

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the study

Higher education in Indonesia is currently facing various challenges, ranging from the relevance of the curriculum to labor market demands to low student learning motivation. Amid globalization and rapid technological advancement, university graduates are expected to possess not only theoretical knowledge but also practical skills and the ability to adapt to change (World Bank, 2020; OECD, 2021). Unfortunately, a significant number of students experience academic stagnation, a loss of learning motivation, or even regret over their choice of major. One contributing factor to this condition is the selection of a study program without careful consideration and adequate information (Utomo & Wijayanti, 2022). In recent years, the issue of major selection in higher education has become increasingly relevant and complex, especially amidst the rapid transformation of the job market and evolving industry demands. Global economic

shifts, digital technological progress, and increasing competition in the workforce require students to be more selective and strategic in determining their field of study. A major that was once considered ordinary may now be highly promising, depending on its relevance to the needs of the times (Siregar & Prasetyo, 2023).

One study program that has shown a rising trend in popularity is English Education. According to data from the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, there was a 15% increase in the number of applicants for this major in 2023 compared to the previous year (Kemendikbud, 2023). This figure not only reflects growing awareness of the importance of English proficiency but also indicates a shift in academic preferences among prospective students. However, this trend raises an important question: What actually motivates students to choose this major? Is it based on strong personal interest, or merely influenced by trends and external pressures.

Education can also be seen as an investment in the future. In this regard, universities continually strive to improve their quality to attract public interest and produce graduates who are quickly absorbed into the workforce. UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu plays a role as an institution capable of cultivating and developing three crucial qualities of human resources needed to face the era of globalization and information. In this department, students are not only taught strong English language skills but are also provided with Islamic values education that shapes their character and ethics as future educators. The combination of language proficiency and religious insight prepares graduates of the English Education Program at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu to contribute in various educational and social fields, both locally and nationally. This makes the program a favored choice for prospective students seeking a holistic education balanced between worldly knowledge and spiritual values.

Motivation is a key factor in answering this question.

In educational psychology, motivation is generally classified into two main types: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation refers to internal drives, such as a love for the English language, interest in foreign cultures, or the desire to become an educator. In contrast, extrinsic motivation involves external influences, such as expectations of a high salary, parental pressure, or broader career opportunities (Ali, 2024). A deeper understanding of these motivations is crucial because they can directly impact students' learning processes, persistence, and overall academic success.

Motivation plays a crucial role in major selection, as strong motivation can encourage students' enthusiasm in pursuing their studies. As noted in Ishikawa (2023), motivation is instrumental in student engagement, and its absence can result in a lack of academic involvement and challenges. Students with low motivation may face academic difficulties, such as procrastination or laziness in studying, which ultimately affects their academic performance.

Although UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu offers many programs, English Education remains one of the majors that attract significant attention. Decisions regarding major selection are often influenced by various factors, such as parental advice, personal interest, peer influence, the appeal of strong accreditation, and promising career prospects. Some students choose a major based solely on personal interest without parental pressure. However, in reality, it is not uncommon for students to feel they have chosen the wrong major because they were not accepted into their desired program. As a result, some decide to drop out midway and pursue work aligned with their passion, or switch to a major that better fits their interests.

Based on initial observations and brief interviews with several students in the English Education Program, some admitted to choosing this major without a clear reason or simply following their friends' choices. This raises questions about the true motivations behind their decision. A study by Dian Safitri (2023) at UIN Walisongo Semarang found that

student motivation in selecting the Hajj and Umrah Management major was dominated by intrinsic factors, such as personal interest and desire in the field, as well as extrinsic factors, including career prospects and social influence. Additionally, research by Listya Salma Prastiwi (2023) showed that most students in the Hajj and Umrah Management program were interested in working in the field of pilgrimage management, reflecting their hopes for career opportunities in this sector. However, research specifically examining the motivations of students at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu, particularly the 2024 cohort, remains limited.

In practice, major selection is not always based on personal interest or aspirations. Many students choose a program due to failing to get into their first choice, peer influence, or lack of information regarding future prospects. This phenomenon also occurs at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu, where initial observations revealed that several 2024 cohort students in the English Education Program chose

the major just to follow friends or simply gain university admission, without thorough consideration. This indicates a gap between personal awareness and the academic decisions students make.

