

## DEMOTIVATION FACTORS IN ENGLISH LEARNING AND THEIR DIFFERENCES ACROSS GRADE LEVELS

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This study explored the factors demotivating students in learning English and tests whether or not there are differences between grade levels in secondary schools with the results to inform strategies for improving English language teaching. This was a quantitative with comparative study including 90 students of SMP Negeri 16 Samarinda as a sample through cluster sampling. Data were collected from responses to a closed-ended questionnaire developed by Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) which was categorized by Hosseini and Jafari (2014) into six demotivation factors. It was discovered VIII grade was demotivated by characteristics of classes and class environment factors. Furthermore, there was a significant difference in demotivation factors in teachers and class environment factors in VII and VIII grades. This study underlined the need to resolve particular demotivating factors in English language learning to enhance students' educational experience.

**Keywords:** *English Learning; Demotivation; Different Grades Level*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the process of teaching English language proficiency, the experiences that students faced are bound to have various obstacles that shape their learning thus affecting their motivation to be engaged with the language. Motivation, often portrayed as the driving force behind human behavior, played an important role in language learning. However, while understanding what encourages motivation is important, it is correspondingly important to examine the factors that lead to demotivation. Demotivation, a concept that has been gaining attention among educators, denoted the decline or loss of motivation, which negatively affected learning processes and outcomes (Jahedizadeh & Ghanizadeh, 2015; Molavi & Bir, 2013; Zhang, 2007).

Dörnyei (2005) has highlighted that motivation research has traditionally focused on positive persuasion, often neglecting negative aspects, such as demotivation. This neglect was important, given that demotivation could hinder students' advancement in acquiring language skills. In English as a foreign language (EFL), demotivation is a prevalent phenomenon that must be tackled to support students' learning journey.

At the secondary school level, students' development stages as delineated by Vygotsky's theory about Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) impact their learning experiences. Differences in academic load and teacher interaction in 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> grades can lead to varying outward of demotivating factors. This study focused on SMP Negeri 16 Samarinda, where the researcher observed in three months considerable problems related to students' competence in English during the Community Service Program. In the interviews with English teachers, it was revealed that many students exhibited low motivation and poor performance, thereby highlighting the need for a more interested understanding of demotivation factors.

This study was designed to identify the factors that have been detected in students' demotivation in learning English at SMP Negeri Samarinda. To deal with these factors, this study sought to provide insights for educators to develop strategies that improve students' motivation and learning outcomes. Based on the background and the theoretical framework of Hosseini and Jafari (2014), this paper aims to investigate how Junior High School students perceive demotivation factors and to examine the differences of demotivation factors across grade levels (7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup>).

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was designed with a comparative quantitative design which required 90 samples from 886 populations at SMP Negeri 16 Samarinda, selected using cluster sampling. Each class of 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> grades consists of 30 students. The questionnaire was distributed online using Google form. There were 35 items developed by Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) divided into six factors by Hosseini and Jafari (2014). Using SPSS, researchers analyzed the data obtained in descriptive statistics and test hypotheses using One Way ANOVA, Welch's ANOVA, or Kruskal-Wallis test depending on the data normality and homogeneity. To understanding how students perceived each factor, the mean scores were separated by the number of items, with the scores categorized as follows:

Table 1. Score Categorization

No.	Mean of each factor	Categorization
1.	1.00 – 1.80	Very Non-Demotivating
2.	1.81 – 2.60	Not Demotivating
3.	2.61 – 3.40	Neutral
4.	3.41 – 4.20	Demotivating
5.	4.21 – 5.00	Very Demotivating

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The first factor, **“Teacher”**, included six items which were related to teachers' attitudes, language proficiency, behavior, personality, and teaching style. The second factor, **“Characteristics of Classes”**, included seven items related to how the classroom is set during English lessons, the design of English lessons, and classroom conditions. The third factor, **“Experience of Failure”**, included five items addressing low scores, negative feedback received by students, and student difficulties. The fourth factor, **“Class Environment”**, comprised seven items and focused on the facilities or learning tools available in class, as well as student relations with classmates. The fifth factor, **“Class Material”** included six items concerned with learning materials or textbook content. Finally, the sixth factor, **“Lack of Interest”** included four items reflecting students' inability to feel engaged or motivated in learning due to uninteresting content, unclear goals, or a lack of perceived relevance in what they are learning.

