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## STUDENTS INTEREST IN FOLLOWING ENGLISH LESSON: A SURVEY OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN INDONESIA

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### Keywords

*students' interest; English lesson; Junior High School; learning activity*

### Abstract

*The study explored the students' interest in learning English lessons at a private junior high school in Indonesia. The result of the research can be used as input in the English teaching process especially for knowing the factors that influence students' interest in learning English. This research was conducted using a survey design by applying a questionnaire as the instrument to collect the data. The population of the subject research was 70 students of the ninth-grade junior high school. The data was analyzed by using frequency and means in Microsoft Excel 2013. The mean score shows  $\bar{X} = 50,53$  with a value of 67, 37. The result indicated that the most influential factor in students' interest in taking English lessons was learning activity (106,76%). Therefore, to increase students' interest in learning English, it is necessary to prepare interesting and fun activities to attract students' interest in participating in class learning*

## INTRODUCTION

English is used as a means of communication in daily life. The use of English itself then makes the curriculum in schools begin to provide English subject to encourage students to learn English. Therefore, English lessons in junior and senior high schools are subjects that must be studied in Indonesia. In studying English there are some skills we should master such as listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Learning the English language should be a strong interest because of the presence of an interest in a person. It will make them diligent in learning anywhere and anytime. Because without interest in all activities will be performed less effectively and efficiently. Interest will make us pay more attention to something and do it with pleasure. Intrinsic interest or intrinsic value defined as "the enjoyment people experience when doing a task, or their subjective interest in the content of the task" (Wigfield & Eccles, 1992, p. 280). Intrinsic interest may enable students to remain occupied in a task without receiving immediate feedback because it can allow them to perceive the task as enjoyable and as containing personally meaningful information, which they can connect with various issues that interest them. In addition, the students who have an interest in a certain topic, might be able to rely on internal cues as to how well they are doing due to their experience with similar tasks. Interest is one concentration born with full willingness and depends on the talent and the environment. The English study required a concentration of attention so that what is learned can be understood and students can do something that could not be done before. There was a change in students' behavior which affected their concentration on learning English (Le, 2021). Changes in student behavior also affect students' cognitive and affective abilities in the learning process (Garrett et al, 2003, p.3).

Based on the preliminary research, the researchers found that the ninth grade students of a junior high school in Indonesia have a lack of interest in learning English. One of the most occurring factors that trigger the less interest in learning English of the students because the students' assumption that they think learning English as a foreign language is difficult to master and the students have little knowledge about English subjects. Those assumptions make the students easily bored, lazy to learn, shy to speak and afraid of making a mistake in English class. It has some influence on the students' response to learning. When the students are learning English most of them are quiet, and some others eliminate boredom by playing on their mobile phones or doing other activities that cannot attract the teacher's attention in the classroom. The lack of interest can cause difficulties for both teacher and students. Teacher will face challenges during the lesson and students have difficulties to follow the learning material or subject they are learning (Kazemian et al., 2021).

Interest is a psychological state marked by increased focus, effort, and impact encountered at a single moment, as well as a lasting predisposition over time to re-engage with a specific object or subject (Hidi & Renninger, 2006). Mulyani, Mahdum, & Delfi (2016) point out that the level of student achievement may be affected by interest. Interest in learning English is very important to bring pleasure to the English lessons hence students would be interested to learn and pay attention to all that have been studied. Attention that would encourage him to learn at home, at school and wherever it is located. English is not a difficult subject but English is the language that is easy and fun. With strong interest in students to learn English then it will be the driver to be active in learning English thus lessons will run smoothly, effectively and efficiently.

Interest is a strong motivator that energizes learning, guides academic, and is important for academic success (Renninger & Hidi, 2016). Intelligence and students' interest in learning and liveliness will smooth the process of teaching and learning in school in order to reach the learning objectives. The existence of student interest in learning English will be seen when the learning process takes place, the good response from students that are active in learning, often ask, pay attention to any explanation from the teacher, not noisy in the classroom, and does not

interfere with your friends who are diligent and also active in learning. English teachers should try to make lessons more interesting and enjoyable so that students are motivated and enthusiastic in learning. The student's interest in learning English can be seen when they are studying in the classroom with a variety of English activities (Hidi, 1990). Those kinds of activities will stimulate the students' interest, thus the students do not feel bored and tired of learning English. Interest is closely related to learning. Learning without interest will feel dull. In fact, not all students learn is driven by an interest factor alone. There is a passion for the subject matter due to the influence of his teacher, his friend, and his parents. Therefore, it is the duty and responsibility of schools to provide conditions that can stimulate students' interest towards learning.

