

**Analysis of Factors Influencing the Lack of Motivation of Stigmatized Students in Learning English with a Psychological Approach at MA Muhammadiyah Suprpto**

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**Abstract**

*Learning motivation is a critical internal drive determining academic success, yet it remains a significant challenge for stigmatized learners. This study aims to identify the psychological factors contributing to low learning motivation among stigmatized students and examine the effectiveness of a psychological empathic approach in enhancing their motivation in English language learning. Conducted at MA Muhammadiyah Suprpto Bengkulu City, this descriptive qualitative research involved eight students as research subjects. Data were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews during the School Field Experience Program (PLP II). The findings reveal that low motivation is driven by internal factors such as emotional pressure from unstable family backgrounds and low self-esteem and external factors, specifically negative social labeling and a lack of emotional support. However, the implementation of a psychological approach, characterized by active listening, emotional validation, and empathetic interpersonal interactions, significantly reduced academic anxiety and fostered students' self-confidence. The results showed a notable shift in student behavior from passivity to active engagement and increased participation in communication-based tasks. This study concludes that a psychological-empathic approach is a central factor in restoring the learning enthusiasm of stigmatized students by creating a safe and inclusive emotional climate. These findings suggest that emotional recovery through humanistic teacher-student relationships is a fundamental prerequisite for academic engagement in foreign language learning.*

**Keywords:** *learning motivation, stigmatized students, psychological approach, empathy, English language learning*

**INTRODUCTION**

Learning motivation is a crucial factor determining student success in achieving learning goals. According to Nikmah (2019) states that motivation acts as an internal drive that influences academic achievement. However, low motivation remains a common problem in high schools, influenced by a lack of emotional support, low self-confidence, and negative learning experiences.

This phenomenon is particularly evident at MA Muhammadiyah Suprpto Bengkulu City, where most students are categorized as stigmatized learners due to negative social and educational backgrounds. Based on preliminary observation, these students tend to be passive, less engaged in class activities, and often display indifference toward learning. Such behaviors indicate deeper psychological issues that

influence their learning motivation and academic performance.

According to Mahardika & Hanafi (2022) stated that motivation problems are not merely cognitive but are strongly influenced by emotional and social aspects, including interpersonal relationships between teachers and students. In the context of English language learning, the problem becomes even more complex since learning a foreign language demands emotional engagement, confidence, and social support. Lubis et al. (2023) emphasized that teachers who foster positive and empathetic interactions can build students' confidence, thus improving motivation. Similarly, Fernando et al. (2024) noted that a positive classroom climate and social acceptance reduce learning anxiety and encourage active participation.

To overcome such challenges, a psychological approach in the teaching process is considered relevant. Mahardika & Hanafi (2022) explained that psychosocial elements such as positive suggestion, teacher and students relationships, and supportive learning climates are essential in creating an effective learning environment. This approach is centered on understanding students' emotional and social needs, allowing teachers to apply more empathetic and personalized teaching methods. This view aligns with the humanistic educational perspective that values empathy and interpersonal connection in learning (Nikmah, 2019).

This research is significant because empirical studies on the relationship between psychological approaches and stigmatized students' learning motivation in English learning, particularly in religious-based institutions, are still limited. Most previous studies have focused on cognitive strategies and teaching methods, while psychological and social aspects have received less attention (Fernando et al., 2024; Mahardika & Hanafi, 2022). Therefore, this study aims to identify psychological factors that contribute to low learning motivation and assess the effectiveness of psychological approaches in improving the motivation of stigmatized students.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In this research, the researcher used descriptive qualitative research design. In descriptive qualitative research, the researcher seeks to describe and interpret a phenomenon based on natural settings without manipulating any variables. This design was chosen because the study aimed to obtain a deep understanding of the psychological factors influencing the learning motivation of stigmatized students in English language learning at MA Muhammadiyah Suprpto, Bengkulu City.

In this study, the researcher acted as the main instrument to collect, observe, and interpret the data directly. The research process consisted of three main stages: (1) preparation, including preliminary observation and identification of motivational problems; (2) implementation, involving English teaching using psychological and empathetic approaches along with continuous classroom observation; and (3) reflection, analyzing students' motivational changes and discussing the findings with the supervising teacher and school principal.

