

Unveiling Attitude and Motivation of English Education Students Toward English

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Abstract

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English learning is often influenced by several aspects such as attitude and motivation. In fact, not all the students from the English Education Department have a positive attitude and motivation toward the major they are studying. While many studies have been conducted on attitude and motivation among secondary and university students, rarely have we seen a similar study for English Education Department students. Therefore, this study aims to determine English Education students' attitudes and motivation in learning English. This was a survey study with 183 students participating in this study. This study used a modified version of AMTB (Attitude and Motivation Test Battery) from Gardner to collect the data. The recent version was adapted from [Imsa-Ard \(2020\)](#). There were 34 questions; the questionnaire was divided into five aspects (i.e., personal, emotional, educational, professional, and parental). The data were then analyzed by using SPSS and Microsoft Excel. The results show that English Education students have a positive attitude and motivation toward English. The overall results revealed that the English Education students in this study are highly motivated in the professional aspect. This implied that the professional atmosphere in these institutions should be maintained as it could boost students' attitudes and motivation.

Keywords: attitude, motivation, Attitude Motivation Test Battery, English Education.

INTRODUCTION

English is vital for improving academic and future professional success. The English learning process is influenced by a number of factors including students' attitudes, motivation, and a set of beliefs about learning the language, which could affect their performance in language classes ([Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011](#)). Motivation in language learning may come from anywhere, starting from within students themselves or their environment. Furthermore, [Adila \(2017\)](#) describes that motivation will affect someone's responses and acts called attitudes. Attitude is a set of beliefs that decide a person's actions in doing something. The attitudes of students affect their involvement in language learning. Positive attitudes among learners can increase motivation and lead them to successful competence attainment as a result of increased input and interaction ([Young, 2006](#)). Consequently, students' attitudes and motivation must be considered because they have an important role in the success of the language learning process. In the context of English Education students, attitude and motivation toward learning are important because they may influence the way they teach English in the future.

Like other personality traits, attitudes are a hypothetical construct that must be inferred from quantifiable responses because they are not available to direct observation. Given the construct's nature, these responses must represent a favorable or negative appraisal of the attitude object ([Ajzen, 2005](#)). Hence, [Rosenberg \(1960\)](#) classifies three types of evaluative responses that become the important components of attitude. The three components are: affective, behavioral, and cognitive.

Meanwhile, in human behavior, motivation is the driving force behind guidance, control, and persistence ([Tohidi & Jabbari, 2012](#)). [Alizadeh \(2013\)](#) insists that motivation is the most important factor in the success or failure of any difficult activity. We all know that motivation is a key to completing a task successfully. [Gardner \(1985\)](#) conducted the first empirical study on motivation in language learning, defining motivation as a combination of effort, desire to achieve the aim of learning the language, and favorable attitudes about language learning.

One of the most widely used instruments to measure student attitudes and motivation is a questionnaire. It can be seen from the number of studies on student attitudes and motivations that use questionnaires as a data collection tool. [Mcleod \(2009\)](#) divided attitude measurement into two basic categories: direct and indirect measurement. Direct measurements are in the form of scale and semantic differential, while indirect measurements consist of projective techniques and implicit association tests. From several ways on how to measure students' attitudes and motivation described previously, most of the researchers used questionnaires and scales to measure students' attitudes and motivation. [Affairs \(2009\)](#), in his study, used three different sets of scales, Academic Motivation Scale (AMS), Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI), and the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), to measure the level of motivation and attitude toward studying a foreign language (Spanish).

[Gardner \(1985\)](#) was the one who proposed the instrument for measuring attitude and motivation called the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB). Furthermore, [Gardner and Macintyre \(1993\)](#) added that the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery is a study tool created to evaluate the primary affective components linked to second language learning. In this study, a questionnaire from [Gardner's \(2004\)](#) international version of the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery was employed. The AMTB was chosen because it has a high level of reliability and validity for measuring attitude and motivation. The

international edition of AMTB has 104 pieces. However, only 34 items were chosen for this research. There were 34 items in this questionnaire, plus additional open-ended questions. This 34-item questionnaire was chosen since it was used in the same context, i.e., EFL context (e.g. [Imsa-Ard, 2020](#); [Choomthong & Chaichompoo, 2015](#); [Kim, 2006](#)).