This research aims at investigating quantitatively: (1) how are students interested in learning English? and (2) what factors influence interest in learning English? With a variety of factors that influence students' interest in learning English, it is hoped that the teacher can become a motivator and facilitator for students in the learning process.

## **METHOD**

### **Context of the Study**

This research was conducted using quantitative methods by applying a survey design. Survey research designs are methods used in quantitative research to collect data from a sample or from the entire population. (Creswell, 2012, p. 376). The participants enrolled in the study were students of the ninth-grade junior high school (14-15 years old) in one of the Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. The population in this study were 70 students which consist of 33 students from class A and 37 students from class B. The researchers used total sampling to collect sample data. According to Sugiyono (2007, p.124), total sampling is a technique for collecting data whose sample size is similar to the population size. For the ethical purpose, pseudonyms were employed in this article. Respondents are free to withdraw from the study without any penalty.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The survey was designed to explore the students' interest through English learning in Junior High School. The data were collected through paper survey using a questionnaire and distributed offline in the classroom. The type of questionnaire used in this study is a closed question, using multiple choice. The analysis uses data that has been taken from the results of the student interest questionnaire and then the frequency and means data were calculated using Microsoft Excel 2013. The data calculation applied a Likert scale to measure the value of the need scale. The Likert scale uses several questions to measure individual behavior by responding to 5 choice points on each question item, strongly agree, agree, disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree (Likert, 1932).

The researchers analyzed the data in two stages. In the first stage, the researchers analyzed all information from 70 respondents to find the results of the average value and score (Mean), the value and score which is the middle value (Median), and find out about the values and scores that often appear (Modus), and looking for the smallest to the highest values and scores, and the number of variations of the standard deviation data that has been found.

The second analysis stage is to find the results of seven factors that can affect students' interest in taking English lessons which have previously been entered into the questionnaire which is distributed to participants to be filled in. In this analysis, the researchers used the Likert scale to determine the choice of each question which has been divided into seven aspects or factors, namely (motivation, obstacle, frequency, material, media, English skills, and learning activity). The researchers performed color and number coding for each choice in this aspect to

determine the level of influence of these choices on students' interest, the higher the number given, the higher the effect. Then the researchers conducted an analysis of each option that was filled in the most to the least filled in to be given a score and value.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. The Results of Respondents' overall information

Respondents' overall information that completed the questionnaire shown in the chart below:

