

Freshmen's Motivations and Career Objectives for Taking the Major of English Education

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to study the motivations of incoming students who decided to take the English Education Major offered by the Faculty of Education at a private university. It also sought to find out what career objectives the students plan to achieve after finishing their studies. The results of this study expectedly could become the basis for the administrators to design suitable promotional strategies to attract more incoming students. Additionally, these could help the administrators decide on strategic plans to advance and develop the best curriculum that meets the students' expectations. The research was conducted on 20 female English Education Major students using the qualitative approach through which the data were gathered and analyzed using purposive sampling techniques and qualitative data analyses. The findings showed that most students' motivation to take the major is to deepen their English language knowledge and develop their English skills, and some of them are truly motivated to be English teachers in the future. In terms of career objectives to achieve in the near future, most of them plan to be English teachers. Interestingly, some of them also plan for alternative careers like, for example, becoming English translators or tourist guides if they do not have the chance to be English teachers later.

Keywords: English Education Major, English Major Motivations, English Major Career Objectives, English Major Orientations, English Teacher, English Translator, Tourist Guide

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INTRODUCTION

English education major has been one of the majors offered by Indonesian universities for a few decades. It is one of the educational undergraduate majors commonly offered in Indonesia due to fulfilling the needs of English teachers at Indonesian schools. Public universities like Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, and Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta offer this major that is called "Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris S1." This major is not only offered by these public universities, but it is also provided by other private universities like Universitas Pelita Harapan Jakarta, Universitas Sanata Dharma Yogyakarta, Universitas Bosowa Makassar, and other small private universities around Indonesia.

Universitas X is a private university located in Manado, North Sulawesi, Indonesia. Like any other private university, this university also offers the major, "Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris" for undergraduate students. When taking this major, undergraduate student will be equipped with two types of knowledge and skills. They will learn the knowledge and skills of the English language, and, at the same time, they learn and exercise the pedagogical knowledge and skills necessary for teaching English at school in the near future.

During the period between 2014 and 2020, the number of students enrolled at Universitas X taking this major increased gradually. This case was similar to what happened at Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kudus, Indonesia where the enrollment number of this major had increased from year to year (Suciati et al., 2019). However, the number of student enrollment has been stagnant or even slightly decreases for unknown reasons for the last few years like what happened at Dire-Dawa University (Dadi, 2018). This problem creates research questions such as, "Why do incoming students choose to take the English major at Universitas X or what motivates them to take the major?"

Some studies had been conducted at different universities overseas to answer similar research questions. The results of these studies showed that the reasons for taking "*Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris*" (English Education) major varied. One reason for choosing the major is related to intrinsic and extrinsic motivations (Suciati et al., 2019; Suralaga et al., 2020), or altruistic motivation (Masbirorotni et al., 2020). The second reason is that the students have been committed to the teaching profession or to be teachers (Suralaga et al., 2020). In Suciati et al.'s study (2019), all these reasons are categorized into two types, internal factors and internal factors. The internal factors are identified as needs, plan, pleasure, and meaning. On the other, the external factors consist of learning environment, career, and society.

What motivates incoming students to take the English Education major? What are their objectives in choosing "*Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris*"? To answer these questions, the faculty of English Education decided to conduct this research. It aimed to explore the main reasons the incoming English Education students decide to come and study at Universitas X and specifically choose this major. The results of this study purposefully could become the basis for the administrators to design suitable promotional strategies to attract more incoming students. This purpose specifically makes the difference between the main purpose this study has and other previously conducted studies have. Additionally, these could help the administrators analyze the needs of stakeholders (incoming new students) and decide on strategic plans to advance and develop the best curriculum that meets the students' expectations.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation in Language Learning

Motivation is a psychological construct that is considered very important in learning. Generally, motivation is very closely relevant to human needs based on the theory of Maslow's hierarchy of needs where there are two distinct types of motivating forces or states that affect us (Gross, 2015). The two motivating forces consist of those that ensure survival by satisfying basic physical and psychological needs and those that promote the person's self-actualisation – that is, realising one's full potential, becoming everything that one is capable of becoming (Maslow in Gross, 2015). Out of the two, Santrock (2004) explained that the self-actualization is seen as the motivation to develop one's full potential as human. Santrock also stated that, from the cognitive perspective, the motivation to deal with the environment effectively generates the internal motivation of students to achieve something. Based on this idea, the educational perspective has been influenced by the cognitive perspective (Santrock, 2004) it seems to become the basis of defining motivation and types of motivation in education.

