

Exploring factors influencing EFL students' lack of interests in English lessons

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ABSTRACT

Learning outcomes are significantly and positively influenced by students' interest in learning. This means that students will learn more effectively if they are more interested and satisfied with what they are learning. Unfortunately, the issue of students' lack of interest in learning English has not been thoroughly studied yet. Therefore, the aim of this study is to find out the aspects that cause students' lack of interest in English lessons. A survey design was used with tenth grade students of a high school in Malang, Indonesia, as the subjects, using 14 sets of items in the questionnaire as the research instrument to obtain the data. The data were verified through interviews to confirm their consistency with the questionnaire results. The data were analyzed and displayed using percentages. The findings show that, on average, from the teacher's side, the students' lack of interest in English lessons were mostly due to the teacher's materials and methods of teaching and personal relationship with the students. From the students' side, most of their lack of interest is due to their own unreadiness to learn English. These findings suggest that teachers should improve their teaching methods, materials, and student engagement strategies to enhance students' interest in learning English and achieve better learning outcomes.

Keywords: English lessons; lack of interest; students' strategies; teacher perspective

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INTRODUCTION

English is a medium of communication in various aspects that has developed rapidly in social society and been applied in science (Syakur et al., 2020). The use of English as a mean of communication at the international level still faces obstacles, not everyone in the world, including in Indonesia, master this language well. Many people view English as a foreign language as difficult thing to be mastered. This fact then encourages some people to try to learn it; however, there are also some people who are not interested in it because not only from the language itself find it difficult to understand, but it also takes a long time to learn. The English language has emerged as a powerful tool for fostering cross-cultural bonds on a global scale. To explore the multifaceted role of English in facilitating communication, understanding, and collaboration among individuals and communities from diverse

linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Burieva, 2023). The English has emerged as a powerful tool for fostering cross-cultural bonds on a global scale. The role of English is to facilitate communication, understanding and collaboration between various linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Atasheva, 2024).

Meanwhile, Riyanto et al. (2023) stated there are some aspects influence students in learning, such as level of intelligence, attitude, interests, and talent as the internal aspects and also external aspects, among others, learning tools, reference books, and teacher's method of teaching. Students who have an interest in learning have the desire to succeed in learning, a drive and need to learn, have goals, feel happy to learn, and are interested in learning. Therefore, it is necessary for students to feel happy to study hard and diligently do assignments, repeat lessons after school and try to understand the subject matter at school in order to achieve satisfactory academic achievement. Motivation is an important factor in determining student success in learning. This aims to analyze and determine the efforts made to increase student motivation in learning English (Jannah et al., 2024).

Based on the above statements, it can be said that interest is a condition in which a student feels like and is interested in an object in the form of a thing or activity that is in accordance with his or her desires or needs. If students have an interest in learning, it is shown through good attitudes and behavior during the learning process. This is because interest has an important role in determining a person's thinking patterns in carrying out an activity or action. Therefore, interest is one of the aspects that determine a person's success in learning.

Related to interest, motivation is also very important for learning and mastering a language. Motivations related to second language learning are integrative and instrumental and this is to describe students' interest in learning English (Huriyah, 2024). Motivation is very important in learning and mastering a language. English teachers should work hard to encourage and engage students deeply language use during and outside teaching and learning situations (Mafulah et al., 2023; Rathiga & Sarpparaje, 2020).

In several previous research results, such as by Rowa (2022), one of the reasons for students' lack of interest in learning English was due to the difficulties in memorizing words, for example when listening to western songs. This was overcome by following the rhythm of the music and looking at the song lyrics presented. Meanwhile, as stated by Sedyowati and Abduh (2022), students' low learning abilities were attributed to learn was due to inadequate facilities and infrastructure, such as reference/package books, teaching media, etc. Because in fact teachers have a very big influence on students, then they must truly guide and train students to study seriously to lead to success. Thus, the role of teachers is very important to overcome students' low interest in learning.