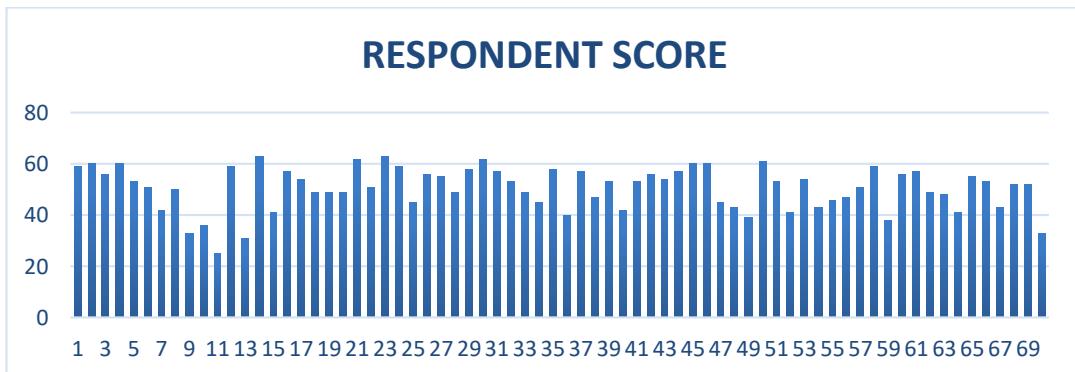


Figure 1. Chart of Respondent Score

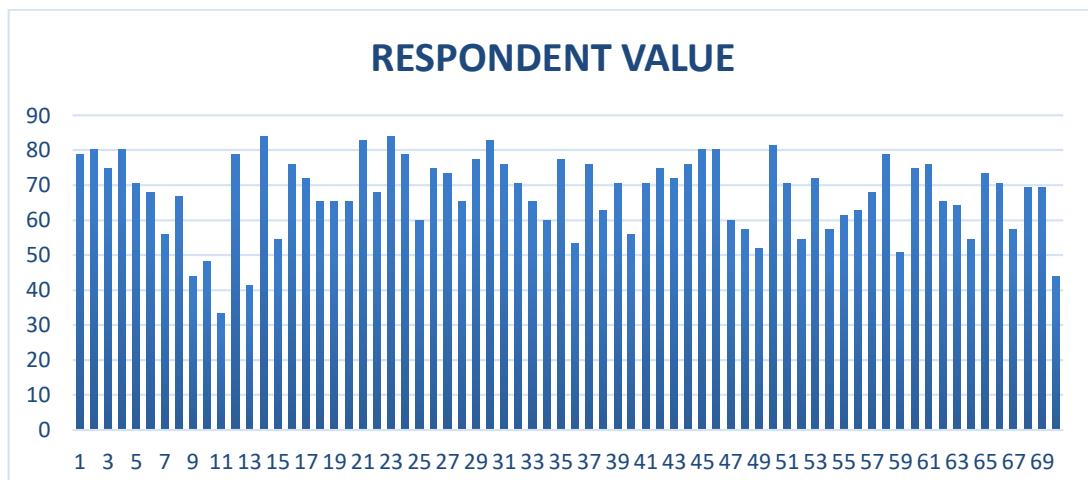


Figure 2. Chart of Respondent Value

From the data above, the total respondents were 70 participants who filled out a questionnaire about interest in learning English and the factors that influenced it. The average score of 70 participants was (50.53) of the 13 questions that had been answered in the distributed questionnaire, followed by an average value of (67.37). The smallest score obtained by one of the participants from 70 respondents was 25 with a value of 33. However, the highest score of these 70 participants was at number (63) with a value of (84). From the data above, it can also be seen that the middle or median score is at (53), with the median score of (70), followed by the score that was often obtained or the mode score by 70 participants who answered the questionnaire was (53) with a mode score of (71). What is then known from the results of the score and value above there is a score

variance of 70.92 and a value variance of (126.08) with a Standard Deviation score of (8.42) with a value of (11.23).

## 2. Finding of Each Part of the Question

This chapter aims to answer research questions about what factors influence students' interest in learning English. This research was conducted in one of the schools in Indonesia. This study only focused on junior high school students. There are 13 questions that are grouped into 7 factors that influence students' interest in English subjects. Data processing uses the Likert scale by providing a code for each choice of the questions asked.

### a. Motivation

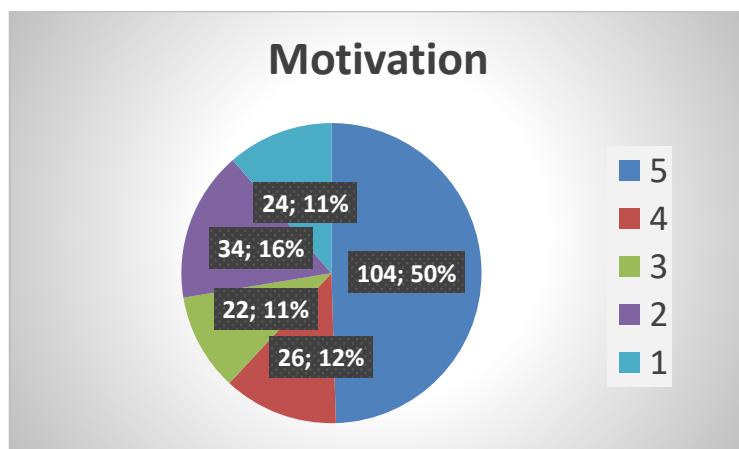


Figure 3. Motivation Chart

From the chart above, it can be seen that there were 5 different colors that have been coded using the Likert scale starting from number 1 which means the level of influence is very small, to number 5 which means it has the greatest influence. From the data above, it can be seen that the one who gets the highest number of choices is blue with the code number 5, the value is 104, 50%. Meanwhile, the other rates were slightly the same average around 22, 11% to 34, 16%. Hence, it can be concluded that the motivation factor has a big influence on students' interest in English lessons.

