

Students' Voices on Demotivating Factors in Learning English: Semarang Regency Vocational Students

 <https://doi.org/10.31004/jele.v11i5.3051>

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ABSTRACT

English learning motivation plays an important role in helping students develop their language skills and achieve successful learning outcomes. However, many vocational high school students experience demotivation when learning English, and only a few studies have explored this issue from students' own perspectives in the context of vocational schools in Semarang Regency. Therefore, this study aimed to explore the demotivating factors experienced by vocational high school students in learning English. This study employed a qualitative approach involving 20 Grade 11 students, aged 16 years, from SMK Negeri 1 Pringapus. These participants were purposively selected because they met the study's inclusion criteria regarding age and grade level, ensuring that they had relatively similar educational experiences and sufficient exposure to English learning. Data were collected through a close-ended questionnaire, which was used to support the interview findings, and semi-structured interviews and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. The findings revealed two major categories of demotivating factors: internal factors, including lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, and limited English ability, and external factors, including peer influence, teacher teaching methods, and classroom environment and facilities. These findings suggest that creating a supportive learning environment and using engaging teaching practices are essential to reducing students' demotivation in learning English.

Keywords: *Demotivation, English Learning, Vocational Students, Motivation, Students' Voices.*

Article History:

Received 05th August 2026

Accepted 14th September 2026

Published 17th September 2026



INTRODUCTION

English is one of the most widely used languages in the world. It is used for communication, education, business, science, technology, and many other fields. People from different countries use English to share ideas, exchange information, and work together. Many books, research articles, websites, and learning materials are also written in English. Therefore, learning English gives students more opportunities to gain knowledge and communicate with people from different cultures. English plays an important role in education and enables learners to access scientific knowledge, technology, and global communication (Ren & Abhakorn, 2022). In Indonesia, English is taught as a compulsory subject in junior and senior high schools because it is considered important for students' education and future careers (Erniyati & Putra, 2022).

Although English is important, learning it is not easy for many Indonesian students. Since English is a foreign language in Indonesia, students rarely use it outside the classroom. Most students communicate in Indonesian or their local languages in everyday life. Because of this situation, many students find it difficult to understand English vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These difficulties often make students feel worried, lose confidence, and become less interested in learning English.

One factor that strongly affects students' success in learning English is motivation. Motivation gives students the desire to learn, practice, and improve their English skills.

Students with high motivation usually pay attention in class, join classroom activities, complete assignments, and try to overcome learning difficulties. On the other hand, students with low motivation often become passive, lose interest, avoid participating in class, and make less effort to improve their English. As a result, their learning progress may become slower.

Motivation can come from different sources. According to [Erniyati & Putra \(2022\)](#), motivation is divided into intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation comes from the students themselves, such as their interest, curiosity, or enjoyment of learning English. Meanwhile, extrinsic motivation comes from outside the students, such as teachers, classmates, parents, learning materials, classroom activities, rewards, and future career goals. Both types of motivation are important because they help students stay interested in learning English.

However, students' motivation does not always stay the same. A student who is interested in learning English at the beginning may later lose that interest because of unpleasant learning experiences. This condition is called demotivation. According to [Ren & Abhakorn \(2022\)](#), demotivation has traditionally been defined as external forces that reduce learners' motivation. However, more recent research suggests that demotivation is influenced by both external factors, such as the learning environment and teaching practices, and internal factors, including fear of making mistakes, anxiety, low self-confidence, and lack of interest. Therefore, demotivation can be influenced by both the learning environment and students' personal feelings.

One of the main theories used in this study is the theory proposed by [Chambers \(1993\)](#). Chambers believed that teachers should understand demotivation by listening directly to students instead of depending only on teachers' opinions. He explained that students who seem unmotivated often have their own reasons for losing interest in learning. Therefore, students' voices are very important because they can explain what really happens during the learning process.

To understand this issue, [Chambers \(1993\)](#) carried out a study involving 191 students who were identified as demotivated in learning foreign languages. He asked students about their classroom experiences, teaching methods, learning materials, classroom environment, and their feelings toward language learning. The results showed that demotivation is not caused by only one factor. Instead, many different factors work together to reduce students' motivation. Students mentioned that unclear teacher explanations, boring teaching methods, unsuitable learning materials, poor listening activities, large classes, fear of speaking in front of classmates, criticism from teachers, lack of encouragement, and low self-confidence all made them less interested in learning foreign languages.