Moreover, Purmama et al. (2019) revealed that interest was an important part of every activity. Lack of motivation and interest might be caused by the lack of vocabulary students have when they are learning. The lack of teaching and learning facilities and competent teachers might also lead to the decrease of student interest as well as lack of mastery of the material. Hafisah (2017), also stated that students often had difficulty communicating in English in class. This difficulty stemmed from a combination of personal doubts and feelings on the challenges within themselves and their classmates that made the action unattractive. Another element that made it difficult for the students to communicate in English was distraction as a possible contributor to student inactivity.

Teachers play a significant role in determining students' learning outcome. Therefore, one way that can foster students' interest in learning is the teacher's efforts in implementing teaching and learning process. If teachers can deliver good and enjoyable learning, students will become more interested and enthusiastic in participating in learning. This will also make students interested in participating in learning. Various efforts may be made by the teacher to arouse students' interest in learning, such as based on Putra et al. (2023), which include the need for a warm and cooperative attitude, trying to start impressive and contextual teaching and learning activities, varying learning methods, using media, doing icebreaking when bored, and giving rewards.

One dynamic force that is thought to be useful in the learning process is interest. As a result, educators ought to give children greater chances to develop their interests. Likes and dislikes, as well

as attraction to the teaching and learning process are strongly correlated with lack of interests (Wahyuni, 2022). A sense of enjoyment, liking, and attentiveness to knowledge acquisition is known as interest in learning. Participating in learning activities helps students acquire knowledge, hence efforts should be made to help all students attain the final results.

Research results of Athiyyaturrahmah et al. (2023), on the reasons of the students' low interest in learning stated that the students got bored in learning. The students preferred to sit at the back chairs so that they could play their mobile phone freer. It was also stated of their being lazy to learn, frequently asking permission to go out of class, chatting with classmates, passive and unfocused in the teaching and learning process, skipping their homework, feeling sleepy or even sleeping in the class.

Based on the previous research results and references regarding the interest in learning English, various aspects may be identified, which include teaching methods, learning materials, motivation, and learning environment. However, there remains a lack of understanding of how these aspects contribute to student interest, particularly in English lessons. In response to this fact, the present research aims to conduct an analysis to identify the aspects as the cause of lack of students' interest in learning English. These finding is expected to be useful for adding perspectives for teachers regarding students' lack of interest in English lessons.

Hafsah (2017) conducted an analysis of students who were afraid to speak English among Torsina Sanggau Christian Vocational School students. Based on the results of the research, students often have difficulty communicating in English in class. The student's difficulty in achieving something stems from a combination of personal factors that make the action unattractive. Students' doubts about using English in the classroom might stem from a variety of reasons, including challenges within themselves and their classmates. Another element that can make it difficult for the students to communicate in English is how they feel at the time. Distraction is also a possible contributor to student inactivity.

Based on previous research regarding the lack of interest in learning English, various factors have been identified including teaching methods, learning materials, motivation, and learning environment. However, there remains a lack of research related to find out in-depth understanding of how these factors interact and contribute to student lack of interest, particularly in English lessons.

In response to this fact, the present research aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of students who lack of interest in English lessons to see the factors that can be identified as the cause of lack of interest and to provide concrete recommendations for increasing students' interest and involvement in learning English. It is hoped that these findings will be useful for adding perspectives regarding students' interest in English lessons and strategies to overcome for the students to be interested in English lessons. Therefore, the present research aims to explore the factors that cause the students lack of interest in English lessons and strategies of the students and the teachers, from the point of view of the students, to be interested in English lessons. The subject of present research are different from previous ones, so it is expected that the results of this research will enrich the previous research results.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Students' interest