The subjects of this research were eight students of MA Muhammadiyah Suprpto Bengkulu City, consisting of seven male and one female student from grades X, XI, and XII. All students in the English

class were involved as the research subjects since the total number was limited. The research was conducted for one month during the School Field Experience Program (PLP II) with two meetings each week.

The steps of collecting the data were as follows: (1) preparing the instruments, including observation sheets and interview guides; (2) conducting classroom observation to identify students' motivation and emotional behavior during English learning; (3) interviewing the students to gain deeper understanding about internal and external factors influencing motivation. Observations and interviews are expected to uncover internal and external psychological factors that influence stigmatized students' learning motivation. These results will demonstrate how emotional conditions and social interactions shape students' attitudes and participation in English learning.

The data in this research were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman in Qomaruddin & Sa'diyah, (2024), which consists of three main steps: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. In the data reduction stage, the researcher selected and summarized essential information from observations and interviews. Then, in the data display stage, the data were organized into descriptive narratives and tables to identify emerging patterns and themes. Finally, in the conclusion drawing stage, the researcher interpreted the findings to understand how psychological approaches influence the learning motivation of stigmatized students.

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Findings**

Based on the implementation of learning in the PLP II program at MA Muhammadiyah Suprpto, Bengkulu City, it was found that most students come from less supportive family and social backgrounds. Instability in family circumstances, minimal parental attention, and economic pressures impact students' enthusiasm and self-confidence, especially in English language learning, which requires active participation. This finding aligns with Mahardika & Hanafi (2022), who stated that low internal drive and social support are the main factors contributing to weak learning motivation.

At the beginning of the lesson, students displayed passivity, lacked focus, and were reluctant to speak out for fear of making mistakes. After implementing an empathy-based psychological approach through personal communication and collaborative activities, significant changes occurred in learning engagement. Warmer and more supportive interactions created a positive emotional climate and increased students' intrinsic motivation.

These Changes were evident in the increased activeness, confidence, and enthusiasm of students, who began to actively ask questions, answer questions, and engage in communication tasks. This aligns with Fernando et al. (2024); Lubis et al. (2023), who stated that an empathetic approach reduces academic anxiety and increases feelings of appreciation, and Nikmah (2019) who emphasized that motivation develops when students' psychological needs are met through supportive relationships. Observations and interviews with eight students indicated that low motivation was influenced by internal factors (low self-esteem and emotional distress) and external factors (social stigma and lack of

emotional support). A psychological approach allows for a clearer identification of the root causes of motivation in English learning.

**Table 1. Observation Sheet of Psychological Factors Affecting Student Learning Motivation**

No	The resulting factors	indicator	Field Findings (Observation Summary)	Remarks
<b>A. Internal Factors</b>				
1	Self-confidence	Students appeared hesitant to speak, afraid of making mistakes, and avoided participation.	Most students were reluctant to answer questions for fear of being laughed at or making errors.	Dominant
2	Emotional and family pressure	Displayed sadness, lack of focus, or tiredness during class.	Some students seemed demotivated and admitted to having family conflicts and lack of parental attention.	Frequently observed
3	Fatigue and economic responsibility	Often sleepy in class, did not complete assignments, or arrived late.	Two students worked after school to help their families, causing fatigue and difficulty concentrating in class.	Moderate
<b>B. External Factors</b>				
4	Negative labeling and social stigma	Showed low self-esteem or withdrew from social interactions.	Some students felt labeled as "troublemakers" in their previous school and feared being treated the same way.	High
5	Lack of emotional support at school	Limited positive interaction between teachers and students.	Students were rarely engaged in personal conversations with teachers before the implementation of the empathetic approach.	Moderate
6	Lack of positive social relationships	Weak peer relationships and minimal group cooperation.	Interactions among students were limited to small familiar groups with little social bonding.	High