[Chambers \(1993\)](#) also found that students did not only explain their problems, but they also suggested ways to improve English learning. They wanted teachers to use different teaching activities, provide clear instructions, give positive encouragement, and create enjoyable classroom situations. Students also preferred learning activities that were meaningful, interesting, and related to their needs. Chambers concluded that every student has different interests, abilities, and learning experiences. Therefore, teachers should not ignore students who seem demotivated. Instead, teachers should encourage them, listen to their opinions, build their confidence, and create a positive classroom environment where students feel comfortable learning English.

The ideas proposed by [Chambers \(1993\)](#) are very relevant to this study because this research focuses on students' voices. Instead of asking teachers about why students lose motivation, this study asks students directly about their own experiences in learning English. By listening to students' opinions, the researcher expects to understand the real factors that reduce their motivation.

Many recent studies have also discussed demotivation in English learning. [Huwari et al. \(2023\)](#) found that classroom environment, teacher behavior, learning materials, and low test scores were the main factors that reduced students' motivation. Among these factors, classroom environment had the strongest influence. [Shagdarsuren \(2020\)](#) also reported that teachers' attitudes, teaching methods, and students' lack of interest often caused demotivation.

In addition, [Erniyati & Putra \(2022\)](#) explained that students still experience difficulties in learning English because they have different abilities, backgrounds, and learning conditions. These studies show that demotivation is influenced by many different factors, and each student may have different experiences.

This issue is also found in vocational high schools. Compared with students in general senior high schools, vocational students usually spend more time learning practical skills related to their study programs. The primary goal of vocational education is to prepare students for specific occupations, so they often give greater attention to vocational subjects that are directly related to their future careers. Because of this, some students think that English is less important than vocational subjects. They may also believe that English is difficult and not useful for their future jobs, especially when they cannot see a clear connection between English lessons and their vocational fields. In addition, vocational students often have different academic backgrounds, learning abilities, and career aspirations, which may influence how they perceive English learning. English lessons in vocational schools also tend to use general learning materials that may not always match the language needs of students' specific study programs. As a result, students may feel that the learning materials are not relevant to their future work, reducing their interest and participation in English classes. These conditions suggest that vocational students may experience demotivating factors that differ from those experienced by students in general senior high schools. Therefore, understanding demotivation in vocational education requires attention to the unique characteristics and learning needs of vocational students. The same situation can be seen in vocational high schools in Semarang Regency. Although English is a compulsory subject, many students still have limited English ability and do not actively participate in classroom activities. Some students are afraid to speak English, while others feel bored or think that English is too difficult. These situations suggest that there are several factors that reduce students' motivation to learn English. However, these factors have not been explored deeply from students' own perspectives. The same situation can be seen in vocational high schools in Semarang Regency. Although English is a compulsory subject, many students still have limited English ability and do not actively participate in classroom activities. Some students are afraid to speak English, while others feel bored or think that English is too difficult. These situations suggest that there are several factors that reduce students' motivation to learn English. However, these factors have not been explored deeply from students' own perspectives.

Many previous studies have investigated demotivation in learning English, but most were conducted in different countries or educational settings. Only a few studies have focused on vocational high school students in Semarang Regency by using students' voices as the main source of information, as suggested by [Chambers \(1993\)](#). Therefore, this study aims to explore students' voices of demotivating factors in learning English among vocational high school students in Semarang Regency. The findings are expected to help English teachers better understand students' learning experiences and develop teaching strategies that are more interesting, supportive, and suitable for students' needs.

Based on the background of the study & review of literature, the researcher formulates several research questions to guide the investigation. (1) What demotivating factors do students perceive in learning English? (2) How do the factors influence students' demotivation?

METHOD

This study used a qualitative research method. This method was chosen because it helps the researcher understand students' experiences, opinions, and feelings in detail. According to [Aspers & Corte \(2019\)](#), qualitative research is used to understand how people see and experience the world around them through detailed information. Therefore, this method was suitable for exploring students' voices about the factors that demotivate them in learning English.