The interests in learning can be seen from several aspects. According to Haryono (2021), interest in learning can be seen, among others, from the way students participate in learning, whether their notes are complete or not, whether they pay attention to the learning in question. Interest is one of the aspects that can support success in learning. Through high interest in learning, students will follow and pay attention to the material in the learning process. Students' attention in the learning process makes it easy for them to understand learning material. Therefore, if a learning process is not in accordance with students' interests, it will have a negative impact on students' learning outcomes. To analyze the factors that influence students' attitudes and motivation in learning English includes various elements that influence students' desires and interests in learning English, such as internal and

external motivation, perceptions of the usefulness of English, and previous language learning experiences (Ningtiyas & Rahmawati, 2024). Students' motivation towards foreign language learning, which spans a variety of contexts and methodologies, collectively reveals the dynamic and fluctuating nature of interest. Learners' motivation and interest develop not only during the language program but also within individual classes, influenced by external factors such as the learning environment and the presence of anxiety. The role of educators in shaping positive language learning experiences, strategies for overcoming reduced motivation, and positive outcomes from integrating content and language learning are discussed by Franchisca et al., (2024).

The interests in learning in students can also be seen from several other aspects. According to Solari et al. (2022), interest in learning can be seen from the way students participate in learning, whether their notes are complete or not, or whether they pay attention to make them interested and satisfied to the teaching and learning processes provided by the teacher. Motivation, including interest, is the main thing that determines students' desire to learn English. Student motivation and interest will be correlated with their performance and achievements during the learning process (Yuzulia, 2021) as the most important key that has an essential impact on the learning process. This research aimed to find out the interest that most influences students and explored the students' perceptions about teaching strategies to boost their motivation to learn English (Mafulah, 2016; Amelia et al., 2024).

Wahyuni's (2022) research statements show students being enthusiastic about lessons, diligently doing assignments, diligently coming to school, and always paying attention to the teacher when explaining lessons in class. Likes and dislikes, as well as whether or not students are attracted to the teaching and learning process are strongly correlated with interests.

Students' strategy

Students apply several strategies to become interested in English lessons. This strategy is a solution for students who are less interested in English lessons. Based on Ikart (2019) there were several strategies to get students interested in English lessons, two of which were students' strategies for studying English lessons in general and ways for students to increase their interest in English lessons. There were some strategies used by students to be interested in English lessons. These strategies included students' strategies for studying English lessons in general, and it was found among them: learning all the topics of the lesson, learning some topics of the lesson, and not learning most topics of the lesson. And then from the ways for students to increase their interest in English lessons, it was found among them: paying close attention to the English lesson, concentrating on the English lessons, learning and practicing more the four language skills, participating more in the English discussions, and paying more attention to the learning process.

METHOD

Survey design was used in the present research to find out the aspects that cause students' lack of interest in English lessons. A close-ended questionnaire was used to collect data from 10 tenth grade students of a high school in Malang, Indonesia as the subjects of the research. Following Ikart (2019) who researched the use of questionnaire to assess student's interest in learning, the present research developed 14 items in a closed-ended questionnaire which was adapted and modified from Winata (2020) and Athiyyaturrahmah et al. (2024), to explore the student's lack of interest in learning English. These items included the aspects from the teacher's side of teaching methods and materials, teacher's conduct in teaching. and teacher's relationship with the students, as well as from the students' side consisting their interest in learning English. The data obtained were calculated in percentage.

In collecting the data, there were three steps, first, distributing the questionnaire to the subjects through an online web-based survey (Google Form) in which the link was sent via the WhatsApp messaging application and waiting for the results; second, collecting and analyzing the results of the questionnaire in percentage. The data from the questionnaire were analyzed using four-point Likert scale of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD). In the last step, interview session with the subjects was done through WhatsApp voice calls to ensure whether the

stated responses in the questionnaire were in line with the answers in the interview. Likert scale with three response formats of agree (A), neutral (N), and disagree (D) was utilized to analyze the results of interview.

To select the subjects of the research, all of the students' activities during the teaching and learning process of English in class X-E in one of high school in Malang were previously observed several times. It was found that there were ten students often did not do their assignments, sleeping in class, and they rarely attended the class during the English lessons, whether for clear reasons or even without a reason. Those ten students were taken as the subject of the research. Meanwhile, the object of this research was to analyze the factors that make students were less interested in English lessons, the students' and the teacher's strategies, from the point of view of the students, to make them be interested in English lessons.