Initial observations at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu indicate that students demonstrate varying levels of motivation that directly impact their academic performance. For instance, highly motivated students tend to actively attend lectures, submit assignments on time, and strive for high grades, while less motivated students often struggle to maintain consistent learning. Researcher observations showed that, among a sample of students from the Faculty of Sharia, approximately 65% had high motivation, correlating with satisfactory academic achievement, whereas 35% had lower motivation and faced difficulties in their studies. These data highlight the need for deeper analysis of the relationship between motivation and academic performance.

Interviews with 2024 cohort students in the English Education Program at the Faculty of Tadris and Tarbiyah

revealed significant findings regarding their motivation, experiences, and challenges in choosing and pursuing this program. The observations aimed to understand students' reasons for selecting the major, the pathways they took to enter it, their level of satisfaction, the influence of internal and external factors, and their perspectives on tuition fees and accreditation.

Some students, such as Mayasari, stated that they chose the major out of “curiosity” and a desire to explore English learning at the university level, indicating that curiosity and intrinsic motivation play a vital role in academic decision-making. Meanwhile, Zaki expressed that his motivation was personal, stemming from his interest in English, while Sinta Wulandari admitted that her high school experiences influenced her interest in education. Similarly, Anisa Salsabila mentioned she chose the program based on her interests and experiences during high school. These statements indicate that intrinsic motivation is the dominant factor for many students, in line with Deci and Ryan's Self-

Determination Theory (1985), which asserts that intrinsic motivation drives individuals to engage in activities due to personal interest and satisfaction rather than external pressures or rewards.

In addition to intrinsic motivation, observations revealed the impact of extrinsic motivation on some students. For instance, several admitted choosing the program to follow friends or to gain university admission, even if it was not their first-choice major. Vedo Virgp and Alvin Ardiansyah mentioned that social factors, such as peer and parental influence, affected their decisions. This aligns with Ali (2024), who emphasizes that extrinsic motivation arises from external factors, such as social pressure or career prospects, which can significantly influence academic behavior.

Regarding satisfaction, most students expressed contentment with their chosen major. Zaki remarked, “Hehe, it’s okay, keep practicing, later we can do it ourselves,” indicating readiness to face academic challenges through continuous learning and practice. This supports Ishikawa

(2023), who asserts that high motivation is associated with student engagement, where motivated students actively participate, remain disciplined, and commit to academic achievement.

Observations also highlighted students' perspectives on tuition fees and program accreditation. Some considered tuition reasonable and proportional to the quality of education received. Accreditation was also important, with Sinta Wulandari and Anita Listiana noting that it influenced their perception of program quality and future career prospects. This aligns with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986), which states that social environment and institutional conditions affect individual decisions and perceptions.

Previous studies support these findings. Dian Safitri (2023) revealed that students' motivation in choosing the Hajj and Umrah Management program was largely driven by intrinsic factors such as personal interest but also influenced by extrinsic factors, including social pressure and career expectations. Listya Salma Prastiwi (2023) found similar

results, with most students selecting the program in hope of pursuing careers in Hajj and Umrah services. These findings indicate that student motivation is complex, shaped by a combination of internal and external influences.

Previous research by Dian Safitri (2023) analyzed the motivation of 2022 cohort students in choosing the Hajj and Umrah Management major at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, UIN Walisongo Semarang, examining intrinsic factors such as personal interest and career aspirations, as well as extrinsic factors including social influence, parental encouragement, and future job prospects. Her findings emphasized the role of motivation in shaping academic engagement and career aspirations, with intrinsically motivated students demonstrating higher commitment and active participation. Compared to Safitri's study, the present research on the 2024 cohort in the English Education Program at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu similarly examines intrinsic and extrinsic motivation but differs in scope and context, focusing on language education

and the development of English teaching competencies combined with Islamic values. Moreover, unlike Safitri's study, which considered gender differences in motivation, this study does not include gender as a variable, aiming instead to understand overall motivational patterns, academic engagement, and student satisfaction in English Education. By excluding gender, this study provides a broader perspective on how intrinsic interest, curiosity, peer influence, and institutional factors shape academic choices, highlighting the role of UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu in nurturing both language proficiency and Islamic character, in contrast to the professional-oriented context of the Hajj and Umrah Management program.