Participants

The participants of this study will be students of SMK Negeri 1 Pringapus, located in Pringapus Subdistrict, Semarang Regency, Central Java. The researcher chooses this school because it is located in an area relatively far from the city center, which may influence students' access to English learning resources and opportunities to use English outside the classroom. Therefore, the school is considered a suitable setting for exploring students' experiences and perceptions of factors that reduce their motivation to learn English. This study will involve twenty students as questionnaire respondents. The participants will be selected using purposive sampling, which allows researchers to select participants based on specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives (Campbell et al., 2020). The selection criteria include students who are 16 years old, enrolled in Grade XI at SMK Negeri 1 Pringapus, and studying English as a compulsory subject. In addition, three students will be selected from the questionnaire respondents to participate in semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews provide opportunities to explore participants' experiences and perspectives in greater depth while maintaining focus on the research objectives (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). The combination of questionnaire and interview data is expected to provide a broader understanding of students' demotivating factors and deeper insights into their personal experiences. Through these methods, the researcher hopes to identify the challenges students face and provide information that may support improvements in English teaching and learning.

Instruments

This study used two instruments to collect the data: a close-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire was used to identify the demotivating factors that students experienced when learning English. After that, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the students' experiences and opinions in more detail. Using these two instruments helped the researcher understand the topic from different perspectives (Kallio et al., 2016).

The first instrument was a close-ended questionnaire adapted from Chambers (1993). It contained statements about different factors that may reduce students' motivation to learn English, such as teachers, learning materials, classroom conditions, learning activities, and students' personal feelings. The questionnaire consisted of 30 close-ended statements covering both internal and external demotivating factors experienced by students in learning English. The internal factors included aspects such as students' confidence, anxiety, learning interest, and self-perception, while the external factors focused on teachers, classmates, learning materials, classroom environment, and teaching methods. Students answered each statement using a five-point Likert scale, from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). This type of questionnaire makes it easier to collect responses from many participants and compare their answers (Joshi et al., 2015). Examples of the questionnaire items included: "I often feel learning English is too difficult for me," "I am afraid that my classmates will laugh at me when I make mistakes in front of the class," and "I lose motivation when the lesson moves too quickly."

The second instrument was a semi-structured interview. After the questionnaire was completed, several students who agreed to join the interview were selected. The researcher prepared a list of guiding questions but also asked additional questions when more explanation was needed. The interview protocol consisted of 10 semi-structured questions designed to explore students' experiences, perceptions, and reasons behind the demotivating factors identified in the questionnaire. The interviews were conducted individually through Zoom Meetings, with a maximum duration of 15 minutes for each participant. This online format provided flexibility and allowed the researcher to conduct the interviews efficiently while ensuring that each participant had sufficient time to explain their experiences. This interview method gave students the opportunity to share their own experiences and explain their answers more clearly. As a result, the researcher could collect richer and more detailed information about the factors that reduced students' motivation to learn English (Kallio et al., 2016).

Before the instruments were used, both the questionnaire and the interview guide were reviewed by an expert to make sure that the questions were clear, relevant, and suitable for the purpose of the study. This process helped improve the content validity of the instruments before they were used for data collection (Yusoff, 2019). After the validation process, the questionnaire was distributed to the participants, followed by the semi-structured interviews. The interview findings were then used to support and explain the questionnaire results, providing a more complete understanding of the demotivating factors experienced by vocational high school students in learning English.

Procedure

The data collection started by sharing a close-ended questionnaire through Google Forms. Before the participants filled in the questionnaire, the researcher explained the meaning of demotivating factors in learning English so that they understood the topic of the study. The researcher also gave instructions on how to answer the questionnaire and reminded the participants to choose the answers based on their own experiences. Using Google Forms made it easier for the participants to complete the questionnaire and for the researcher to collect all the responses.

After all the questionnaire responses were collected, the researcher invited students who were willing to join the interview. Four students agreed to participate and were selected for the semi-structured interviews. Before the interview began, the researcher explained the purpose of the interview, assured the participants that their information would be kept confidential, and encouraged them to answer every question honestly. This was done to make sure the data reflected the participants' real experiences. Semi-structured interviews are useful because they allow researchers to ask prepared questions while also exploring participants' answers in more detail (Yusoff, 2019).

Each interview took about 10–15 minutes and was audio-recorded with the participants' permission. Recording the interview helped the researcher capture the participants' answers accurately without missing important information. It also allowed the researcher to focus on the conversation instead of taking many notes during the interview (Yusoff, 2019).

After all the interviews were finished, the researcher transcribed the audio recordings into written text. The transcripts were checked carefully to make sure they matched the recordings. These transcripts were then used for the next step of the data analysis. Transcribing interview data helps researchers understand the data better and prepare it for coding and thematic analysis (Yusoff, 2019).