The instruments of this research were questionnaires and interviews to obtain data from a larger number of respondents that can be collected in a relatively short time. This was with consideration that questionnaires could allow for efficient data collection because the subjects can fill out the questionnaire at the time they choose. Besides, interview as the second research instrument was also used in order to be able to gather the data needed which might require more time and resources that direct interaction with each subject was done. With this interview instrument more depth results can be obtained whether the answers in the questionnaire were incompatible or not during the interview.

To answer the research questions, the data collection steps were followed: the questionnaire was distributed to the subjects through an online web-based survey (Google Form). The questionnaire link was sent via the WhatsApp messaging application and waited for the results. After the research subjects filled out the questionnaire then the collected results were analyzed. The next step conducted was an interview session in which the researcher asked questions to further explore the subjects' answers. *Bahasa Indonesia* was used in the interview to avoid misunderstanding regarding the questions. In addition, the interviewees were accepted if they wanted to answer in English or in Bahasa Indonesia or both. Before conducting the interview, the selected subjects were contacted and asked for their consent whether they were willing to take part in the interview session and to adjust the subject's time and hours for the interview.

Data analysis involves organizing data into patterns, categories, and descriptions. According to [Kawulich \(2004\)](#), data analysis is not only the process of producing a large amount of the data but also might be carried out after the data have been collected in the field, as soon as the data are collected, both when the researcher is still in the field and later when the researcher is not in the field. The present research followed Miles and Huberman's model ([Dull & Reinhardt, 2014](#)), which included three data analysis procedures, namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

FINDINGS

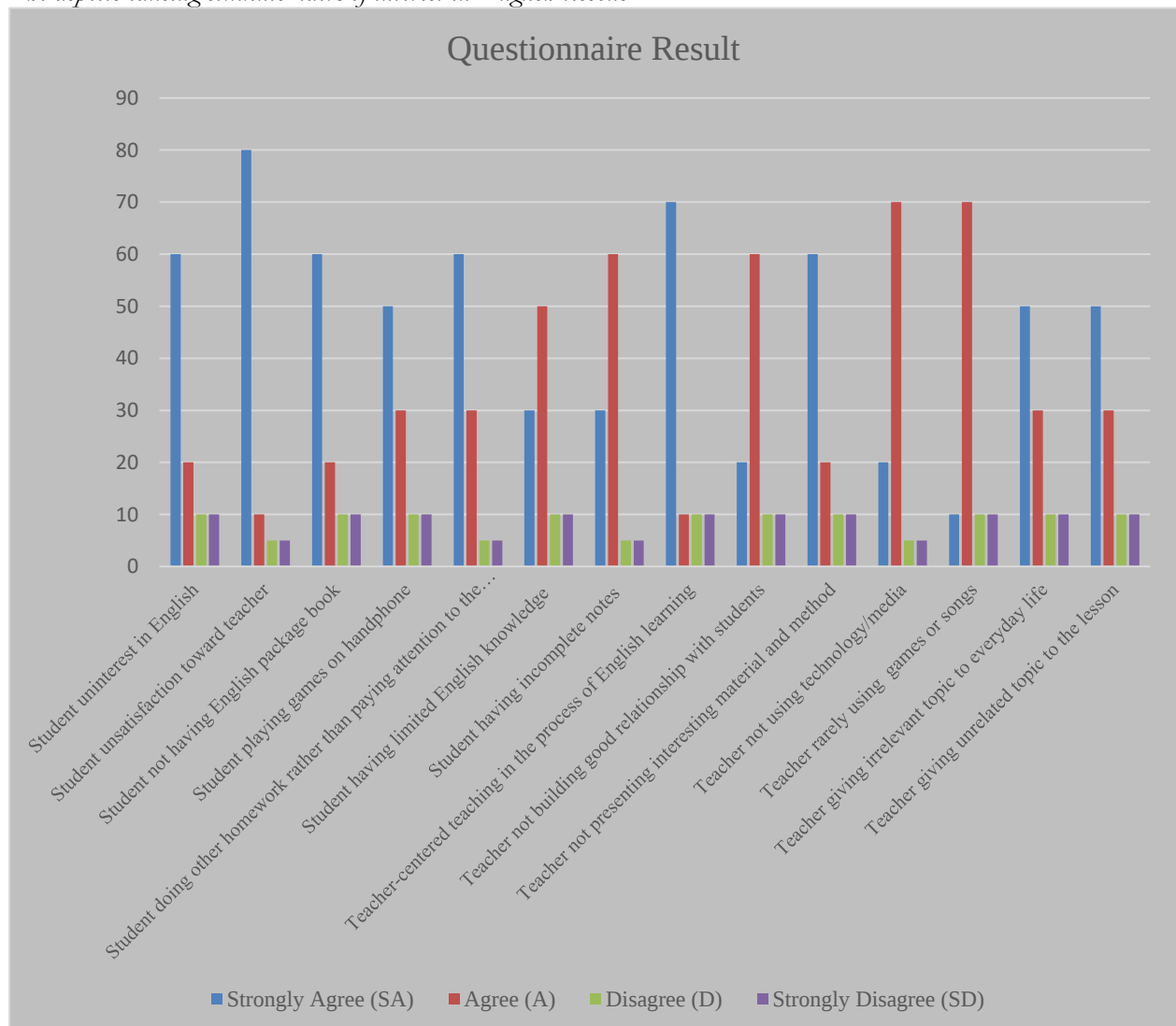
Results from the questionnaire responses ([Figure 1](#)) show that the factors causing students to be lack of interest in English lessons were students not satisfied towards the teacher. From the teacher's side, it was found that the teacher did not use technology/media, not involving students in the process of English learning, rarely using games or songs. Moreover, the teacher did not present interesting material in class, not building good relationships with students, not doing the activities interactively and pleasantly, the topic was not relevant to everyday life, and not using interesting teaching methods, and not providing positive feedback.