Although many studies have been conducted on attitudes and motivation in the Indonesian context, there is limited research with English Education Department students as the participants. Studies in Indonesian context mostly conducted among Indonesian high school students and focused on subjects other than English like science ([Herron & Hennessey, 2019](#)); and physics ([Astalini et al., 2019](#); [Jufrida et al., 2019](#)). Several studies about motivation to learn English were found for university students and focused on English, such as ([Agustrianti et al., 2016](#)) who identify the relation between students' motivation in learning English and their literacy skills; [Arsyistawa \(2019\)](#) who identifies International Program Undergraduate Students motivation and attitude of towards learning English; and [Yosintha \(2020\)](#) who identifies the attitudes of students from 12 different universities across Indonesia toward studying English. Therefore, the present study is interested in analyzing the student's attitudes and motivation toward learning English, especially freshmen in the English Education Department, and thus, attempts to answer the following question: What are the attitudes and motivations toward English among students in the English Education Department?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs survey study as the design of research. The participants in this research are 183 first-year students/freshmen from the English Education Department in two universities in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Convenience sampling technique was chosen to determine the sample of research. Convenience sampling or also known as accidental sampling is a non-probability sampling method in which a sample of study is drawn from members who meet certain practical conditions, such as accessibility, geographic proximity, availability at a specific time, or willingness to engage. First-year students were chosen as the sample because students this semester are assumed to have unstable emotions related to the majors they choose. Some of them may have a high level of motivation and attitude towards English, but some others may not have it. These unstable emotions may also probably make them choose to quit English Education majors and try other opportunities in different majors. This is what makes the attitudes and motivations of first-year students still very worthy of research.

This research used the attitude and motivation questionnaire adapted from [Imsa-Ard \(2020\)](#). This 34-items questionnaire was modified from [Gardner \(2004\)](#) from the international version of the Attitude and Motivation Test Battery (AMTB). The questionnaire was divided into two parts; the first part contained questions related to background information, including gender, and types of universities. The second part consisted of 34 items designed to collect information about students' attitudes and motivation towards learning English. There were five key themes of the questionnaire, i.e., personal, emotional, educational, professional, and parental.

In this study, the researchers involved a professional in the field of English teaching to evaluate, assess and provide feedback for each questionnaire item which was translated into Indonesian. The results showed that the expert agreed that the questionnaire items were appropriate for investigating the study subject. Meanwhile, in terms of reliability, we analyzed the reliability coefficient test using Cronbach Alpha and the Cronbach Alpha result was .83 in terms of total questionnaire item reliability, indicating satisfactory

consistency.

The questionnaire was administered via Google Forms to save time and distributed to a large number of participants. The data gathered from the Google form will be analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, mean scores, correlation, and Cronbach Alpha. The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 2.3.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This present study aims to investigate the attitudes and motivations toward English among students in the English Education Department. Of the 186 students, 183 signed the informed consent form and agreed to participate in the present study. The majority of the participants (60.7%) were from public university and the rest (39.3%) were from private university. The samples consisted of 130 females (71%) and 53 males (29%).

Findings

There were 34 questions to assess first-year students' attitude and motivation in public and private universities, which then were divided into five key aspects (i.e., personal, emotional, educational, professional, and parental). Based on the descriptive statistics analysis using SPSS, the researchers find the pattern of the first-year English Education students' attitude and motivation, as shown in Figure 1. The overall result revealed that students in this study are highly motivated on the professional aspect indicated by the highest score ($M=3.82$) while the emotional aspect is the lowest aspect ($M=2.11$).

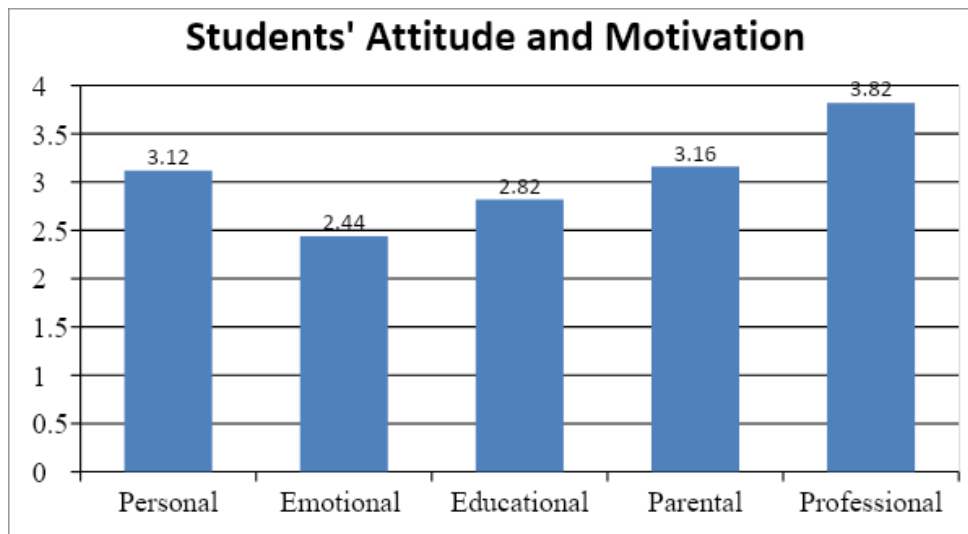


Figure 1. Result of Attitude and Motivation

Furthermore, the results of each aspect of attitude and motivation are described as follow:

1. Personal Aspect

Table 1 shows that the highest score is question number 3, "I wish I were fluent in English" ($M=3.97$, $SD=.17$), and the lowest score is in question number 24, "Knowing English is not really an important goal in my life" ($M=1.50$, $SD=7.69$). Based on the highest result, it can be stated that English Education students have a great desire to master and be fluent in the use of English.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Personal Aspect

Statements	N	M	Std. Deviation
3. I wish I were fluent in English	183	3.97	.179
27. Studying English is important because it will allow me to meet and converse with more and varied people	183	3.82	.439
1. Studying English is important because it will make me more educated	183	3.81	.417
31. I want to learn English so well that it will become natural to me	183	3.79	.458
4. I wish I could have many native English-speaking friends	183	3.79	.473
12. I learn English because English plays a role as an important language in the world	183	3.78	.444
8. I want to get grade "A" in my English class all the time	183	3.77	.482
14. I like to learn English because I like to listen to songs in English	183	3.71	.533
9. If I can speak English, I will use it for traveling abroad	183	3.70	.516
5. I want to learn other cultures to understand the world better	183	3.69	.529
10. Knowing English would help me to become more knowledgeable person	183	3.65	.543
13. I like to learn English because I like to watch films in English	183	3.44	.707
2. Studying English is important because other people will respect me more if I know English	183	3.20	.830
24. Knowing English is not really an important goal in my life	183	1.50	.769
Valid N (listwise)	183		

2. Emotional Aspect

In terms of emotional aspect, most of the English Education students reported that they felt anxious when they had to speak English, especially to foreigners. It can be seen from the highest score in Table 2 which comes from question number 17, "I get anxious when I have to speak in English to foreigners" ($M = 2.85$, $SD = .86$). Meanwhile the lowest score is in question number 25, "I hate English" ($M = 1.11$, $SD = .37$). Participants showed disagreement on question number 25 which showed a negative statement but implying positivity that they enjoy learning English.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Emotional Aspect

Statements	N	M	Std. Deviation
17. I get anxious when I have to speak in English to foreigners	183	2.85	.868
32. It worries me that other students in my class seem to speak English better than I do	183	2.77	.956
34. I am sometimes anxious that the other student in my class will laugh at me when I speak English	183	2.61	.982
22. I get anxious when I have to speak in English class	183	2.56	.899

29. It embarrasses me to volunteer answer in English class	183	2.40	.938
25. I hate English	183	1.11	.377
Valid N (listwise)	183		

3. Educational Aspect

As seen in Table 3, the highest score in the educational aspect is on question number 20 "I have strong desire to know all aspects of English" ($M=3.62$, $SD=.59$) and the lowest score is on question number 23 "Studying English is not enjoyable". From the participants' responses in this aspect, it can be concluded that students are highly interested in learning English.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Educational Aspect

Statements	N	M	Std. Deviation
20. I have a strong desire to know all aspects of English.	183	3.62	.599
19. Learning English is really great.	183	3.61	.562
16. I pay much attention to feedback I receive in my English class.	183	3.46	.618
30. My English lecturer has a dynamic and interesting teaching style.	183	3.40	.628
11. I expend much effort in learning English.	183	3.37	.615
18. I look forward to going to English classes because my English lecturer is so good.	183	3.33	.720
33. My English lecturers are a great source of inspiration for me.	183	3.25	.758
28. I think my English class at school is boring.	183	1.53	.725
21. My English class at school is really a waste of time.	183	1.39	.709
23. Studying English is not enjoyable.	183	1.23	.526
Valid N (listwise)	183		

4. Parental Aspect

In terms of professional aspect, as shown in Table 4, question number 6 "Studying English is important because I will need it for my career" has the highest scores ($M= 3.88$, $SD=.35$), while question number 7 "Studying English is important because it will be useful in getting a good job" got the opposite ($M=3.75$, $SD=.45$). It can be assumed that students agree that mastering English is one of important tools to support their career in the future.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Professional Aspect

Statements	N	M	Std. Deviation
6. Studying English is important because I will need it for my career	183	3.88	.358
7. Studying English is important because it will be useful in getting a good job	183	3.75	.457
Valid N (listwise)	183		

5. Professional Aspect

The table below shows that the highest score in parental categories is on question number 26 "My parents feel that it is very important for me to learn English" ($M=3.42$, $SD=.71$). From

these responses, the attitudes of parents might serve as extrinsic motivation for pupils to learn English.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Parental Aspect

Statements	N	M	Std. Deviation
26. My parents feel that it is very important for me to learn English	183	3.42	.713
15. My parents try to help me to learn English	183	2.90	.923
Valid N (listwise)	183		

Discussion

Concerning the research question, the overall result of descriptive analysis shows that English Education students have a positive attitude and motivation toward English. In addition, from all five key aspects of attitude and motivation, students are highly motivated on the Professional aspect ($M=3.81$). This result is in line with [Alkaff \(2013\)](#), who reported that career choice is one of influencing students' attitude and motivation to study, students believed mastering English could help them acquire a decent job. One implication for this is that students' attitude and motivation on their professionalism, need to be maintained, which means that academic atmosphere in the university should be kept professional (e.g., by lecturers, staffs, leaders, etc.). If they are not professional in managing the campus, this could affect students' motivation.