Data Analysis

The data in this study were analyzed using Thematic Analysis by Braun & Clarke (2006). This method is used to analyze qualitative data by finding and grouping similar ideas into themes. Braun & Clarke (2006) explained that thematic analysis helps researchers understand participants' experiences and opinions through the patterns that appear in the data. This method was chosen because it fits the purpose of this study, which is to explore students' voices about the factors that make them feel demotivated to learn English.

Braun & Clarke (2006) explained that thematic analysis consists of six phases to help researchers analyze qualitative data in a clear and organized way. The first phase is familiarizing with the data. In this phase, the researcher transcribed the interview recordings into written text, read the transcripts several times, and made notes about important ideas. This helped the researcher become familiar with the participants' responses. The second phase is generating initial codes, where the researcher identified important information from the interview data and gave labels or codes to meaningful parts related to students' demotivating experiences.

The third phase is searching for themes. In this phase, similar codes were grouped together to create possible themes. The fourth phase is reviewing themes, where the researcher checked whether the themes matched the coded data and the whole interview data. After that,

the fifth phase is defining and naming themes. The researcher refined each theme, gave it a clear meaning, and selected a name that best described its content.

The last phase is producing the report. In this phase, the researcher explained the findings by describing each theme and supporting it with quotations from the interview participants. The themes were then discussed based on the research questions and related studies. By following the six phases of [Braun & Clarke \(2006\)](#), the researcher was able to analyze the interview data in a systematic and organized way and present the students' experiences clearly.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The interview results showed that the students faced different problems that reduced their motivation to learn English. Based on the questionnaire findings, many students tended to choose neutral responses to several statements about demotivating factors. These responses did not clearly explain the reasons behind their experiences. Therefore, the researcher conducted interviews to explore the students' opinions and experiences in greater detail.

Table 1 Questionnaire Findings

No.	Questions	Percentage				
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1.	I often feel that learning English is too difficult for me.	5%	10%	50%	25%	10%
2.	I believe I am not good at learning English.	5%	15%	30%	35%	15%
3.	I lose motivation when I do not understand English lessons.	10%	15%	10%	55%	10%
4.	I feel embarrassed when speaking English in front of my classmates.	10%	15%	35%	20%	20%
5.	I am afraid that my classmates will laugh at me when I make mistakes in English.	10%	15%	25%	25%	25%
6.	I avoid answering questions in English class because I feel nervous.	5%	15%	45%	30%	5%
7.	Listening activities in English class are frustrating for me.	20%	50%	30%	-	-
8.	Fast English recordings make me lose motivation.	5%	25%	45%	20%	5%
9.	I do not see how English will be useful in my future life.	50%	30%	15%	5%	-
10.	Learning English feels like a waste of time.	50%	40%	5%	5%	-
11.	My difficulties in Indonesian language learning make English harder to learn.	30%	50%	20%	-	-
12.	I often feel that no matter how hard I try, I cannot improve my English.	15%	50%	25%	5%	5%
13.	I need immediate rewards or recognition to stay motivated in English class.	5%	20%	40%	20%	15%
14.	Overall, I feel less motivated to learn English than other school subjects.	15%	30%	30%	20%	5%
15.	My English teacher's criticism reduces my motivation to learn.	15%	55%	15%	10%	5%
16.	I feel discouraged when teachers get angry because I do not understand.	15%	65%	5%	5%	10%

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17.	I feel ignored when I have difficulties learning English.	10%	70%	20%	-	-
18.	I would be more motivated if my teacher encouraged me more often.	-	-	10%	40%	50%
19.	Unclear instructions from the teacher reduce my motivation to participate.	5%	10%	40%	30%	15%
20.	I lose motivation when the lesson moves too quickly.	5%	15%	35%	35%	10%
21.	Poor audio quality during listening activities discourages me from learning English.	10%	-	55%	25%	10%
22.	I get bored when English lessons involve too much copying from the board or textbook.	5%	15%	30%	35%	15%
23.	Writing tasks often feel meaningless to me.	10%	40%	30%	10%	10%
24.	I lose interest when English learning activities do not have a clear purpose.	10%	25%	25%	25%	15%
25.	The materials used in English class are not interesting.	10%	55%	30%	5%	-
26.	I feel less motivated when English classes are repetitive.	5%	5%	25%	55%	10%
27.	I feel uncomfortable learning English in a crowded classroom.	-	-	50%	30%	20%
28.	The classroom environment affects my motivation to learn English.	-	5%	30%	30%	35%
29.	Working with classmates sometimes distracts me from learning English.	-	5%	60%	20%	15%
30.	My friends' negative opinions about English affect my motivation.	5%	20%	35%	15%	25%