From the student's side, it was found that the students' notes were not complete, they did not have the English package book, and they were not interested in the teacher's explanations. Moreover, it was also found that the students did other homework rather paying attention to the lessons, they rather played games on their cellphone, and their knowledge of English was limited. Even more, the students had health problems, they were not interested in the topic because according to them the topic was not related to the lesson. Being discomfort in speaking in front of the class, the students

were thinking about other things during the English lessons. All of the above students' causes of lack of interest in English lessons resulted from the questionnaire is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1

The aspects causing students' lack of interest in English lessons



Result of the questionnaire is presented in percentage on the lack of interest in English lessons, in which the value of $\geq 50\%$ was elaborated. In Figure 1, it is shown that from the students' side, 80% of them unsatisfied with the teacher's explanation. Meanwhile, 70% of the students were not having English package book, and doing other homework during the English lessons. There were 60% of them stated consecutively of not having complete notes, not possessing the English package book, not interested in English, or doing other homework rather than paying attention to the English lessons. Moreover, 50% of students successively having incomplete notes or would rather play games in their mobile phone.

From the teacher's side, it was found that there were 80% of students felt dissatisfaction towards the teacher. As much as 70% of students agreed with the statement that the teacher did not use technology/media. Moreover, also 70% of students strongly agreed consecutively with the statement that the teacher did teacher-centered teaching in the process of English teaching and learning, and that they rarely used games or songs. There were 60% of students agreed with the statement sequentially that the teacher did not present interesting material and media in class, and the teacher did not build good relationships with students. Moreover, 50% of students also agreed with the

statement that they were not interested in the teacher's explanations because of irrelevant topic being taught.

Student's strategy to be interested in English lessons

There are two parts to students' strategies for being interested in English lessons. The first part is asking the students to describe their strategies in learning English lessons in general. In their answers, their strategies included: learning all the topics of the lesson, learning most of the topics of the lesson, learning some topics of the lesson, but not learning most topics of the lesson. In the second part the students were asked to describe ways to increase interest in English lessons, and the result included: to pay close attention to the English lesson, concentrate on the English lessons, learn and practice more the four language skills, participate more in the English discussions, and pay more attention to the learning process.