**Table 2. Interview Results on Factors Influencing Student Learning Motivation**

No	Factors Investigated	Questions	Students' Response
<b>A. Internal Factors</b>			
1	Self-confidence	How do you feel when you are asked to speak or answer questions in English class?	Students feel unable to follow English lessons and are afraid of making mistakes when speaking. (Interview Shaskia: "idak eh buk, ambo takut kelak salah kecek (ngomong), kelak di gelak i samo tobo iko").
2	Emotional and family pressure	How is your situation at home? Do your family members support you in learning?	Some students experience family conflict and lack of parental attention, resulting in a loss of motivation to study. (Interview Renta mersi: "setiap aku balik dusun di rumah tu idak pernah di anggap buk, itulah aku malas belajar dan idak peduli kek orang buk")
3	Fatigue and economic responsibility	What do you usually do after school? Do you have other responsibilities that affect your study?	Students work after school to support their families, leading to fatigue and difficulty concentrating on their studies.
<b>B. External Factors</b>			
4	Negative labeling and social stigma	How do you feel about how other people at school see you?	Students were previously labeled "naughty" or "unruly" at their previous school, leading to feelings of inferiority and passivity at their new school. (Interview M. ibnu farleyo: "kelak di omong nakal lagi, orang idak mau belajar tu jangan di pakso biar idak melawan buk")
5	Lack of emotional support at school	Do you feel that your teachers and classmates care about your feelings and struggles?	Students feel they receive no attention or empathy from their teachers and the community, reinforcing feelings of alienation.
6	Lack of positive social relationships	How do you get along with your classmates?	Relationships between students are weak; interactions are limited due to mistrust and negative social experiences.

Internally, several students experience emotional pressure and low self-confidence due to unstable family conditions and a lack of affective support at home. Some also struggle to concentrate because they must divide their time between studying and working. Students' statements reveal feelings of being unacknowledged, social anxiety, and fear of making mistakes, which directly reduce their intrinsic motivation. This aligns with the theory of Deci and Ryan in Lange et al. (2012), which emphasizes

that the need for acceptance, competence, and social relatedness forms the foundation of learning motivation; when these needs are unmet, students' enthusiasm for learning declines.

Externally, negative labeling in previous schools contributes to social stigma and feelings of inferiority. Several students reported being labeled as "naughty" or "problematic," which weakened their confidence to participate in a new educational environment. Ho & Tai (2020) argue that unsupportive interpersonal relationships can increase academic anxiety and hinder active participation. Furthermore, Geary et al. (2023) highlight the importance of teachers' emotional support in restoring motivation among students with negative learning experiences.

Thus, the combination of internal factors, such as low self-esteem, and external factors, such as social stigma, constitutes the primary cause of reduced learning motivation. Therefore, an empathetic approach that emphasizes emotional support and confidence building is essential to help students regain motivation and achieve optimal development.

Based on observations and interview, results show that a psychological approach impacts not only students' behavioral changes in class but also their emotional development. Teachers who act as listeners, motivators, and emotional mentors are able to restore the self-confidence of stigmatized students. This supports the theory and is further evidenced by follow up observations during the PLP II implementation at MA Muhammadiyah Suprpto, Bengkulu City, where significant behavioral changes were found following the application of a psychological approach in English language learning. In the early stages of learning, student engagement was low, characterized by a lack of attention, minimal participation, and a tendency to feign passivity in class. Interactions were still dominated by one-way communication, resulting in a learning environment that did not encourage active engagement. In response to this situation, researchers implemented a psychological approach that emphasized empathy, open communication, and emotional support. Through efforts to build interpersonal closeness, listen to students' difficulties, and provide positive reinforcement, a safer and more respectful learning environment was created. Gradually, students showed increased participation in discussions and group work, and their confidence in using English grew. The classroom atmosphere also became more interactive and collaborative.