On the other hand, Emotional aspect was found as the lowest aspect of their attitude and motivation toward English. Though emotional aspect was the lowest, this does not mean students' attitude and motivation were low. All the statements in this aspect were related to negative feelings such as anxiety, worry, and embarrassment. Participants showed disagreement on these questions yet implying positivity that they enjoy learning English.

Regarding the five key aspects of attitude and motivation, in the Personal dimension, participants reported having a positive attitude and motivation toward English. Most students wish they were fluent in English. It may be because English was their second language and as English Education students, who will be English educators in the future, in order to teach English, they have to be fluent in English. These results were supported by [Thang et al. \(2011\)](#) on his findings that revealed that there is a positive relationship between positive attitudes and motivation and higher proficiency levels. Therefore, the higher their attitude and motivation, the higher their tendency to have a higher proficiency level.

In the Emotional aspect, the majority of the students reported feeling anxious when they had to speak English both to foreigners and class. Due to the survey results, this anxious feeling can be linked to other questions in the survey where students may feel anxious because they are afraid that other students will laugh at them when they speak. This point can also be linked to [Syahfutra and Wibowo \(2021\)](#) who found the main factor of students speaking anxiety were self-confidence; afraid of making mistakes, nervousness, and idea delivery. [Santosa \(2018\)](#) also reported that Indonesian students experience speaking anxiety because they are afraid of making grammatical mistakes and lack of speaking vocabulary.

Concerning the Educational aspect, the result reported that students have a strong desire to know all aspects of English, students pay much attention to feedback and think learning

English is really great. The findings are in accordance with [Nazari and Abdollahi-Guilani, \(2015\)](#) who found undergraduate and postgraduate students showed a strong interest in foreign languages as well as a strong willingness to learn English.

In terms of professional aspect, another factor influencing students' motivation and attitudes is their career choice. According to the survey, the majority of students believed that learning English would help them find a good job. These results are similar to those reported by [Imsa-Ard \(2020\)](#) and [Alkaff \(2013\)](#), in which students had no doubt that English was critical to their future success and that it is required to help them have greater work prospects.

Regarding the Parental aspect, the findings revealed that most of the participants' parents feel that it is important to learn English which is also in line with [Imsa-Ard \(2020\)](#) that most students receive parental support in learning English. Moreover, [Adila \(2017\)](#) mentioned that besides being extrinsically motivated in a professional aspect, parental support, and motivation to please the family are also reasons they are studying English. Unfortunately, the participants' responses to the second question showed that their parents were not helping them to learn. [Dailey \(2009\)](#) explained that a parent figure could be a crucial role in whether a student is motivated to acquire an L2. In detail, [Dailey \(2009\)](#) explained that parents have the power to establish a positive future self-image in their children, set an example to have a favorable attitude, and not put their children under excessive external pressure. However, most parents do not master a foreign language like English. As a result, the parents may be unable to assist the student with his or her homework.

CONCLUSIONS

This study aims to identify English Education students' attitudes and motivations in learning English. Based on the findings and the analysis in the previous chapter, the researchers draw the following conclusion. The researchers conclude that English Education students have a positive attitude and motivation toward English. According to the data, most students are highly motivated to study English because of the awareness from themselves and their parents that it will be beneficial for them both in their academic and professional life. However, some students stated that using English made them feel uncomfortable and nervous, especially when they had to talk to foreigners. For a while, the researcher concluded that speaking anxiety arises because English is not the students' first language. Difference results could potentially be obtained at other batch, major, and larger samples. This study simply used a questionnaire to collect data, which may not really delve into the motivation and attitude of students. The alternative data gathering approaches, such as classroom observation, document analysis or conducting an interview, can be considered to gain a full picture of their attitude and motivation toward English. This study explained students' attitudes and motivation from five key aspects (i.e., personal, emotional, educational, professional, and parental), and it could be expanded using other theories of the attitude component (i.e., affective, behavioral, and cognitive) and types of motivation (i.e., intrinsic, extrinsic, integrative, and instrumental). This study is limited to using questionnaires as the only instrument to investigate English Education students' attitudes and motivation. Therefore, in conducting further research in the future, researchers may develop data collection approaches such as interviews or observations to confirm the results of this study and obtain more in-depth results. Larger sample areas with multiple respondents can also be considered.

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