Teacher's strategy to make the students interested in English lessons

Table 1 informs the students' answers and reasons for them in the interview sessions. From the point of view of the students, there were four parts of the teacher's strategy to get students interested in English lessons, which consisted of enhancing interactive activities, engaging content, developing interest, and giving motivation. In enhancing interactive activities, the students stated that doing group discussions, often holding debates, playing games, and making multimedia presentations done by the teacher would make them more interested in English lessons. To engage content, the students statements to be done by the teacher included making a variety of topics, attractive writing styles, relevant content, and providing interesting material to students. In order to develop student's interest, what the teacher should do included making students active participation, making students skill development, making increased capabilities of students, and using various methods of teaching and the fourth explaining the parts of giving motivation, such as by using games, songs, etc. in the teaching process, taking a personal approach, cultivating positive interactions with students, having interactive and fun activities in class, giving materials relevant to every life, using technology in class, motivating not to be afraid to learn English, giving a sense of enjoyment to obtain knowledge, not to easily be angry with student's mistakes, and giving attentiveness to individual students.

The responses in the questionnaire were crosschecked by doing interview with the subjects to ensure the compatibility of the data obtained. The data from the interview were analyzed using a Likert scale with three response formats: (1) agree (A), (2) neutral (N), and disagree (D) in which the value of $\geq 40\%$ was elaborated with some other values when needed. From the student's strategies in learning English lessons in general as stated in Table 1, 6 (60%) students agreed to the statement of learning all topics of the lessons. Interestingly, however, 2 (20%) students disagreed with the statement and gave the reason of still lost their interest to study and half-heartedly learned to English lessons, and 2 (20%) other students reasoned that the topic had not been taught that they did not understand. Meanwhile, most of the students (8 persons or 80%) were willing to learn most of the topics of the lessons with the reason to improve their English skills, and only 1 (10%) consecutively stated their neutrality or disagreement. This result was similar to the student's strategy of learning only some topics of the English lessons with the reasons that they did not want to be overdue to English. Following the above statement results, it is not surprising that 9 (90%) students disagreed with the statement of not willing to learn any topic of the English lessons, and only 1 (10%) of them stated their agreement. Almost similar reason was also stated by them; they did not want to be left behind by others.

Furthermore, in the answers and reasons of the students' ways to increase interest in English lessons, 7 (70%) students gave the reason of cocentrating to study all learning topics in English and they always paid close attention to the teacher in their English lessons to improve their knowledge. However, 2 (20%) other students stated that their teacher has actually explained everything about the topic; they sometimes lost their focus due to being sleepy or they were easily distracted by things around them.

Table 1*Interview result on the students' strategies to be interested in English lessons*

No.	Student's Strategy	Statement	Student's response (%)		
			Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1	Student's strategy in learning English lessons in general	a. to learn all the topics of the lesson	6 (60%)	2 (10%)	2 (20%)
		b. to learn most of the topics of the lesson	8 (80%)	1 (10%)	1 (10%)
		c. to learn some topics of the lesson	8 (80%)	1 (10%)	1 (10%)
		d. not to learn topics of the lesson	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	9 (90%)
2	Students' ways to increase interest in English lessons	a. to pay close attention to the English lesson	8 (80%)	1 (10%)	1 (10%)
		b. to concentrate on the English lessons	7 (70%)	1 (10%)	2 (20%)
		c. to learn and practice more the four language skills	8 (80%)	1 (10%)	1 (10%)
		d. to participate more in the English discussions	4 (40%)	5 (50%)	1 (10%)
		e. to pay more attention to the learning process	9 (90%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)
		f. expressing the phrase "love Indonesian" when facing difficulties in English	10 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Moreover, 8 (80%) students' answers in the interview show of wanting to learn and practice the four English language skills since English is one of the widely used languages that they wanted to master the English skills. For this purpose, 4 (40%) students liked to take part in the group assignments to discuss using English. Even more, 9 (90%) also liked to pay more attention to the learning process to avoid difficulties in understanding the English learning materials

In the last part of the interview about being proud of using Indonesian language or Bahasa Indonesia, 10 (100%) students agreed that although they had the phrase "love Indonesian" they tried hard to use English. Regarding their statements, this was done by listening to the pronunciation through youtube or spoken vocabulary dictionary, paying attention to the teacher's pronunciation, or by watching films in the internet and imitating the pronunciation produced by them.

