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CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A. Review of Related Theories

1. Students' Lack of Interest in Learning English

a. Definition of Interest

Interest refers to a strong desire or attraction toward something or a particular activity that encourages an individual to participate in it or give greater attention to it. Interest usually develops naturally within an individual and can influence their decisions and behavior in various aspects of life, including education, work, hobbies, and other activities.

In the field of education, interest has an important role in influencing students' engagement and academic achievement. Students who have a high level of interest in a subject are generally more enthusiastic, attentive, and persistent throughout the learning process. In contrast, students with low interest tend to demonstrate passive behavior and show less motivation to learn.

Interest in learning is defined as a student's interest in a particular subject (Fau, 2022:10). It can also be described as a continuous tendency to pay attention to a specific activity. Students who are interested in a learning activity usually maintain consistent attention and active involvement throughout the learning process (Suwarsih, 2018:413-424).



Furthermore, according to Adirasa Hadi Prasetyo (2021:3), an individual's interest in an activity influences their willingness and strong desire to participate in it. This interest encourages individuals to take action voluntarily without being directed or instructed by others.

From the foregoing discussion, it is clear that Interest is an intense desire or attraction to something or a particular activity that develops within a person, motivating them to regularly participate or pay attention. This interest can affect students' curiosity, focus, and willingness to actively engage in class without external pressure.

b. Interest in Learning

Learning, in general, can be defined as a process of change in an individual that occurs through experience rather than as a result of physical growth or innate characteristics (M. Sarumaha & Harefa, 2022). Interest in learning is reflected in students' curiosity, concentration, and willingness to actively participate in the learning process.

Interest in learning English is especially important because English is regarded as a foreign language for Indonesian students. Without adequate interest, students are more likely to perceive English as a difficult subject, which may result in low motivation and unsatisfactory learning outcomes.

c. Indicators of Interest in Learning

According to Slameto (2010:180-182), asserts that a crucial element in determining the effectiveness of the educational process is students' enthusiasm for



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what they are studying. Several indications may be used to determine a students' enthusiasm in studying, including:

1) Attention to lessons

Attention to lessons is a very vital initial indicator. Interested students will show high focus, listen easily, and be active in taking notes and asking questions. This shows that the learning stimulus provided by the teacher is welcomed with full engagement by the students.

2) Active Participation in Learning Activities

Engagement in the learning process is another characteristic of interested students. Interested students actively participate in classroom activities such as answering questions, asking questions, and engaging in discussions.

Readiness to exert greater effort is also mentioned by Slameto as a tangible form of interest in learning. Students with a high level of interest take the initiative to seek additional learning resources outside of school assignments, enrich their knowledge by reading and watching independent learning materials, and actively seek alternative ways of understanding the material.

3) Active involvement in learning activities

Active involvement in learning activities in learning is clearly described by Slameto. Students' often participate in discussions, answer questions,



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provide feedback, and even express constructive opinions and new ideas. This indicates optimal engagement between students' and their learning environment.

4) Consistency in engaging with learning task

Consistency is also an important indicator. Slameto emphasizes that a genuine interest will make students' learning patterns regular and continuous. Students remain motivated and have a regular study schedule, even when facing challenges or difficult material. These indicators show that interest in learning is reflected not only in students' feelings but also in their learning behavior.

2. Factors Causing Students' Lack of Interest in Learning English

Students' lack of interest in learning English can be influenced by various factors. Generally, these factors are divided into internal factors and external factors (Slameto, 2010:54-60). However, this research only focuses on internal factors, including motivation, attitude toward learning English, confidence, and vocabulary mastery.

a. Internal Factors

Internal factors are factors that come from within the students themselves. Slameto (2010:57) explains that internal factors influencing students' interest in learning include motivation, attitude, confidence, and students' basic abilities.