The interview data were analysed using the thematic analysis by [Braun & Clarke \(2006\)](#). After analysing the responses, the researcher found two main categories of demotivating factors: internal factors and external factors. Internal factors are problems that come from the students themselves, while external factors come from the people and the learning environment around them. This classification is in line with [Dörnyei & Ushioda \(2021\)](#), who states that students' motivation can be influenced by both personal and environmental factors. The findings showed that the main internal factors were lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, and limited English skills, especially vocabulary, pronunciation, and speaking ability. The main external factors were peer influence, teachers' teaching methods, learning activities and materials, and the classroom environment and learning facilities. These factors appeared in the responses of all participants, showing that students' motivation to learn English is influenced by both their own abilities and feelings as well as the support and learning conditions they experience at school.

Internal Demotivating Factors Perceived by Students

Lack of Confidence

One of the main internal factors found in this study was lack of confidence. Based on the interview results, all four participants said that they did not feel confident when speaking English in front of their teachers or classmates. Most of them felt nervous and worried because they thought their English was not as good as other students. Because of this feeling, they were often afraid to speak or join classroom activities that required them to use English.

Participant 1 said, "Honestly, I get a little nervous and embarrassed because I'm afraid of making mistakes." The participant also said, "I feel like I'm still below them in terms of vocabulary or understanding." These responses show that Participant 1 lacked confidence

because they believed that their English ability was weaker than their classmates. The participant compared their ability with others, which made them feel embarrassed and less willing to speak English in class.

Participant 2 shared a similar experience. The participant explained, "At first, I definitely feel nervous and lack confidence. I'm worried about making mistakes in pronunciation." This shows that fear of making pronunciation mistakes reduced the participant's confidence. Even though the participant continued practicing English, speaking in front of others was still difficult because of nervousness. However, the participant also mentioned that support from teachers and classmates helped improve their confidence little by little. This suggests that a positive learning environment can help students become more confident when learning English.

Participant 3 also experienced a lack of confidence. The participant said, "I've always been scared when asked to speak English in front of people. I'm embarrassed – afraid of being laughed at. Every time I speak, my heart races, and I get nervous." This response shows that the participant felt both nervous and anxious before speaking English. Because of these feelings, the participant found it difficult to speak confidently during English lessons.

Participant 4 gave a similar response by saying, "Honestly, I'm not very confident yet because I'm not fluent in speaking English." This statement shows that the participant believed speaking fluently was important for feeling confident. Since the participant thought their speaking ability was still limited, they were less confident when using English in class.

The findings are similar to the ideas of [Dörnyei & Ushioda \(2021\)](#) who explained that self-confidence is an important part of language learning motivation. Students who have higher confidence are usually more willing to participate in learning activities, while those with low confidence often avoid using the language. In addition, [Macintyre et al. \(1998\)](#) stated that learners with low confidence are usually less willing to communicate in a second language because they are afraid of making mistakes or receiving negative responses from others. Likewise, [Dewaele & MacIntyre \(2014\)](#) found that anxiety and low confidence can reduce students' enjoyment and participation in foreign language classrooms. Therefore, the findings of this study indicate that lack of confidence is an important internal factor that can reduce students' motivation to learn English.

Fear of Making Mistakes

Another internal factor found in this study was fear of making mistakes. Based on the interview results, all four participants said that they were afraid of making mistakes when speaking English. They worried about saying the wrong words, making grammar mistakes, or pronouncing words incorrectly. Because of this fear, they often felt nervous and were unwilling to speak English in front of their teachers or classmates. This fear became one of the reasons why they were less motivated to take part in English learning activities.

Participant 1 explained that making mistakes made the participant feel nervous and embarrassed. The participant said, "Honestly, I get a little nervous and embarrassed because I'm afraid of making mistakes." The participant also shared that they felt their vocabulary and English understanding were lower than those of their classmates. Because of this, the participant worried that other students would think negatively about their English ability. This shows that fear of making mistakes was connected to the fear of being judged by others.

Participant 2 had a similar experience. The participant said, "At first, I definitely feel nervous and lack confidence. I'm worried about making mistakes in pronunciation." This response shows that the participant was afraid of pronouncing English words incorrectly. Even though the participant continued to practice English, the fear of making mistakes still made speaking English difficult. This suggests that worrying too much about pronunciation can reduce students' confidence and make them afraid to speak.