The results of observations and interviews indicate that a psychological approach not only impacts student behavior in the classroom but also their emotional development. Teachers who act as listeners, motivators, and emotional companions are able to restore the self-confidence of stigmatized students. This supports the theory of Garland, Barbara L, & Fredrickson (2020) on the Broaden and Build Theory of Positive Emotions, which explains that positive emotions expand thinking skills and build an individual's psychological resilience. In this context, the application of empathy and a psychological approach is an effective strategy to increase student motivation and engagement in English learning in schools with stigmatized social backgrounds.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings of this research indicate that the empathic relationship between teachers and students plays a central role in restoring the

learning enthusiasm of stigmatized students at MA Muhammadiyah Suprpto, Bengkulu City. The implementation of a psychological approach by English teachers is proven to foster students' self-confidence and emotional engagement in the learning process. This aligns with the findings of Mohzana et al. (2024), who explain that emotional attachment between teachers and learners can significantly increase intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, Eki Saputra et al. (2023) emphasize that motivation serves as a positive energy that drives students to achieve better performance in the learning process. Research by Khairuddin (2025) emphasizes that empathic relationships play a vital role in reducing learning stress in students with negative social experiences. Rogers' (1983) humanistic theory, as cited by Yusuf et al. (2025) also explains that empathy and unconditional acceptance create a sense of psychological safety that strengthens learning readiness. In line with this, Sidik & Sobandi (2018) assert that learning based on positive interpersonal relationships can enhance learning motivation and discipline. Additional support comes from Prijambodo & Punggeti, (2025), who found that teachers who apply emotional empathy have a significant effect on increasing students' academic participation.

Low learning motivation in students experiencing stigma is influenced by two main factors: internal and external. Internal factors include low self-confidence, emotional exhaustion, and lack of family support, while external factors include negative labeling and limited social support at school. This is in line with Citra et al. (2025) who emphasized that student motivation in challenging tasks is influenced by both internal and external factors. The implementation of mild psychological interventions by teachers, such as active listening and providing emotional validation, has been shown to reduce learning resistance and academic anxiety (Damanik, 2024). An empathetic learning environment also increases students' psychological resilience, particularly in religious based schools (Waang et al., 2025). Furthermore, teachers' understanding of students' social contexts can foster intrinsic motivation through a sense of acceptance (Suharni, 2021). Positive relationships between teachers and students strengthen self-regulation S & Winata (2018) and increase emotional engagement and reduce academic stress in foreign language learning (Nuraeni et al., 2025).

The psychological and empathetic approach to English learning has been shown to increase student participation, speaking confidence, and self-confidence. Students who were initially passive become more active and show greater interest in learning activities. These findings align with those of Rifiyanti et al. (2025), who asserted that empathy-based learning improves interpersonal communication, and Metri (2025) who stated that a teacher's emotional approach reduces language anxiety and strengthens speaking motivation. According to Irsyadiyah et al. (2025) demonstrated that a humanistic approach can transform passive attitudes into more active and reflective ones, while Rahmawan et al. (2025) emphasized that teacher empathy builds positive perceptions through a sense of emotional safety. This finding is reinforced by Hamidah et al. (2025), who stated that empathy-based strategies increase academic engagement and emotional well-being. Thus, a psychological-empathetic approach is a key factor in creating an inclusive and meaningful learning environment.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

### **CONCLUSION**

This research concludes that the low learning motivation among stigmatized students at MA Muhammadiyah Suprpto Bengkulu is driven by a complex interplay of internal factors, such as emotional wounds from unstable family backgrounds and low self-esteem, and external factors, particularly negative social labeling and a lack of affective support. However, the implementation of a psychological-empathic approach by the teacher has proven significantly effective in reducing academic anxiety, restoring self-confidence, and transforming passive behavior into active participation. By prioritizing emotional validation and humanistic interaction, the teacher successfully created a safe learning environment that fosters students' intrinsic motivation, proving that emotional recovery is a fundamental prerequisite for academic engagement for stigmatized learners.

### **SUGGESTION**

Based on the findings of this study, teachers are encouraged to apply empathetic communication and active listening in the learning process to support students' emotional development and increase engagement. Schools should create an inclusive environment by minimizing negative labeling and promoting social acceptance among students. Furthermore, future researchers are expected to examine the long term impact of psychological approaches on students' academic achievement and overall development across broader populations.

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