### b. Obstacle

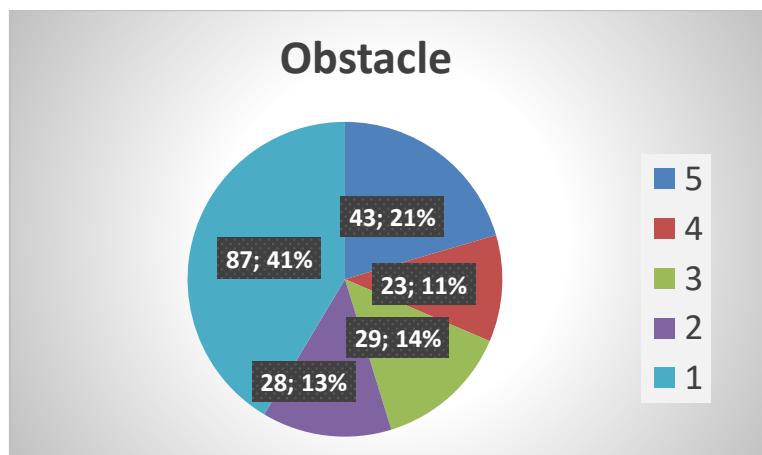


Figure 4. Obstacle Chart

From the chart data above, it can be seen that those who get the highest number of choices are light blue with the code number 1 with a value of 87, 41%. On the other word, the other rates (2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup>) were slightly the same average around 23, 11% to 29, 14%. Meanwhile, several students voted 43, 21% with 5<sup>th</sup> rate that obstacles in English learning was influenced them. Therefore, it can be said that the obstacle factor has a low influence on students' interest in English lessons.

#### c. Frequency

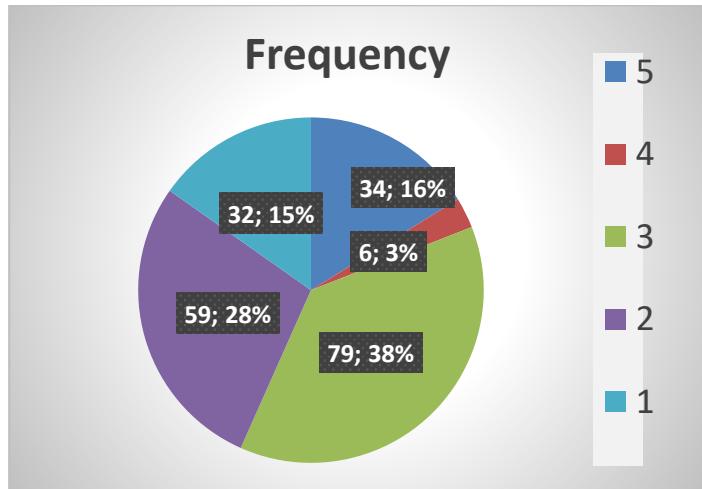


Figure 5. Frequency Chart

From this chart data, it can be seen that the number of students voted between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> rates with slightly the same average around 32, 15% and 34, 16%. Meanwhile, rate number 2 was chosen about 59, 28%. There was a lowest data that chosen only 6, 3% with the 4<sup>th</sup> rate. The one who gets the highest number of choices is the bright green color with the code number 3, the value is 79, 38%. Hence, it can be terminated that the Frequency factor has a moderate influence on students' interest in English lessons.

#### d. Material

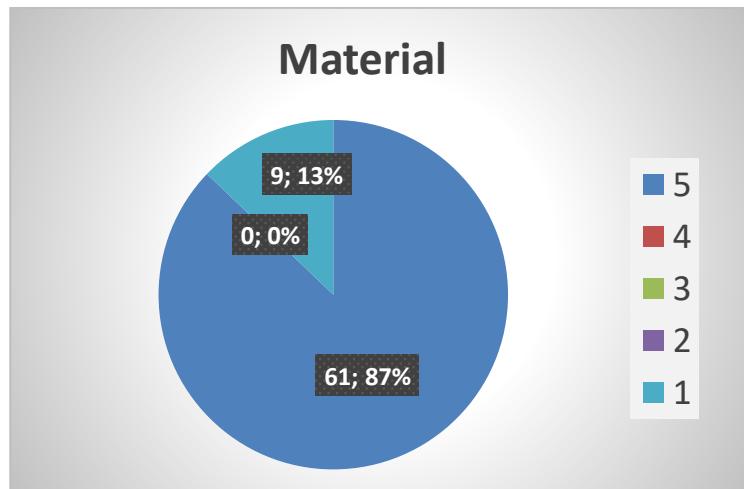


Figure 6. Material Chart

From this chart data, it can be seen that the one who gets the most gains is the blue option with the code number 5 with a value of 61, 87%. Only 9, 13% with 1<sup>st</sup> rate that chosen English materials influenced the students' interest toward the English learning.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the material factor has a very high influence on students' interest in English lessons.

