnaire, and the students’ responses are analyzed through descriptive statistics. The major demotivators and remotivators were identified according to four categories: external, internal, learning situation (classroom/outside classroom), and learner. The research findings showed that in demotivation process, external factors influenced more than internal factors, and learning situation factors affected more than learner factors. In contrast, in remotivation process, internal factors more affected than external factors and students’ desire to be good at English and their awareness of the usefulness of English mostly affected their remotivation.

Molavi (2012) conducted a study related to demotivation of Iranian Seminary Students. Fifty Iranian students were involved in his investigation. They investigated using two validated questionnaires. First, a modified version of The Attitude/Motivation Test Battery Questionnaire (AMTB) originally developed by Gardner (2004) was used to determine the degree of learners’ motivation. Second, a modified version of Warrington’s (2005) questionnaire was administered to determine the demotivating factors from the students’ point of view. The result revealed that factors such as the improper method of English teaching, frequency of classes in a week, problems in understanding listening materials and lack of use of English in students’ real life were found to be the essential demotivating factors among Iranian seminary students.

Al-Khairy (2013) conducted a study investigating the common factors that are perceived as demotivating by Saudi university undergraduates. The sample of this study responded to a 23-item self-structured questionnaire to record their demotivational factors towards learning English as a foreign language. The results reported that Saudi university undergraduates felt demotivated because of the factors which include textbooks, English faculty behaviors, peer pressure, teaching methods, insufficient use of modern teaching aids, and difficult English vocabulary and grammar.

Most studies mentioned above only dealt with demotivating factors faced by the students, but there is one thing that also crucial to be considered which is the demotivation from teachers’ point a view. Soaresjani & Riahipour (2012) had already talked about this issue. 215 Iranian male and female EFL learners and teachers were selected in the pre- and post-stages of the study to fill in the two developed questionnaires (one pertaining to students and one for teachers) on demotivating factors of speaking skill. It was revealed that students believe that factors related to teachers, equipment and class utility were the three most demotivating factors as far as speaking skill is concerned. Besides, based on teachers’ perspective, the three most discouraging factors were related to teachers, time and classroom. From this study it can be concluded that demotivation did not only happen to students but also to the teachers as well.

To sum up, the previous studies mainly dealt with the internal and external factors of demotivation. However, no prior research, particularly in Indonesian context has been found. Since most of the studies are conducted abroad in university level and no data
has been found on the factors that cause students’ demotivation in Indonesian context especially in secondary level, thus this study attempts to investigate the demotivating factors among Vocational High School Students particularly the twelfth graders in learning English. The study was administered in Vocational High School 4 Malang with the following issue being addressed: What are the factors which contribute to students’ demotivation in learning English?

Before conducting this research, the researcher has drawn her own view about students’ demotivation based on observation and informal interview. The result showed that students experienced both internal and external demotivation. The external factors are: (1) teacher’s behavior; (2) the teaching methods; (3) learning environment; and (4) the materials of English course. From the internal side, the factors of demotivation are in the form of: (1) students’ attitude toward English; (2) students’ experience of failure, and (3) students’ self-esteem.

**METHOD**

The aim of this research was to find deeper information about the factors that demotivate students in secondary level especially in vocational high school students; therefore, this research relied on the participants’ views on the topic being studied. Based on the aim of this research, the suitable method was qualitative. Creswell (2009) explained that qualitative research is a means of exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The reasons for selecting a qualitative research were proposed by Creswell (2009): (1) **Natural Setting**, this study will be conducted at school where the participants experience the issue or problem under study; (2) **Researcher as a Key Instrument**, in this study the researcher is the one who collect the data; (3) **Multiple Source of Data**, this study will utilize questionnaire and interview to gather the data; (4) **Inductive Data Analysis**, this study will employ bottom up analysis by organizing the data into increasingly more abstract units of information; (5) **Participants’ Meaning**, the researcher will keep a focus on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem or issue; (6) **Interpretive**, in this study, the researcher makes an interpretation of what she sees, hears, and understands.

This study was a descriptive qualitative study because it examined and described in detail about the phenomenon of demotivation among vocational high school students.

**Research Instrument**

In this study the researcher used questionnaire and interview guide as the instrument. There were two kinds of questionnaire which were employed. The first questionnaire was a single-item questionnaire with three options to be chosen. It was employed to find out students who were indicated of experiencing demotivation. The second questionnaire was a 30-items questionnaire which was developed based on criteria of demotivation proposed by Thi Thu Trang and Baldauf, Jr (2007) consisting of internal and external factors of demotivation. The questionnaire consisted of 30 items of yes/no questions. The questionnaires which were distributed to the students used Bahasa Indonesia in order to avoid misunderstanding about the questions.