### 1. Demotivation Factors of 7<sup>th</sup> Graders

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of 7<sup>th</sup> grade's Demotivation Factors

Factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teacher	30	11.3667	4.49124
Characteristics of Classes	30	22.8000	3.77286
Experiences of Failure	30	13.1333	3.21348
Class Environment	30	19.9667	4.92344
Class Material	30	17.1000	3.52675
Lack of Interest	30	9.0000	3.29053
Valid N (listwise)	30		

Table 2 indicated descriptive statistics of 7<sup>th</sup> grade students responding to their perceiving toward demotivation factors. The mean results in the table are divided by the number of items per factor, so that it is obtained that:

- Teacher: 1.89 (Not Demotivating)
- Characteristics of Classes: 3.25 (Neutral)
- Experience of Failure: 2.62 (Neutral)
- Class Environment: 2.85 (Neutral)
- Class Material: 2.85 (Neutral)

f) Lack of Interest: 2.25 (Not Demotivating)

There are teacher and lack of interest factors that do not demotivate students in learning English, while other factors are still on the neutral score. However, even though the Characteristics of Classes is considered neutral, the mean value was the highest value. There were 73.33% of 7<sup>th</sup> grade students who confirmed by responding to Question 3 statement indicated "Grammar formed the backbone of the lesson". And there are 70% of 7<sup>th</sup> grade students confirming Question 26 namely "The classes were too crowded".

## 2. Demotivation Factors in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade at SMP Negeri 16 Samarinda

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of 8<sup>th</sup> Grade's Demotivation Factors

Factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teacher	30	14.4667	5.58775
Characteristics of Classes	30	25.0667	4.23396
Experiences of Failure	30	14.4333	4.51575
Class Environment	30	24.1667	4.72034
Class Material	30	19.4000	4.82522
Lack of Interest	30	10.8333	4.44959
Valid N (listwise)	30		

Descriptive statistics of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students viewed on demotivation factors were displayed in Table 3. When the number of items per factor were divided by the mean results in the table, the following result was obtained:

- a. Teacher: 2.42 (Not Demotivating)
- b. Characteristics of Classes: 3.61 (Demotivating)**
- c. Experience of Failure: 2.88 (Neutral)
- d. Class Environment: 3.45 (Demotivating)**
- e. Class Material 3.23 (Neutral)
- f. Lack of Interest: 2.70 (Neutral)

There are two factors demotivating 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in English learning, there are characteristics classes dan class environment factors. Even though that was not very strong, but it was in demotivating limit score from the Table 1.

With 83.33% of students agreeing, Question 26, "*the classes were too crowded,*" had a significant effect among the factors referring to characteristics of classes that were being examined at. In similar manner 73.33% of the participants agreed that "*It was mandatory to memorize and translate sentences in the the textbook,*" indicating a considerable impact on Question 6. The statement of Question 3, "*Grammar formed the backbone of the lesson,*" and Question 21, "*I was supposed to repeat sentences after the teacher,*" were endorsed by more than half of the students (63.33%). There were 60% of respondents also agreed with Question 4, which states that "*nearly all lessons were designed for the University entrance exam.*" Then, of the components analyzed in the classroom, Question 2 had the biggest influence on students' feelings of demotivation, with 80% of students concurring that "*Computer software was not used.*" Additionally, Question 24, "*We didn't have a language lab at school,*" was agreed or strongly agreed with by 76.67% of students. Additionally, Question 35, "*Audio tapes were not used when learning,*" had a big influence. More over half of the students agreed with the following other items: Question 22 (53.33%), "*Pictures, movies, and the like were not used,*" and then Question 23 (56.67%), "*I had no access to the internet.*"

### 3. Demotivation Factors in 9<sup>th</sup> Grade's Perceiving at SMP Negeri 16 Samarinda

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of 9<sup>th</sup> Grades' Demotivation Factors

Factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teacher	30	12.6667	4.75854
Characteristics of Classes	30	22.5333	5.78782
Experiences of Failure	30	14.5333	3.12645
Class Environment	30	22.7000	5.14715
Class Material	30	18.2667	4.72655
Lack of Interest	30	10.6667	4.22907
Valid N (listwise)	30		

Descriptive statistics of 9<sup>th</sup> grades students on demotivating factors were viewed in Table 4. When the number of items per factor were divided by the mean scores in the following result was obtained:

- Teacher: 2.12 (Not Demotivating)
- Characteristics of Classes: 3.22 (Neutral)
- Experience of Failure: 2.91 (Neutral)
- Class Environment: 3.25 (Neutral)
- Class Material 3.04 (Neutral)
- Lack of Interest: 2.67 (Neutral)

The categorization calculations show that students' enthusiasm to learn is unaffected by the teacher factor. The remaining factors, however, are classified as neutral. Despite being classified as neutral, the class environment has the highest score among the components based on mean values. This suggests that students frequently give answers that come close to the upper limit of the neutral category. With 83.33% agreeing or strongly agreeing with Q2, "*Computer software was not used,*" and 60% agreeing with Q24, "*We didn't have a language lab at school,*" more than half of the pupils supported the statements.