**e. Media**

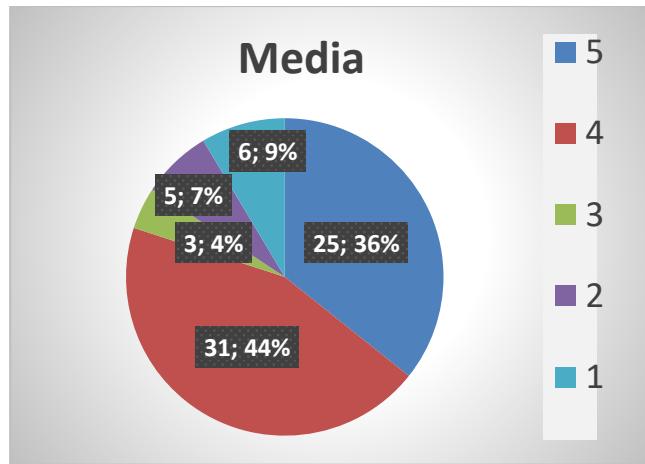


Figure 7. Media Chart

From the chart data above, it can be seen that less than 10% of students chose English media as their influence factor through their English learning interest. There is 25, 36% of students chose 5<sup>th</sup> rate. However, the most gains were the red option with the code number 4 with a value of 31, 44%. Hence, it can be concluded that the media factor also has a fairly high influence on students' interest in English lessons.

**f. English Skills**

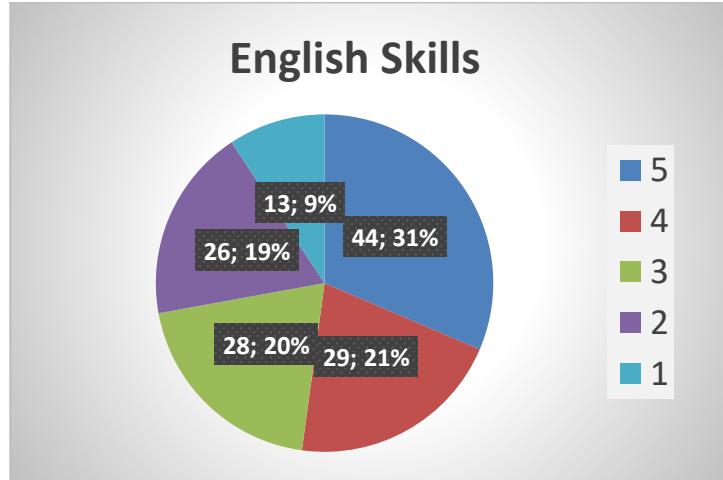


Figure 8. English Skills Chart

From the chart data above, it can be seen that the highest score obtained was the blue option with a total of 44, 31% with the code number 5, but the other choices also have a fairly large number, such as 29, 21% with 4<sup>th</sup> rate and the green choice was 28, 20% (3<sup>rd</sup> rate). Thus, it can be concluded also that the English Skills factor has a very high influence on students' interest in English lessons with various answers.

**g. Learning Activity**

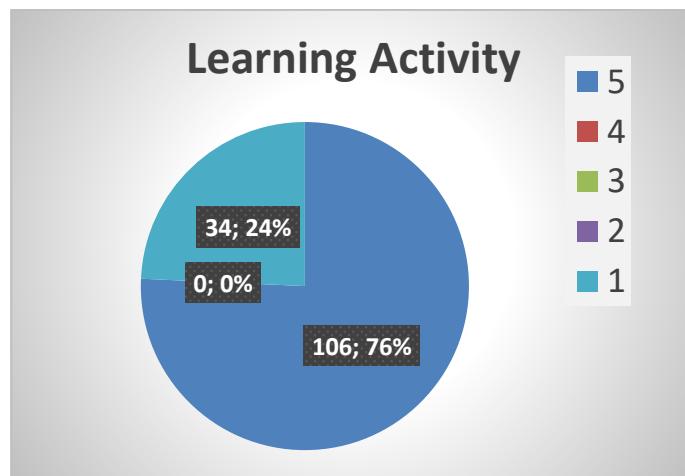


Figure 9. Learning Activity Chart

From the chart data above, it can be seen that the one who got the most points was the blue option with the code number 5 which got a total of 106, 76%. Only 34, 24% with 1<sup>st</sup> rate that chosen learning activity influenced the students' interest toward the English learning. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Learning Activity factor has a very high influence on students' interest in English lessons.