1. Motivation

Motivation is considered one of the most important internal factors affecting students' interest and engagement in learning English. In contemporary educational psychology, motivation is frequently explained through Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which emphasizes the quality of motivation rather than merely its quantity. According to Ryan and Deci (2020:4), motivation exists on a continuum ranging from intrinsic motivation, in which individuals perform an activity because they find it enjoyable and meaningful, to extrinsic motivation, in which behavior is driven by external demands or rewards. SDT further explains that students' motivation becomes stronger and more sustainable when their three basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—are fulfilled.

In language learning, SDT has been widely adopted in recent studies to explain why students may experience a decline in motivation when learning a foreign language such as English. Students who do not feel competent, receive limited social support, or experience little autonomy are more likely to have lower levels of motivation. As a result, they may develop less interest and become less actively involved in learning English.

Supporting this perspective, a recent meta-analysis on SDT and second language learning found that different types of motivation, particularly autonomous and controlled motivation, are significantly related to language learning outcomes. These findings suggest that students' motivational orientation plays an important role in influencing both their learning process and academic achievement.

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Furthermore, recent research in the field of language learning motivation emphasizes that motivation is dynamic and may change according to students' classroom experiences, teaching strategies, and learning environments. *The Palgrave Handbook of Motivation for Language Learning* (2020:6) states that motivation in language learning is influenced by various interconnected factors, including the classroom context, learners' emotions, and teacher support, all of which can either strengthen or reduce students' willingness to participate in learning activities.

Based on these theories, it can be concluded that motivation is a fundamental internal factor affecting students' interest in learning English. Students with stronger autonomous motivation are generally more interested, actively engaged, and persistent in learning, whereas those with lower or controlled motivation are more likely to demonstrate a lack of interest in learning English.

2. Attitude toward Learning English

Attitude is an important internal factor that influences students' interest and motivation in learning a foreign language. Attitude refers to students' feelings, beliefs, and evaluations toward a subject, which can be positive or negative. According to Al-Hoorie and MacIntyre (2020:15), learners' attitudes toward a language strongly influence their willingness to engage in learning activities and persist in language learning tasks.

Recent studies in second language acquisition indicate that students who hold negative attitudes toward English—such as believing that English is too



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difficult or irrelevant to their daily lives—are more likely to show low interest and low engagement in the learning process. Conversely, positive attitudes can increase students' curiosity, participation, and persistence in learning English (Oga-Baldwin & Fryer, 2020:42).

Moreover, Dörnyei and Ryan (2023;70) explain that attitudes are closely related to learners' emotional experiences in the classroom. Negative classroom experiences, such as repeated failure or lack of teacher support, may lead to negative attitudes, which eventually reduce students' interest in learning English.

Based on these explanations, it can be concluded that students' negative attitudes toward English may significantly contribute to their lack of interest in learning the language.

3. Confidence (Self-Confidence/ Self-Efficacy)

Confidence is another internal factor that plays a crucial role in students' interest in learning English. In educational psychology, confidence is often discussed through the concept of self-efficacy, which refers to students' beliefs about their ability to perform learning tasks successfully. According to Bandura (as discussed in Usher & Schunk, 2021:123), students with high self-efficacy are more motivated, persistent, and interested in learning activities.

Recent research highlights that low confidence in using English—especially in speaking, listening, or understanding vocabulary—can cause students to feel anxious and afraid of making mistakes. This fear often leads students to withdraw



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from classroom participation, which gradually reduces their interest in learning English (Teimouri, Goetze, & Plonsky, 2022:1-29).

Futhermore, according to Bandura's self-efficacy theory, as further discussed by Usher and Schunk (2021:123), students' confidence influences their motivation and learning behavior. Recent studies in language learning also confirm that low self-confidence can reduce students' interest in learning English (Papi & Hiver, 2020: 209–232; Teimouri et al., 2022:1–29).

Therefore, lack of confidence can be considered a significant internal factor that contributes to students' lack of interest in learning English.

4. Vocabulary Mastery

Vocabulary mastery is an essential aspect of language learning and plays an important role in developing students' interest in learning English. It refers to students' ability to understand and use words appropriately in communication. According to Nation (2022:33), limited vocabulary knowledge restricts learners' ability to understand texts, comprehend spoken language, and express their ideas effectively.