In educational practice, motivation is later identified in two different types of motivation, intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation (Santrock, 2004). The first is characterized as spontaneous activity that is maintained by the satisfactions inherent in the activity itself. In teaching practices, students' intrinsically motivated learning behaviors are based on their needs, wants, or desires within them (Brown, 2001). On the other hand, being extrinsically motivated is the condition when people are engaged in certain behaviors

because of the instrumental value they have (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Brown (2001) stated that “extrinsically motivated behaviors are carried out in anticipation of a reward from outside and beyond the self” (p. 76). In this case, the rewards can be things like money, prizes, and other things like positive feedback. Both types of motivations can be found and observed empirically in the process of daily learning.

Well-motivated English learners both intrinsically or extrinsically can effectively study the second or foreign language in classroom. Sabbah (2017) found that when a learner is goal-oriented, diligent, persistent, and has a positive attitude toward learning English, they might be self-motivated or intrinsically motivated. Another research found that external variables like supporting parents and the students' own learning purposes can help motivate students. When students are well supported by their parents to study, and the students themselves know for what purpose they learn English, they will be extrinsically and intrinsically motivated (Alamsyah et al., 2020). Another study found the importance of English teachers who directly and extrinsically motivate students in English learning. Students who learn in a supported learning environment when English teachers creatively integrate new technologies into teaching may increase students' English learning motivation (Yao, 2024). Interestingly, when the two types of motivation were compared, Mohandas et al. (2023) found that students' extrinsic goal orientation to learn English is higher than their intrinsic goal orientation. Similarly, Liu (2020) also found that extrinsic motivation is the highest predictive factor to pre-college students' English learning participation. To conclude, it is scientifically proven that both types of motivation significantly help English learners successfully learn English.

Instrumental Orientation and Integrative Orientation

In language learning, there is a connection between students' orientation and their learning motivation. Gardner and Lambert (1972) argued that a learner's motivation for language study would be determined by his/her orientation (one of a few contributing factors) to the whole process of learning a foreign language. The student's orientation itself is divided into two types, instrumental orientation and integrative orientation (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). The instrumental orientation highlights the practical benefits and rewards of acquiring a new language. On the other, the integrative orientation reflects a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other group. Brown (2001) came up with discussions that learners with instrumental orientation study a language in order to achieve a career or academic objective, but differently learners with integrative orientation study the language to pursue social or cultural goals. For this reason, language teaching practitioners should be aware of the relationship between students' orientation and their language learning motivation.

A few research in language teaching show that the instrumental and integrative orientations of students play a significant role in their English learning. Jin (2014) did a research on college students and found that the majority of the students have a clear, strong instrumental and integrative desire to study English because they understand its importance in both academic and real-world contexts. Similarly, a study on EFL university students (Abdalla, 2023) show that they have high level of both instrumental and integrative orientation toward English learning, but the instrumental orientation is slightly higher than the other. This is caused by the students' belief that studying English will help them find good jobs in the future. A similar result generated in two studies demonstrating that students possess high levels of both instrumental and integrative orientations, while the first is more prevalent (Naeeni et al., 2018; Chemir & Kitila, 2022). For example, most students want to study English primarily to improve their chances of landing a better career or to continue their education at a higher level. The findings of these studies strongly support the

importance of possessing instrumental and integrative orientations in individuals learning English as a second language.

METHOD

The research was conducted using the qualitative approach through which the data were gathered and analyzed using qualitative sampling techniques and analyses. The subject of this study was 20 female English major students (see Table 1) who were chosen using purposive sampling technique because they have the characteristics specified in this study. When this study was carried out in August 2023, these students were actively studying as new freshmen who just started studying for two weeks at the Faculty of Education of Universitas X, majoring in "*Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris*." Based on this fact, they met the subject's specified characteristics of this study.

Table 1. Subject Demographic Profiles

Respondent	Gender	Age
Respondent 1	Female	22
Respondent 2	Female	18
Respondent 3	Female	19
Respondent 4	Female	18
Respondent 5	Female	21
Respondent 6	Female	18
Respondent 7	Female	18
Respondent 8	Female	-
Respondent 9	Female	20
Respondent 10	Female	20
Respondent 11	Female	-
Respondent 12	Female	18
Respondent 13	Female	17
Respondent 14	Female	20
Respondent 15	Female	21
Respondent 16	Female	21
Respondent 17	Female	17
Respondent 18	Female	19
Respondent 19	Female	18
Respondent 20	Female	18

The data were collected through two types of instrumentation, open-ended questionnaires and interviews. The questions asked in the questionnaires are all the same as the questions asked to the interviewees during the interviews. However, the questions in the interviews were followed by some follow-up questions depending on the respondents' answers to the main questions. All 20 students participated to fill in the questionnaires, but there were only nine students who were chosen using the purposive sampling technique to participate in the interviews.