Another instrument used was interview guide. This kind of instrument was used to attain detailed information about students demotivation. The interview was done in Bahasa Indonesia and in the form of a semi-structured and a focus-group interview.

**Participants**

The participants of this research were the twelve graders of Vocational High School 4 Malang of 2016/2017 academic year. Not all the twelve graders from all the departments were chosen but only some students from Graphic Preparation who were assumed of experiencing demotivation. The list of students who got demotivated was gained from the teacher’s information who taught the class about students’ score. The reason underlying the selection was based on the assumption that the twelve graders had already familiar with the teachers, the school environment, the school system, and the English materials so there was possibility that the researcher acquired rich data.

**Source of Data**

The data of this study gathered from students’ responses toward the questions related to demotivation in learning English. The first questionnaire used as the initial study as the cue for researcher to detect
students who were demotivated. The questionnaires were distributed only to students of Graphic preparation of which average daily scores were low. The criteria of low score was based on the score which was far under the standard school score which was 75. It is in line with a research conducted by Muhonen (2004) which states that there is a relationship between students’ achievement and their demotivation. Then, the second questionnaires were handed out to students who were detected as demotivated students. Another data of this study was from the results of the focus group interview between the students and the researcher.

The sources of the data in this study were 19 twelve graders of the Department of Graphic Preparation of Public Vocational High School 4 Malang in the academic year of 2016/2017.

Data Collection

There were three steps in the process of collecting the data. First, the researcher examined the daily score of six classes from Graphic Preparation department. The score was gained from all teachers who were teaching the twelve graders of graphic preparation. She then counted the average daily score of every class and selected one class which had the lowest achievement. As stated before by Muhonen (2004) that students’ demotivation influences their achievement.

Second, the researcher distributed the single-item questionnaires to all students who belong the lowest class. The questionnaire was used as an initial study to find students who experienced demotivation in learning English. From the first questionnaire, it was found numbers of students who were indicated of having demotivation. Next, the researcher distributed the 30-item questionnaires to students who got demotivated.

Third, the researcher conducted an interview. To know students’ opinion about their experiences on demotivation and to deepen the result from the questionnaires, the researcher employed focus group interview to students who were detected of having demotivation that were gained from the result of the questionnaires. The interview involved interview guide with some open-ended questions. This semi-structured interview allows the researcher to manage the questions without having to follow any specific, predetermined order (Grix, 2004). The researcher recorded information from the interview by making notes and audio-recording.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data of the research, the researcher employed the procedures of data analysis suggested by Miles and Huberman (1984)

Data Reduction

Data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, summarizing, coding, sorting, or even making cluster of theme (Miles & Huberman, 1984). In this study, not all the data gathered from the questionnaire and interviews were displayed. The researcher reduced and selected the data which were appropriate to answer the research problems being investigated in this study. In other words, the data which were not relevant were discarded.

The main data of this study was from students’ responses on the questionnaires and the interview. The researcher did the tally to students’ responses from the questionnaires and count the percentage of each factor which caused students got demotivated in learning English. Then, the researcher listened to the audio recording from the interview and made notes of important responses which were related of the questions of this study. From the two instruments the researcher coded the types of demotivating factors. The data analysis was done without waiting all data being obtained. Once the data were collected and coded, they was categorized and then analysed.

Data Display

Data display refers to an organized assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action talking (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The researcher classified the types of demotivating factors. Not all the transcription from the interview were shown in finding report; instead the researcher only picked the transcription that represent the demotivating factors for further explanation. In this study, the selected data was displayed in the form of narrative text.

Conclusion Drawing

Conclusion drawing can be done through a process of noting regularities, patterns, explanations, possible configurations, causal flows, and proposition (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The conclusion of this study was made during the data collection and when the data collection and the data analysis were completed.

In this study, the researcher made a summary of the analysis. The analysis was written based on the analysis of the questionnaires and interviews. The study...
RESULTS

The first instrument was distributed to thirty-two students of Department of Graphic Preparation who were low achievers. This essay question was distributed to find out the students who might encounter demotivation, then, analyzed. From the analysis, it was found that fifteen students were indicated of having demotivation. Those students mentioned that they actually liked English but then their interest of English was decreasing. From students’ responses, it was revealed that students were demotivated because they did not really feel comfortable with their teacher’s way of teaching. They also felt that some of their friends did not cooperate enough in learning because they kept on talking when the teacher explained something, and it was worsened because it seemed that the teacher could not manage the class well. Another reason was about the English materials. Students said that lately, they had to learn almost the same things in every single meeting. Teacher kept on giving them packs of exercises with the same method. Based on those reasons, what students experienced belonged to external factors of demotivation. But, in fact, students were also demotivated because they experienced failure in learning English so it affected their attitude toward the lesson. Students’ self-esteem was another issue that they have to encounter. From those reasons stated by the students, it can be concluded that they experienced external and internal demotivation.