### 4. Differences across Grade Levels Analysis of Demotivation Factors

Table 5. Kruskal-Wallis Test of Teacher Factor

Teacher	
Kruskal-Wallis H	6.309
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.043

Table 6. Pairwise of Comparisons of Teacher Factor

Sample 1-Sample 2	Test Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Test Statistic	Sig	Adj. Sig. <sup>a</sup>
7 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup>	-7.233	6.717	-1.077	.282	.845
7 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup>	-16.817	6.717	-2.504	.012	.037
9 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup>	9.583	6.717	1.427	.154	.461

The null hypothesis is rejected since the table's p-value of 0.043 (less than 0.05) indicates a significant difference in the teacher factor between 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> grades. While there are no significant differences between VII and IX or between VIII and IX grades, the Dunn test indicated a significant difference between VII and VIII grades (p=0.037).

Table 7. Kruskal-Wallis Test of Class Environment Factor

Teacher	
Kruskal-Wallis H	11.563
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.003

Table 8. Pairwise of Comparisons of Class Environment Factor

Sample 1-Sample 2	Test Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Test Statistic	Sig	Adj. Sig. <sup>a</sup>
7 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup>	-14.733	6.726	-2.191	.028	.085
7 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup>	-22.517	6.726	-3.348	<.001	.002
9 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup>	7.783	6.726	1.157	.247	.742

A substantial difference in the class environment factor across 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> grades was demonstrated by the Asymp. Sig. Value of 0.003, which is smaller than 0.05 and indicated that one of the alternative hypotheses was approved. There were no significant differences between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> pair, as indicated by the corrected significance values of 0.085 and 0.742, respectively. Nonetheless, there is a significant difference between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades in the class environment factor, as indicated by the adjusted significance value for the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> pair, which is 0.002 (less than 0.05). The demotivation variables for characteristics of classes, experience of failure, class material, and lack of interest were then found to be the null hypothesis for each other factors, indicating that there was no significant difference between 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> grades. Welch's ANOVA, One way ANOVA, and Kruskal Wallis were also used to examine each dataset.

### ***Demotivation Factors Experienced by Secondary School Students***

The results reveal important points in demotivating elements in learning English, especially the class environment and characteristics of classes. The style and organization of their programs, including grammar-heavy topics, required memorization, and crammed classrooms, demotivated students, especially those in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Students' demotivation was exacerbated by these internal classroom factors, such as passive teaching strategies and little opportunity for communication.

Students' motivation was also impacted by the classroom setting, particularly in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, which included the absence of learning resources like computer software, language labs, and multimedia tools. The class environment component had the highest mean value, indicating its major impact even though it was classified as neutral. Enhancements in this area, such as improved facilities and resources, could greatly increase motivation because students' impressions of the classroom environment are quite important.

According to the report, schools could address these factors by creating a supportive climate and offering suitable learning resources. The results are consistent with earlier studies on the value of class environment, but they highlight how critical it was to address both internal and external factors in order to lower demotivation. The lack of interest element, however, was less noticeable, according to the survey, suggesting that students were still motivated to learn English.

### ***Differences of Demotivation Factors across Grade Levels***

Significant variations in teacher-related demotivation factors between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades were discovered by this study. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) hypothesis states that interactions with a supportive environment—particularly teachers acting as mediators—have an impact on students' development. Positive teacher attributes increase students' confidence and engagement, and teachers' personalities, attitudes, and teaching methods have a big impact on motivation. While the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, who have adjusted, look for more difficult and pertinent approaches, the 7<sup>th</sup> grade students, who are still getting used to junior high school, rely more on structured supervision and encouraging



teachers. While teacher-related factors continue to be significant, student answers also vary depending on the differences in teaching staff between grades.

There were notable variations in the classroom atmosphere between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. Students' motivation may change to demotivation if they do not have access to sufficient resources. These variations are also influenced by the usage of various instructors and instructional resources. The 9<sup>th</sup> grade and the other grades did not differ significantly from one another, according to the study, suggesting that demotivating circumstances and academic experiences were comparable. Given the limited insights provided by the closed-ended questionnaire used in this study, the findings indicates that additional research is necessary to fully comprehend the underlying causes of these discrepancies.

#### 4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The researcher came to the conclusion that the classroom atmosphere and class features have an impact on the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students' demotivation. Both factors were neutral in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades, indicating that students neither fully ignore them nor significantly contribute to demotivation. Class environment in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade and class features in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade had the highest average scores, but they had no discernible effect on demotivation. Additionally, demotivation in learning English at SMP Negeri 16 Samarinda was not significantly impacted by the teacher aspect. Following testing, three alternative hypotheses were accepted because of the notable variations in the Teacher and Class Environment components between the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> grades. While there were no significant differences between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades or the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades in terms of demotivation variables, the Dunn test showed significant differences between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades in the Teacher and Class Environment categories. This research was exploratory in nature with a closed questionnaire, so the data produced were also limited. Therefore, more in-depth research is needed on similar topics with interviews or direct long-term observation.

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