First, the students were asked to fill in the questionnaires in a laboratory room where they could do the filling without disruptions. After filling in the questionnaires, they were asked to go for the interviews. To do this, a lecturer who knows the students well asked the students' consent to participate. Nine of them decided to participate in the interviews which were held in the library room. This room was chosen due to its quietness to prevent any disruptions from other people. Two interviewers at the same time interviewed the students one by one in two separate smaller rooms in the library. The first interviewer interviewed five students, and the second interviewer interviewed the other four students. Both interviewers recorded the interviews through their smartphones and secured the recordings for analysis.

The data analyses were qualitatively carried out based on three parallel processes. These include (1) data condensation, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion drawing/verification (Miles et al., 2014). Before conducting the three processes, the data gathered through the questionnaires were tabulated, and the data gathered through the interviews were transcribed into written texts. By doing this, the data were then easily analyzed through the three activities. First, during the data condensation process, the data

were selected and simplified by categorizing them into groups and labeling the groups with suitable labels. In the second process, the chosen grouped data were then displayed which aimed to ease the process of conclusion drawing. Finally, the data displayed were used to draw conclusions as the strategy to answer the research questions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The conducted qualitative data analysis techniques generated some results for this study. The results are discussed to see similarities or differences between results found in the previously conducted related studies compared to what was found in this study. The answers to the research questions were then identified as the findings of this study.

What motivates incoming students to take the English Education major? To answer this question, the data gathered through the questionnaires and interviews were analyzed and specifically compared to validate the results.

Data from Questionnaires (Filled in by 20 Students)

Question: How did you decide to choose the English Education Major at Universitas X? Explain in detail.

The students want to learn more English knowledge and skills (7 of 20 students).

"Because I want to learn English so that when I want to visit or to be on vacation abroad, I can already speak English, and it doesn't make it difficult for me to communicate with those who come from abroad"

"Because I like to learn English.

"I chose English education because I want to be smart at speaking English"

"I chose this study program because I want to delve into English education and develop my public speaking...

"Because I'm interested in foreign languages to increase my insights.

" I want to improve my English communication skills"

" Because I want to increase my insight in the field of English."

The students want to be English teachers in the near future (5 of 20 students).

"It wasn't hard to decide because my dream was to become a teacher."

"I chose the English Education Major because I want to become an English teacher in the future."

"I want to be an English teacher, and I also want to be a translator"

"Broad job prospects, easy to get a job as an English teacher."

"... And also, I really want to work as an English teacher."

Question: What kind of work do you want to do later when you graduate from this study program? Mention and explain why you will choose the job.

The students plan to be English teachers (12 of 20 Students).

"Teacher, because I want to be useful to others. ... Yes, because my goal of taking the English Education study program is to become a teacher."

"Teacher, opening an English course."

"I want to be working as a teacher. ...Yes, I hope I will be a good English teacher."

"Teachers, because I want to teach children to know and be able to speak English."

"I will become a teacher because being a teacher has many benefits."

"Become an English teacher."

"As a teacher..., so that I can teach more deeply to students later."

"When I graduate, I will continue my education and work as a lecturer."

"I want to be an English teacher."

"Being a teacher, because being a teacher is one of the noble jobs for me."

"The job I want is in the field of education such as being a teacher or lecturer."

"Teacher, because being a teacher is not just about giving English lessons but also to serve."

The students plan to be English translators (6 of 20 Students).

"Translators, because I can help people who come from abroad and I can get to know more people."

"I want to work as a translator because there I can also get a lot of experiences that I can later share with my family"

"Translator..., yes because I like to communicate. "

"Translator."

"Tourism, can help people in translating English to Indonesian, and vice versa."

"I want to be a translator because I really like to see people speaking English."

The students plan to be tourist guides (3 of 20 Students).

"I want to be a tour guide because I can meet a lot of people and gain a lot of experiences."

" ... tour guide, yes because I like to communicate. "

"I want to get into the world of tourism because I want to get in touch with foreign agents and there, I will get a lot of opportunities to talk to native speakers."

Data from the Interviews (Nine Students Attended the Interviews)

Question: How did you decide to choose the English Education Major at Universitas X? Explain in detail.

The students want to learn more English knowledge and skills (7 of 9 Students).

"Eeeh, if it's from me, eee, I chose English because I want to learn English."

"So, the story is that when I was in junior high school, I experienced many failures in English subjects. So, from those failures I want to learn more about this English language."

"Eeeh... at first was still confused. Then when I consulted my sister, she gave me advice to learn Indonesian language. It's just ... anyway, I don't like it. Finally, I thought, oh maybe I can learn English because it's okay for me to learn that."

"Because in order to... can... I like to learn so that I can become a translator. Then, I likely want to learn foreign languages"

"Ehh, I used to hate English the most; I didn't like it the most. Hhhhh, because during every English lesson I must revoke school time. But after, I mean, eh, go out. It turns out that English education is important."