DISCUSSION

The present research provides insight of students' lack of interest in English lessons. The findings show that the teacher's explanation was unsatisfactory. This aligns with the finding of [Solari et al., \(2023\)](#), which suggests that the dissatisfaction of teaching and learning processes can hinder the successful learning. This might be caused by the teaching methods used by the teacher that find it difficult to understand the material. To overcome this, as also suggested by [Hafsah \(2017\)](#) and [Ningtiyas and Rahmawati \(2024\)](#), the teacher has to improve his or her method of teaching, such as by varying methods of teaching, must be competent in using the most suitable method and master the material to lead to the increase of student interest in English learning.

The present research also shows that 80% of the students reported dissatisfaction with the teacher as the primary factor behind their lack of interest in English lessons. The lack of interest might be caused the absence of fun activities in the teaching and learning process. Based on [Amelia et al. \(2024\)](#), this can be addressed by using songs that the students enjoy, following the rhythm of the music and lyrics. Meanwhile, similar to [Sedyowati and Abduh's \(2022\)](#), [Syakur et al.'s \(2020\)](#) and [Wahyuni's \(2022\)](#) research results, the present research also found that reference/package books, teaching media or technology were not adequate. In line with this problem, package books should better be available in the school library that can be borrowed in time of English lessons, in the hope that participating in learning activities by utilising the package book helps students acquire knowledge to attain the final results.

In line with Athiyyaturrahmah et al. (2024), the students' lack of interest in English learning is because of boredom. Instead of participating the English lessons, the students preferred to sit at the back chairs to play games in their mobile phone or even doing other homework. It is proposed to ask the students to put their mobile phone on the teacher's desk during the English lessons to help them more focus. If teachers can deliver good and enjoyable learning, students will become more interested and enthusiastic to participate in learning. By conducting interactive and fun activities in class, providing material relevant to the student's life, and giving students a comfortable learning environment can help students eliminate their lack of interest in learning English.

The present research also found that teacher-centered teaching which should be avoided to make the students more interested and active in this Merdeka curriculum. Franchisca et al. (2024) also suggest that interest as the internal aspect of students' learning might support the desire to succeed in the learning outcome. This study shows a weak relationship between teacher and students, so that this finding should be accommodated by the teacher. Teachers should create good interaction with the students to raise interest in learning. This finding is in line with Mafulah et al. (2023) and Mafulah and Lutviana (2021) that teacher and students interaction should be given proportionally so that students engage in the classroom and motivate the students to learn. Moreover, Hafsa (2017) stated that to avoid students' lack of interest in English learning, teacher should build good relationships with students. Teachers can use various efforts to arouse the students' interest in learning, teachers should build strong relationships with students by fostering a warm, cooperative, and engaging attitude.

It can be implied that teachers play an important role in their students' interest in learning. For this purpose, good relationships with students must be built among them, such as by fostering a warm, cooperative, and engaging attitude. Since today is the era of technology, teacher must take advantage of various internet applications available to be used in the teaching and learning process to avoid boredom.

CONCLUSION

The present research highlights the need for teachers to be mindful of their teaching practices to address students' lack of interest in English lessons. Since the aspect of interest plays a very important role in any learning, teachers must recognize the student's lack of interest in English lessons. Significant effort is required to increase students' interest in English lessons and to encourage their continued learning. This can be achieved by providing more interesting technology/media, and games/songs to avoid boredom, providing methods and materials in accordance with their needs and interest. Advice should be given to the students so they can achieve optimum outcome in a variety of ways. These can be done practicing regular learning at home, finding information about the subject matter on the internet or library, repeating the lesson from school, and taking a personal approach, fostering positive interactions with students, carrying out interactive and fun activities in class, providing material that is relevant to the students' lives by using technology in the classroom.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT:

The authors of the manuscript affirm that they have no conflicting interests.

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