To strengthen the results of the essay question, the second questionnaires were handed out. They had to fill it based on what they really felt. The questionnaires dealt with the factors causing students’ demotivation. There were two main categories of demotivation consisted of internal and external demotivation. The internal demotivation was divided into three themes including students’ attitude toward English, students’ experience of failure, and students’ self-esteem. While the external demotivation was divided into four themes which were teacher’s behavior and competence, teacher’s teaching method, the materials of English course, and learning environment.

The first internal demotivation was students’ attitude toward English. From fifteen students, it was revealed that 58% students still believed that English is important. It was also strengthened by the result of the interview. Some students said that they know English is important especially if it deals with finding jobs. For big companies, students said that it is a must for the employee to be able to use English at least for passive English. Dealing with the time spent to learn English, 95% students mentioned that learning English is time consuming. To confirm their statement, when students did the interview and asked about this issue, they said that it was time consuming because they have learnt English for almost twelve years but there is no significant differences of their ability.

The second factor of demotivation was students’ experience of failure. 65% students stated that they got frustrated in learning English because almost in all exercises they had low scores. Having incorrect answer was also affecting students’ motivation in learning. Sixteen students out of fifteen experienced it.

The last internal motivating factors was students’ self-esteem. 63% students mentioned that they felt that their friends were more superior than they were. Another thing related to students’ self-esteem was having no confidence in speaking English. It can be seen from the question that 89% of students preferred to speak Bahasa Indonesia instead of English. The last was the embarrassment in being the volunteer of answering teachers’ questions. Only 37% students were active in being the volunteer but the rest which was 63% students preferred to wait until their teachers asked them.

From the side of external demotivation, the findings from this study revealed that external demotivating factors were teacher’s behavior and competence, teacher’s teaching method, the material of English course, and the learning environment. When students were asked to fill the question whether they wanted to have another English teacher or not, 53% of students wanted to have another teacher. In correlation with teacher’s behavior in teaching, all students mentioned that their teacher was polite in the classroom but they had problem in getting the fair treatment from the teachers. 58% students felt that teachers performed favoritism in the classroom. When it confirmed with the interview, students said that teachers always pointed out the same students to answer the questions. They added that those students who got selected were considered as bright students. Regarding to teacher’s way of teaching, 53% students revealed that their teacher sometimes gave them free time or just asked them to watch movie and made resume.

Another factor to be highlighted was teachers’ teaching method. From students’ responses about their teacher’s way of teaching, 68% students stated that
they could not understand what their teacher explained. It was further clarified with students’ responses about teacher’s pace in engaging the lesson. More than 80% students mentioned that their teacher was too fast in doing the explanation. Furthermore, when the question was about the variety of teacher’s way in teaching, 58% students said that their teacher’s teaching method was monotonous and always used sets of exercises or workbooks. Apart from that, teacher’s way of helping students was also the cause of students’ demotivation. 58% students said that their teacher were not moving around to supervise students in doing the tasks. Moreover, 47% of students said that they did not enjoy the lesson. Dealing with teacher’s way in giving test before he or she explained the lesson, 58% students mentioned that the teacher did that.

The materials of English course also affected students’ motivation. 79% students said that they mostly learnt about grammar. 53% students stated that English is a complicated subject with lots of vocabulary items to memorize and hard pronunciation. Furthermore 63% students said that the topics of English lesson was not interesting enough.

The last factor of students’ demotivation was the learning environment. The students were asked about their feeling toward the classroom atmosphere; and 74% students felt uncomfortable with the atmosphere in the class. About their feeling toward their classmates, most of the respondents which was 63% said that they felt uncomfortable with their classmates. About school facilities, 49% of students stated that school facilities were insufficient.

To clarify students’ responses, the interviews were conducted. Students said that they like English but because of some reasons they were reluctant to learn. The first reason that the students revealed was because of teacher’s way of teaching. They said that the teacher was boring since she did the same way to teach in most of the meetings. The teacher explained the materials, asked questions, asked them to do the tasks, scored their assignments, and gave them homework. Related to the teacher’s teaching method, another student added that actually the teacher was quite good in teaching but the problem was the way how she explained the lesson. He said that the teacher was so fast in explaining things. Because the teaching method was boring, sometimes students just ignored what the teacher were said. Some students preferred to talk to their friends instead of listen to their teacher. The other thing that should be highlighted was the capability of the teacher to treat the students. Some students said that the teacher was not fair enough in treating them especially when the teacher asked questions and the students who were chosen to answer her questions were the same students which for them belongs to smart students. Another thing which could demotivate the students was their self-esteem. They felt a bit ashamed when they made mistakes in pronouncing some words and also from their lack of capability in knowing the meaning of vocabulary because some of their friends laughed at them.