Recent studies have shown that students with limited vocabulary often experience difficulties in understanding English lessons. As a result, they may feel frustrated or bored during the learning process, which can reduce their motivation and interest in learning English, particularly when the learning materials contain unfamiliar vocabulary (Schmitt, 2020:12).



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Furthermore, Nation (2022:33) emphasizes that vocabulary knowledge is a fundamental component of language proficiency because it supports learners' comprehension and communication. Similarly, Schmitt (2020:12–15) and Zhang and Lu (2023:245–253) found that insufficient vocabulary knowledge may discourage students from participating actively in English learning and gradually reduce their interest in the subject.

Based on the theories above, it can be concluded that motivation, attitude, confidence, and vocabulary mastery are interconnected internal factors influencing students' interest in learning English. Students who have low motivation, negative attitudes, limited confidence, and inadequate vocabulary knowledge are more likely to show a lack of interest in learning English.

B. Review of Related Findings

Several previous studies have been conducted related to students' interest and motivation in learning English.

Previous studies have demonstrated that students' interest in learning plays a significant role in determining their participation and achievement in the classroom. Although each study examined different aspects of learning, they consistently reported that students' interest was influenced by both personal and environmental factors.

Suwarsih (2018:413–424) reported that students with stronger learning interest tended to participate more actively in classroom activities and achieved better academic performance. In contrast, students who showed little interest in



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learning were generally less engaged and experienced greater learning difficulties. These findings indicate that learning interest contributes positively to students' academic success.

Similarly, Harefa (2022:2) found that students' interest in learning was shaped by several factors, including motivation, teacher support, and the learning environment. The study emphasized that a positive learning atmosphere encouraged students to become more enthusiastic and actively involved in the learning process, whereas unfavorable conditions reduced their willingness to learn.

Another relevant study conducted by Adirasa Hadi Prasetyo (2021:20) highlighted the importance of appropriate teaching strategies in promoting students' interest in learning. The findings suggested that effective instructional practices, together with supportive classroom conditions, could increase students' motivation and encourage greater participation during lessons.

These previous studies mostly looked at learning interest from larger educational viewpoints, despite the fact that they have offered useful information about students' learning interest. On the other hand, the current study concentrated on determining the internal causes of the eighth-grade pupils at SMP Negeri 3 Tembilahan Hulu's lack of enthusiasm in learning English. In order to ascertain which internal element had the biggest impact on students' lack of interest in learning English, this study focused on four internal factors: motivation, attitude, confidence, and vocabulary mastery. As a result, this study builds on earlier research

by offering a more detailed examination of the internal causes of students' disinterest in studying English.