With this background, The author is interested in examining the motivation of students to choose the English major with the research title: **“STUDENT MOTIVATION OF THE 2024 COHORT IN CHOOSING THE ENGLISH EDUCATION MAJOR AT THE FACULTY**

OF TADRIS AND TARBIYAH UIN FATMAWATI SUKARNO BENGKULU ”

B. Identification of Problems

Based on the background of the problem, this research identifies several aspects that are the main focus:

1. Students enter the English Education program with diverse motivations.
2. Some students regret their choice of major after enrollment.
3. External factors (e.g., parental influence, peer pressure) and internal factors (e.g., interest, ambition) vary significantly among students.
4. These motivations potentially affect academic performance and commitment

C. Research Questions

Based on the above background, a problem can be formulated as follows:

1. What are the factors that influence students' motivation in choosing the English Education major at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu?
2. How do motivations differ between male and female students in choosing the English Education major at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu?
3. What is the impact of these motivations on the academic performance of students at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu?

D. Objective of the study

The purpose of this research is:

1. To identify the factors influencing students' motivation in choosing the English Education major at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu.
2. To examine the differences in motivation between male and female students in choosing the English Education major at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu.

3. To assess the impact of students' motivation on their academic performance at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu.

E. Significance Of The Study

- a. Theoretically, this research is expected to be useful, especially for the development of English language education as a source of reading or reference that can provide theoretical and empirical information to parties who will conduct further research on this issue and add to existing library resources.
- b. Practically, it is hoped that this research can be a motivation for students to choose majors and be used as a benchmark in choosing an English study program, so that in the future in undergoing lectures there are no obstacles faced.

F. Limitation Of The Study

This study has several limitations that need to be considered in the interpretation of the results. First, the research sample was limited to students of batch 2024 in the

English Department at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu, so the results may not be generalizable to all students or departments at other universities. Secondly, time constraints in data collection caused this study to only cover a certain period, while student motivation may change over time and along with changes in educational policies. In addition, the use of interviews as a research instrument limits the scope of information that can be obtained, as respondents' answers may be influenced by subjective perceptions. The analytical methods used are also limited to descriptive analysis and basic statistics, which may not provide deep insights into motivational factors. Finally, this study is also limited to data obtained from students who were willing to participate, so there is a possibility of bias as not all students were willing or able to participate.

Apart from those limitations, this study has not been able to comprehensively examine the various factors that influence students' motivation in choosing the English Education major at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu.

Personal interest in English, career aspirations, encouragement from family or peers, as well as the perceived prestige of the major and job opportunities after graduation are possible determinants that were not fully explored. Similarly, the study has not addressed potential differences between male and female students in terms of their motivation to choose this major. It is possible that the reasons underlying their choices differ significantly, with some students motivated by stability and teaching opportunities, while others are more driven by global prospects or personal ambition. Furthermore, this study does not investigate the impact of students' motivations on their academic performance. A deeper understanding of how intrinsic and extrinsic motivations correlate with students' learning outcomes could provide valuable implications for teaching practices and academic support at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu. For these reasons, it is important to acknowledge that this study still leaves gaps that should be addressed in future research. A more holistic exploration of motivational

factors, gender differences, and the relationship between motivation and academic performance would enrich the understanding of students' choices and provide meaningful contributions to the development of English Education programs.

G. The definition of Key Terms

1. Motivation: In this study, motivation refers to the internal and external drives that influence students in choosing the English major. This motivation can be in the form of personal interest, influence from parents or the environment, to future career prospects.
2. Class of 2024 Students: What is meant by class of 2024 students are students who began their studies in the English Department of UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu in the academic year 2024.
3. English Tadris Department: This department is one of the study programs under the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Tadris at UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu, which focuses on English education and teaching for prospective educators.

4. UIN Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu: Universitas Islam Negeri Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu is an Islamic-based state university located in Bengkulu, which provides various study programs in education, law, economics, and others.
5. Major Selection: This term refers to the decision-making process by students regarding the major or study program that they will choose as their main field of study during their education in higher education.