Participant 3 also experienced the same problem. The participant explained, "I've always been scared when asked to speak English in front of people. I'm embarrassed, afraid of being laughed at. Every time I speak, my heart races, and I get nervous." The participant also mentioned that this fear came from previous experiences of being laughed at during middle

school. Because of those experiences, the participant became more afraid of making mistakes when speaking English.

Participant 4 also said that making mistakes was something to worry about. The participant explained, "Honestly, I'm not very confident yet because I'm not fluent in speaking English." The participant also said that they were afraid of being teased by classmates when speaking English. Although this had not happened before, the participant still worried that making mistakes might lead to negative comments from others.

The findings are similar to the ideas of [Dörnyei & Ushioda \(2021\)](#), who explained that fear of failure and negative evaluation can reduce students' motivation to learn a foreign language. [Macintyre et al. \(1998\)](#) stated that students who are afraid of making mistakes are usually less willing to communicate because they expect negative responses from others. In addition, [Dewaele & MacIntyre \(2014\)](#) found that anxiety in the language classroom can reduce students' participation and enjoyment in learning. Therefore, the findings of this study show that fear of making mistakes is one of the main internal factors that decreases students' motivation to learn English.

Limited English Ability

The last internal factor found in this study was limited English ability. Based on the interview results, the participants said that they still had difficulties using English. The main problems were limited vocabulary, difficulty with pronunciation, and speaking English fluently. These problems made them feel that learning English was difficult. Because of this, they became less confident and less motivated to take part in English learning activities.

Participant 1 explained that vocabulary was one of the biggest challenges in learning English. The participant said, "The difficulties I face most often are things like memorizing vocabulary and just not feeling confident enough when speaking English." This statement shows that the participant found it difficult to remember English vocabulary. Because of the limited vocabulary, the participant also found it difficult to express ideas when speaking English. As a result, the participant became less confident and was afraid of making mistakes in class.

Participant 2 also experienced similar problems. The participant said, "The biggest challenges I've faced are with speaking and vocabulary." The participant explained that speaking English was difficult because of worries about grammar and pronunciation mistakes. Although the participant tried to keep practicing English, these language problems still made speaking activities difficult. This finding shows that students with limited English ability may feel less confident when they have to speak in front of other people.

Participant 3 also talked about having difficulties with English skills. The participant said, "The difficulties I often face are with vocabulary and pronunciation." The participant explained that these difficulties made them afraid of making mistakes and feeling embarrassed when speaking English. Because of these problems, the participant often felt discouraged during English lessons. This finding suggests that limited vocabulary and pronunciation can reduce students' confidence and motivation to learn English.

Participant 4 gave a similar response. The participant said, "Honestly, I'm not very confident yet because I'm not fluent in speaking English." Although the participant did not directly mention vocabulary or pronunciation, the response shows that speaking English fluently was still difficult. This made the participant less confident when speaking English in front of teachers and classmates.

The findings are similar to the ideas of [Dörnyei & Ushioda \(2021\)](#), who explained that students' beliefs about their own language ability can affect their motivation to learn. Students who think that their English ability is weak are more likely to avoid using English during classroom activities. [Macintyre et al. \(1998\)](#) explained that students with low confidence in their language ability are usually less willing to communicate in a second language. Likewise, [Dewaele & MacIntyre \(2014\)](#) found that students with lower language ability often feel more anxious in language classrooms, which can reduce their participation in learning activities. Therefore, the findings of this study show that limited English ability is one of the important internal factors that decreases students' motivation to learn English.

External Demotivating Factors Perceived by Students

Peer Influence

The first external factor found in this study was peer influence. Based on the interview results, classmates had an important influence on students' motivation to learn English. The participants explained that the attitudes and behaviour of their classmates could affect how they felt during English lessons. Supportive classmates made students feel more comfortable and motivated. However, classmates who laughed at mistakes, gave negative comments, or were not interested in learning English could reduce students' motivation.

Participant 1 explained that supportive classmates made them feel more comfortable studying English. Studying together and discussing the lesson helped increase motivation. However, when many classmates were not interested in the lesson, the participant also lost motivation. As the participant said, "If the group is supportive... I feel more motivated and not afraid to try. But if the class is like, 'I'm just not in the mood,' sometimes I get lazy too."

Participant 2 shared a similar opinion. The participant believed that classmates had a strong influence on learning motivation. When classmates were active and supported each other, the participant became more motivated to learn English. On the other hand, an unsupportive classroom environment reduced the participant's motivation. The participant stated, "If they're highly motivated to learn and support one another, I'd probably feel more motivated too. On the other hand, if the classroom environment isn't supportive, my motivation to learn can also drop."