"Ehh, I'm also interested in learning English more deeply."

"In addition, eh I want more. Eh in my mind, when I enter here, maybe my English skills will increase."

The students want to be English teachers in the near future (4 of 9 students).

"... because if I'm a teacher, it is impossible for me to teach on the Sabbath"

"So that going back to Papua that I can continue to teach the children there."

"... So besides we have to be able to speak English, English teachers are also minimal in Indonesia."

"Ehmm... because I have always dreamed of it when graduating from high school this year... So, from the past, it has been my struggle with God. Hopefully, I can pass the English Education study program at Universitas X... So, it's indeed a target, it's already a target."

Question: What kind of work do you want to do later when you graduate from this study program? Mention and explain why you will choose the job.

The students plan to be English teachers (6 of 9 Students).

"Yes, hhh, because ehh I first took English because I like to be a teacher."

"Of course... as a teacher."

"Yes... Because since I was a child, I really liked to be a teacher, because I was constantly inspired by my parents who have become teachers."

"Teachers, especially to be an English teacher."

"Teacher... Yes, the first time it was hhh."

"..., first, I want to be a teacher."

The students alternatively plan to be English translators (4 of 9 Students).

"I can continue to be a translator; I can be able to go on trips and tours."

"The second is actually the goal that I am most interested in is becoming a translator."

"Hmm, it could be..., translator."

"Become a translator."

The students alternatively plan to be tourist guides (4 of 9 Students).

"I still haven't found out, but... It seems that I wanna be a tourist guide."

"The job that can be my job choice when I graduate, namely..., tourist guide."

"Hmm, I can be a tourist guide."

"To be..., a tourist guide."

When asked about how they decided to choose the English Education Major at Universitas X, the students gave a few various answers. Out of the answers, there are three important motivating reasons why they chose to take the major. These reasons seem go in line with the theory of motivation (Santrock, 2004) and theory of learner's orientation in learning (Gardner & Lambert, 1972).

First, some students want to learn more English knowledge and deepen or develop the English skills that they have already had or learned in the previous education levels. This could be the example motivation determined by the instrumental orientation as proposed by Gardner and Lambert (1972). This finding is precisely similar to what was found in Suciati et al.'s study (2019) in which the students decided to take this major to learn the English language. Probably, because English is a foreign language in Indonesia, these students might have been learning English for years, but they still think that they need to increase their English ability to be able to communicate with English speakers or native speakers.

Second, some of them think that they may become English teachers by taking this major. These students might probably have a long desire to be teachers or felt the call to teach English in remote areas in Indonesia. Out of the 20 students who participated in this

study, most of them gave these two motivating reasons why they took the English Education Major.

Third, some students are interested in learning English for a different purpose compared to the first and the second. They want to develop their speaking skills so that they could be English translators or tourist guides to English native speakers coming to Indonesia as tourists. When compared to the first two reasons, only a few students came up with this idea that this reason seems to become the alternative reason and not considered as significant as the first two reasons.

Two important findings were found when analyzing the students' plans after finishing their studies. When asked about what kind of work they want to do later when they graduate from the study program, most of the students gave a classical answer of most students that they plan to be teaching English at school or in language courses. It seems that some of these students may love teaching or think that becoming teachers is one of the easier opportunities to get a job in the future. Differently, some other students do not plan to look for jobs as English teachers. They prefer to be working as English translators or tourist guides. In their opinion, they could be working as translators in some prospective areas such as in businesses or tourism industries. This type of job may give them the chance to practice their English skills. Related to this, a few students alternatively plan to work as tourist guides because this type of job similarly gives them more opportunities to practice and develop the English communication skills they possess.

A few implications are drawn following the findings of this study. First, it is implied that most students' motivation to take English Education is to learn English skills probably because they think that their English skills are still poor or that they need to enhance their existing English skills to be better or even higher. Second, they think that being an English teacher is not the only job option they might be doing when they finish their studies due to the availability of several other job options. In relation to the types of motivations or orientations, all the students of English Education Major demonstrate the kinds of motivation determined by their instrumental orientation in making decisions to take the major, while the integrative orientation is not seen in their motivations to take the English Education Major.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that students majoring in English Education at Universitas X view their program as an opportunity to deepen their knowledge and improve their English skills, enabling them to advance in various competencies. While many aim to become English teachers, some also consider alternative career paths, such as translators or tourist guides, depending on available opportunities. Consequently, the English Education curriculum should include specialized courses that prepare students for roles in translation or the tourism industry. Additionally, when promoting the program, prospective students should be informed about these opportunities, as it could enhance enrollment by showcasing diverse career prospects. Lastly, future research could target new students before they begin their studies to obtain unbiased insights unaffected by campus learning experiences.

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