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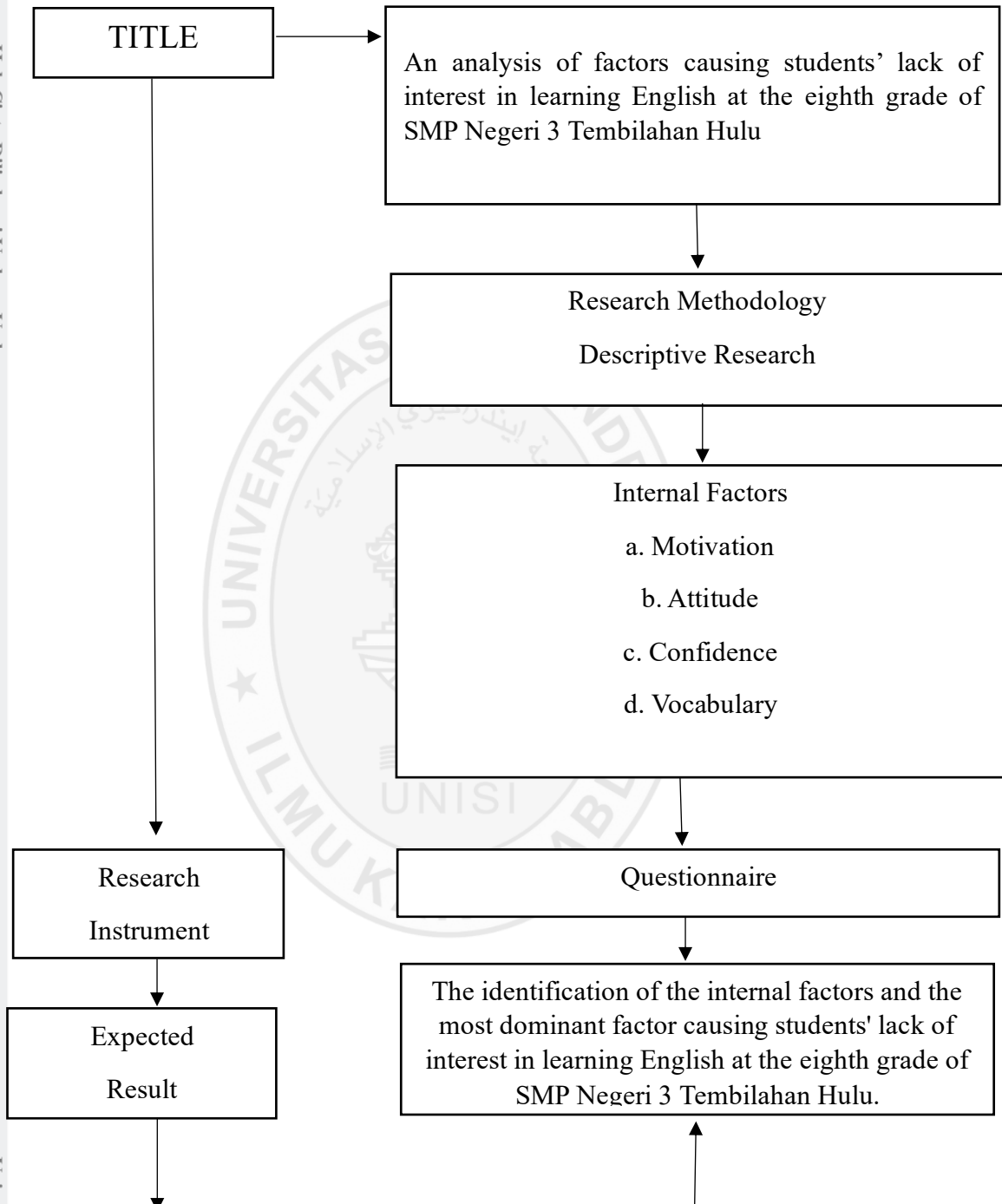




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C. Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of this research can be seen below:





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This research focuses on identifying and analyzing the factors that cause students' lack of interest in learning English among the eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 3 Tembilahan Hulu. Students' interest plays an essential role in influencing their participation, engagement, and learning behavior during English lessons.

Based on the relevant theories, students' lack of interest in learning English may be influenced by both internal and external factors. However, this research focuses only on internal factors because they are considered more relevant to the objectives of the study.

Internal factors originate from within the students themselves, including motivation, attitudes toward learning English, confidence, and vocabulary mastery. Students who have low motivation, negative attitudes, limited confidence, and inadequate vocabulary knowledge are more likely to show a lack of interest in learning English. Although external factors, such as teaching methods, learning materials, teacher support, and the classroom environment, may also influence students' interest, they are not discussed in detail in this study.

Both internal and external factors influence students' lack of interest in learning English, which is reflected in their learning behavior such as low attention during lessons, limited participation, minimal involvement in learning activities, and inconsistency in learning English.

In this research, a questionnaire is used as the research instrument to collect data related to the factors causing students' lack of interest in learning English. The

data obtained are analyzed using descriptive quantitative methods to identify and describe the factors that contribute to students' lack of interest in learning English at the eighth grade of SMP Negeri 3 Tembilahan Hulu.



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