**DISCUSSIONS**

This study was aimed to examine the factors which caused students’ demotivation. Based on the questionnaires distributed to fifty students and the interview, it was revealed that external demotivation was more influential than the internal one. The first questionnaire which was used as the initial study was in line with the second questionnaire which covered more on external demotivation. The prominence of this findings was in line with the findings of Thi Thu Trang and Baldauf-Jr (2007) which stated that external attribution accounted for 64% of the total numbers of demotivation.

From the findings above, it showed that the most dominant factor was related to the teacher. First, some students wanted to have another teacher because they felt that their teacher did not treat them equally and the teacher’s way to discipline was too loose. Second, it was about teacher’s way of teaching which was monotonous. This findings is in line with the findings of Thi Thu Trang and Baldauf-Jr (2007) which stated that ineffective and improper teaching methods caused a large number of demotive encounters. This salience of the teacher did not come as surprise since the study by Bednárová (2011) also said the same thing which is the teacher often had been the most influential demotive in the learning experiences of English by the students. It implies that teachers should pay attention to this issue because not only the teachers are the source of students’ demotivation but also they should be the one who reduce students’ demotivation.

The third was the materials of English course. Teacher emphasized more on grammar and sets of exercises. But students found it boring and difficult because they have to do it in every single meeting. It is in line with the study of Muhonen (2004) stated that students who found studying English either too difficult or too easy had experienced demotivation. The last
reason was because of the learning environment. It implies that teachers had to work hard in helping students to encounter this demotivation.

From the side of students internal demotivation which came from students’ self, their attitude toward English, the experience of failure, and the students’ self-esteem. They said that learning English was time consuming. They had that feeling because they thought that their English has little improvement although they had learnt it for so long. This problem might be related to the teacher. If the teacher can conduct the teaching and learning well, there is a high possibility that students’ might not have the negative attitude toward English. Other issues raised from internal demotivation was students’ experience of failure and their self-esteem. From the findings it showed that students’ tend to give up when they fail to use English. From the researcher points of view, it might be caused by the teachers’ treatment when students failed in using the language, their friends’ reaction when he/she made mistakes, and because of the low self-esteem.

Related to students’ self-esteem, they need to know how to maintain their confidence. It is not an easy job but there needs cooperation between the teachers, the parents, and the student-self. Some students said that they were inferior compared to their friends so they passively participated in the classroom activity unless their teachers obliged them to do. They also said that they lost their confidence because their friends sometimes made fun of their mistakes. Hence, it implies that teachers should know how to treat students’ mistakes, how to manage the class, and how to motivate and encourage the students.

To wrap up, demotivation does need attention from teachers and students. It should be regarded as an important aspects in learning English. If teachers know what the causes of students’ demotivation, they can help their students and themselves in encountering this phenomenon.

CONCLUSIONS

This study aims to find out the factors of students’ demotivation in learning English in secondary level especially in vocation school. By means of questionnaires and interview with students, the finding of this research has answered the research questions.

From the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that demotivation does exist in learning English. This issue should be consider as an important issue to deal with since it affects students’ behavior in learning the language. From the beginning, the prominent factor was external demotivation. Among all the external demotivation, teacher is the most influential motives beside teachers’ way of teaching. Thus, teachers should employ meaningful, challenging, and engaging classroom activities. Another important thing that can result students’ demotivation is inappropriate teachers’ behavior and competence. For students’ learning environment, friends, class atmosphere, the facilities which school has provided also affected their motivation.

Learning materials is also another cause of students’ demotivation. Students felt that English is all about grammar and sets of exercises. The results indicated that teachers most of the time talking about grammar with uninteresting topic which made them think English was a difficult subject.

Another cause of students demotivation came from the students’ selves. First, it was about students’ attitude toward English. Most students felt that English was time consuming. Second, it was about students’ experience of failure. When they failed in using the language, they lost their interest to learn. The third was students’ self-esteem. Even though internal factor of students demotivation is not dominant, but special attention needs to be done to encourage and give positive feedback in order to diminish long-term effects of the demotivation.

Considering the above conclusion, it can be inferred that this research already answer all of the research questions, and thus, able to reach the aim of the research.

Regarding the conclusion, it is recommended that teachers have appropriate, varied, and interesting method of teaching. Teacher should know how to deliver the lesson not in monotonous way. To be able to provide and select an interactive and interesting learning, teachers need to upgrade their knowledge and keep themselves updated to new methods of teaching. Next, teachers need to know how to encourage students to learn English and help students to improve their confidence. In addition, teachers need to provide and create a good atmosphere in the classroom to make sure students get fair treatment and get good environment in learning which may energize students to participate fully in the learning process and thus motivate them to learn the language.

With regard to present research limitations, the researcher suggests future researchers to conduct a research which involves more participants from different secondary school level so the data collected will be more accurate and richer.
REFERENCES