Participant 3 also explained that classmates sometimes helped by explaining the lesson, but some students did not think English was important. The participant said that some classmates often commented, "Oh, come on, it's just English. You don't have to take it so seriously." These comments made the participant feel that learning English was not appreciated and reduced the motivation to study.

Similarly, Participant 4 said that some classmates gave encouragement when speaking English, but others made negative comments such as, "Oh, come on, acting all English-speaking." According to the participant, these comments lowered confidence and made it harder to stay motivated in English class.

The findings show that classmates play an important role in students' motivation to learn English. Positive support from friends helps students feel more confident and encourages them to participate in classroom activities. In contrast, teasing, negative comments, and a lack of support can reduce students' confidence and motivation. This finding is in line with [Dörnyei & Ushioda \(2021\)](#) who explains that the learning environment, including classmates, can influence students' motivation. It is also supported by [Ushioda \(2011\)](#), who states that motivation is shaped by learners' social experiences and their relationships with other people. Therefore, supportive classmates can increase students' motivation, while negative peer interactions can become a source of demotivation.

Teacher Teaching Methods

Another external factor found in this study was teacher teaching methods. The participants explained that the way teachers teach, explain the lesson, and communicate with students affected how interested they felt during English class.

Participant 1 explained that the teacher had an important role in encouraging students to learn English. The participant believed that students became more motivated when the teacher was patient and always supported them during the learning process. The participant said, "If the teacher is patient and really supportive of their students learning English, then the students are more motivated to learn". This response shows that students feel more comfortable learning English when they receive support and encouragement from their teacher. A friendly and patient teacher can help students become more confident and willing to participate in classroom activities.

Participant 2 shared a similar opinion. The participant explained that a patient and communicative teacher made the class more enjoyable and helped students become more

confident. The participant also said that students were more willing to ask questions when the teacher explained the lesson clearly. However, the participant added that teachers who were impatient or did not explain the material well could reduce students' motivation. The participant stated, "Teachers who are patient, communicative, and motivating can make students more enthusiastic and less afraid to ask questions. On the other hand, if a teacher is impatient or doesn't provide specific explanations, students usually become afraid to ask questions or try to speak". This finding suggests that students need clear explanations and positive guidance so they can feel confident in learning English.

Participant 3 also emphasized the importance of the teacher's teaching method. The participant explained that the English teacher often encouraged students and made the class more active. The participant enjoyed learning because the teacher used quizzes and games instead of only explaining the lesson. The participant said, "Miss X always encourages her students to attend her classes" and "Miss X often gives quizzes and games related to the lesson, so the class isn't too monotonous". These activities helped students stay interested and made the learning process more enjoyable. They also gave students more opportunities to take part in classroom activities.

Participant 4 described a different experience. The participant explained that some teachers used teaching methods that were boring and difficult to follow. According to the participant, some teachers only explained the lesson without giving enough detail or making the class enjoyable. The participant also said that teachers sometimes gave assignments without helping students understand the material first. The participant stated, "Their teaching is boring. They don't explain in detail, and their teaching isn't very engaging". The participant suggested that English lessons would be more interesting if teachers included games, group discussions, short videos, or other interactive activities instead of relying only on textbooks.

These findings show that the teacher's teaching method can influence students' motivation to learn English. Teachers who explain the lesson clearly, encourage students, and use interesting classroom activities can help students enjoy learning English. On the other hand, teaching methods that are unclear, monotonous, or provide little interaction may reduce students' motivation. These findings support [Dörnyei & Ushioda \(2021\)](#), who explains that teachers play an important role in maintaining students' motivation through their teaching practices and classroom interaction.

Classroom Environment and Facilities

Another external factor found in this study was teacher teaching methods. All participants said that they felt more interested in learning when the classroom was comfortable and when teachers used different learning media. However, when the lesson only used textbooks or the classroom atmosphere was not supportive, the students felt bored and had less motivation to learn English.

Participant 1 said that a comfortable classroom and complete learning facilities made learning English easier and more enjoyable. The participant explained, "The classroom atmosphere and learning resources really make a big difference. If the classroom is comfortable and the resources are complete, learning becomes easier and really fun." In the same way, Participant 2 said that learning resources, such as projectors and interesting books, helped them understand the lesson more easily and made them more motivated to learn English.