### 3. Discussion

The results of the survey data of the ninth-grade students of an Islamic junior high school were calculated in 2 steps. The first step was about the overall data of respondents who filled out the questionnaire. Based on the bar charts above, the number of respondents who participated and filled out the questionnaire was 70 students who were combined from two different classes at the secondary level. The overall average score for filling out the questionnaire was (50, 53) with a value of (67, 37) which shows that the level of influence of the aspects in the questionnaire was quite dominant. The highest score obtained as a whole was quite high, about (63) with a value of (83). While the lowest value of data was (25) with a value of (33) from respondents who were at number 11 (Students do not feel the dominant influence of the 7 aspects in the questionnaire).

The second step explained about each part of the 7 aspects that have been divided in the questionnaire. The factors that influenced the students' interest in English lessons consist of 7 aspects, namely Motivation, Obstacle, Frequency, Material, Media, English Skills, and Learning Activity. The researchers used the Likert 5 scale in processing data from each question in the questionnaire. The first part is the 'motivation' aspect, in the motivational aspect it is known that this aspect had a very large influence on students' interest in English lessons, because of the 5 choices offered for each question, only the blue option with a value of 5 is widely chosen of the 70 existing respondents with a total acquisition of (104, 50%). The second part was the 'obstacle' aspect, from this aspect most of the respondents prefered the light blue option with number 1, which indicated the choice that had the lowest influence on students' interest in English lessons. The total amount obtained from these choices was (87, 41%) which shown that the 'obstacle' aspect had a less effect on student interest.

The third aspect was 'frequency', in this aspect the results were quite varied, but the choice that had the highest gain was the green option of 79, 38%, which indicates that this aspect of 'frequency' was sufficient or in the middle of its influence on students' interest in taking English lessons. The fourth aspect is 'material,' in this aspect almost all of the 70 respondents chose the same option, namely the blue option with code number 5 which

indicated that the choice had a very high impact on students' interest in English lessons. The total amount obtained in this 'material' aspect was 61, 87% which was indeed the aspect or factor of this material which greatly influenced the lesson of English. The determination of the teaching material to be delivered will certainly affect the students' interest in participating in learning English.

The fourth aspect was the English media. The results of the survey with this questionnaire proved that the media aspect had a high enough influence. The gains obtained in this aspect were that 31, 44% of the students chose the red option with code number 4, and the total number was 25, 36% chose the blue option with code number 5. This indicated that almost all of the respondents chose the two options whose level of influence is quite high and very high. English skills were also included in the factors that influence student interest. In this aspect the survey results shown that the most chosen option was the blue one, although only around 44, 31%. It means that out of the 70 respondents, only 31% felt the very high influence of these English skills.

The last factor was the 'learning activity' aspect. In this aspect the respondents were more dominant in the blue option with code number 5. The number obtained for this choice was 106, 76% which indicated that almost all of the 70 respondents agree that this learning activity greatly influences students' interest in taking English lessons. This result similar with the previous study by Sawant (2013) and Xu, Fu, & Wang (2022) that conducting the various kinds of English activities can increase the students' interest and motivation during the learning process.

## CONCLUSION

Maintaining student focus and interest in learning English is a challenge as well as motivation for teachers and educators to create a conducive classroom atmosphere. Although many factors can affect students' interest and ability to stay focused in the process of learning English in the classroom. The present study investigates that there are factors that influence students' interest in participating in learning, especially in English lessons. The findings of this research have at least proven that there are seven factors that influence students' interest in learning English, including (Motivation, Obstacle, Frequency, Material, Media, English skills and Learning Activity). At the end of this study, it was also found that the most influential factor on students' interest in taking English lessons after being sorted from the highest based on their level of influence through data was the first 'learning activity', followed by 'motivation', 'material', 'media', English skills', 'frequency' and 'obstacles'. Therefore, it can be concluded that in increasing students' interest in learning English is needed to prepare interesting and fun activities to attract students' interest in participating in class learning.

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