Participant 3 also shared a similar opinion. The participant said that using an LCD projector and speakers during English class helped them stay focused and made the lesson more enjoyable. The participant also explained, "If we're just staring at the book the whole time, a classroom that isn't conducive to learning can actually make me feel sleepy and unmotivated." This shows that students need a classroom that is comfortable and uses different learning media to help them stay interested during the lesson.

Participant 4 also explained that learning English became boring when the teacher only used textbooks. The participant preferred learning through short videos, films, games, or other interesting activities. The participant said, "Books are just boring... learning English shouldn't

just be about books; it should be made more fun." This finding shows that students enjoy English lessons more when teachers use different teaching media and interactive activities instead of depending only on textbooks.

These findings are supported by [Dörnyei & Ushioda \(2021\)](#), who stated that the learning environment is one of the factors that can influence students' motivation. When students learn in a comfortable classroom with suitable learning facilities and interesting teaching media, they are more likely to enjoy the lesson and stay motivated. Therefore, schools and teachers should create a better classroom environment and make good use of learning facilities to help reduce students' demotivation in learning English.

How Factors Influences Students Motivation

Internal Factors

The findings of this study show that lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, and limited English ability are strongly connected and together reduce students' motivation to learn English. Even though each participant had different experiences, they shared similar feelings when learning English. Many students felt that their vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, or speaking skills were not good enough. Because of this, they did not feel confident to use English in class. They were afraid of making mistakes and worried that their teachers or classmates might judge them or laugh at them. These feelings made them hesitate to answer questions, join class discussions, or speak English during lessons. Instead of practicing, they often chose to stay quiet because they thought it was safer than making mistakes.

The findings also suggest that these three factors affect each other and create a negative learning cycle. When students avoid speaking English, they have fewer chances to practice and improve their language skills. As a result, they continue to feel that their English ability is weak. This makes them even less confident and more afraid of making mistakes the next time they are asked to speak. Over time, students become less active in English lessons and lose interest in learning the language. Therefore, lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, and limited English ability do not work as separate problems. Instead, they are closely related and together make students less motivated to learn English.

External Factors

The findings of this study show that external factors have an important effect on students' motivation to learn English. Based on the interview results, three main factors were found: peer influence, teachers' teaching methods, and the classroom environment with its learning facilities. These factors can encourage students to learn, but they can also reduce their motivation. Supportive classmates help students feel safe, confident, and more willing to join classroom activities. When students receive encouragement from their friends, they are more comfortable asking questions, sharing ideas, and practicing English. In contrast, students who are laughed at, criticized, or surrounded by classmates who do not care about learning often become less confident and choose not to participate. The interviews also showed that the way teachers teach has a strong impact on students' motivation. Students enjoyed learning more when teachers explained the lessons clearly, gave encouragement, and used interesting activities that involved everyone. However, when the lessons were repetitive, difficult to understand, or had little interaction, students became bored and lost interest in learning English.

The findings also reveal that the classroom environment and learning facilities affect students' motivation. Students said they felt more excited to learn when the classroom was comfortable, the facilities were suitable, and the teacher used interesting learning media. These conditions helped them pay attention, enjoy the lesson, and become more active during classroom activities. On the other hand, poor classroom conditions and limited learning facilities made students less interested and less motivated to learn English. These findings agree with [Dörnyei & Ushioda \(2021\)](#), who explains that teachers, classmates, and the learning environment are important external factors that influence students' motivation. Overall, the results suggest that students' motivation is shaped not only by themselves but also by the

people and environment around them. Therefore, teachers and schools should create a supportive classroom atmosphere, use engaging teaching methods, encourage positive relationships among classmates, and provide good learning facilities to help students stay motivated in learning English

CONCLUSIONS

This study explored the internal and external factors that demotivate vocational high school students in learning English in Semarang Regency. Questionnaire and interview findings revealed that lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, and limited English proficiency were major internal factors that reduced students' participation and interest. External factors included peer influence, teaching methods, classroom environments, and learning facilities. Students felt more motivated when teachers provided clear explanations, positive encouragement, constructive feedback, and engaging activities such as discussions, games, and quizzes. Supportive classmates and adequate learning media also contributed to a more enjoyable learning experience. Consistent with Chambers (1993), the findings emphasize the importance of understanding students' diverse needs and learning experiences. Therefore, teachers should create supportive, student-centered classrooms that encourage participation and appreciate students' efforts. Schools should provide adequate facilities and professional development for teachers. Future research could involve larger samples and examine effective demotivation-reduction strategies across different vocational schools, proficiency levels, and study programs.

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