

The Role of Pedagogy and Learning Environment in Shaping Students' Interest in Tourism Education

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Article History:

Received: 23 Maret 2025

Revised: 10 Mei 2025

Accepted: 21 Mei 2025

Keywords : *Green Economy; Eduaction and tourism; Bandung Regency*

Abstract: *The background of this research is based on the learning attitude and conditions of the students in the Dasar-Dasar Keahlian class. The attitude is reflected in the lack of enthusiasm during the lesson, which is indicated by distracted student performances as they engage more with their smartphones, are in a sleepy state, communicate with each other, excuse themselves to the bathroom, and other reasons. These conditions show the low learning interest amongst the students, which motivates me to conduct a research regarding the factors that affect their learning interest. The main objective of this research is to identify the causal factors of students' interest in learning. Acknowledging the factors can result in an effective learning environment that corresponds with the students' interest, therefore the number of negligent students could be diminished. The method used in this research is a qualitative approach with descriptive research methods which are conducted via observation in class during learning activities, interviews, questionnaires, and documentations. This research involved 33 students from the class of X PH 1 in SMK Bina Warga Bandung, as well as the vice principal, the chief of Hotel Accomodation Program, and the teacher of Hotel Productivity. The result of this research shows that there are internal and external factors that affect the students' learning interest during the class period of Dasar-Dasar Keahlian. The internal factors include students' level of intelligence factor, talent factor, and passion factor, while the external ones are school factor, familial factor, and students' socio-environmental factor.*

INTRODUCTION

Class X is the initial stage of upper secondary education in many countries, particularly in Indonesia. At this stage, students have new opportunities to explore various subjects and determine their interests in specific academic fields. Students enrolled in Class X must adapt to

their school environment and the specialization they have chosen. The specialization in Vocational High Schools (SMK) is a path students enter and must follow diligently because it is within this specialization that they can develop their interests, talents, and abilities. This ensures that students are in the right specialization aligned with their choices, allowing them to be more enthusiastic and focused in their studies, ultimately leading to optimal learning outcomes (Perta, 2021). Students who lack interest in the new educational level they are pursuing are at risk of hindering the achievement of educational goals for themselves (Alam, 2018). This situation could lead to their education being perceived as unsuccessful.

The subject "Basic Competencies" is an introductory course for Class X students in the Hospitality program at Vocational High Schools (SMK), designed to familiarize them with fundamental aspects of their chosen field. For Class X students in the Hospitality program, they are first introduced to the tourism industry before narrowing their focus to the hospitality industry, as it is a component of tourism. Through interviews with teachers of the Basic Competencies subject at SMK Bina Warga Bandung, it was revealed that the subject is divided into two main subtopics: Tourism Fundamentals and Hospitality Fundamentals. Tourism Fundamentals covers the basics of the tourism industry, including its history, tourists, tourist activities, development efforts, and various businesses aimed at developing tourism potential such as transportation, accommodation, attractions, services, and more. Meanwhile, Hospitality Fundamentals include the history of the hotel industry, types of hotels, hotel departments, types of rooms and hotel facilities, grooming standards for hotel employees, workplace relationships in hotels, as well as sanitation, hygiene, and occupational safety in hotels. These topics make this subject particularly significant for Class X students to help them understand the education they are undertaking in the hospitality program.

Based on observational studies and discussions conducted by researchers with teachers of the Basic Competencies subject at SMK Bina Warga Bandung from September to December 2023, it was found that many students lack interest in learning Basic Competencies in the classroom. At the beginning of the academic year, students were enthusiastic about learning, but their interest gradually declined over time. This was evident from behaviors such as students not paying attention during lessons, playing with their phones, feeling sleepy, chatting, asking for permission to leave the classroom for various reasons, including going to the restroom. Such behaviors disrupt the continuity of the teaching and learning process in the classroom. The characteristics of students who lack interest in the learning process were also described by Qomariah & R Sudiarditha (2017), who stated that uninterested students often skip classes or do not attend school, lack enthusiasm for learning, frequently cause disruptions in the classroom, are pessimistic, and often complain.

One way to measure students' interest in learning is by evaluating their academic performance. The greater the students' interest in learning, the better their academic results, and vice versa. If students' interest in learning declines, their academic performance will likely decline as well (Nurhasanah & Sobandi, 2016). Therefore, interest in learning is considered to contribute significantly to students' success in education. The achievement of basic competencies is also highly dependent on students' strong interest in the subject matter. Thus, students must enjoy and find the material engaging to make the Basic Competencies subject not only interesting but also essential for them.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Interest in Learning

In every learning process, there is always a driving desire that motivates students to learn. This desire is referred to as interest. A fondness or interest in a subject motivates students to excel, ultimately fostering a positive learning culture. Therefore, interest is said to have a significant influence on the learning activities undertaken by students (Ratnasari, 2017). Someone with an interest in a particular object will find that object appealing and worth exploring. Such individuals tend to keep up with developments related to the object. Interest in an object encourages a person to seek more information, study it, and engage in activities related to it (Arifin & Ratnasari, 2017).

In teaching and learning activities, it is crucial for students to focus their attention on the material being taught to facilitate the learning process (Qomariah & R Sudiarditha, 2017). This focus is an implementation of the interest possessed by students. Interest arises from the curiosity to know and observe something, creating a positive impression that aids in achieving specific goals (Muis & Pitra, 2021). Interest can also be defined as a consistent tendency of an individual toward a particular field of study or subject matter, leading to enthusiasm for learning specific topics (Winkel, 2007).

Learning motivation is a non-intellectual psychological factor that plays a distinctive role in fostering enthusiasm, joy, and eagerness to learn. Students with high motivation have abundant energy to participate in learning activities. Interest and motivation are interconnected, as interest emerges when an individual perceives certain characteristics or meanings in a situation that align with their personal desires or needs. Thus, what someone pays attention to often stimulates their interest, depending on how relevant it is to their needs and desires (Harefa et al., 2022). In summary, interest is closely related to learning motivation, which drives an individual to engage in learning activities (Arifin & Ratnasari, 2017).

Interest also influences learning outcomes. Learning processes driven by interest promote success among students (Qomariah & R Sudiarditha, 2017). As Slameto (2013) stated, interest significantly impacts the learning process. If the material being studied does not align with students' interests, they tend not to learn optimally because it lacks appeal. Conversely, material that attracts students' interest is easier to learn and remember because interest fosters greater involvement in learning activities. Based on this, it can be concluded that interest in learning is an internal tendency derived from an individual's attraction to focus their attention and engage in learning activities. Therefore, learning processes must also aim to stimulate students' interest to achieve optimal learning goals.

Factors that Influence Interest in Learning

Learning interest is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors originate within the individual and include physical and mental health, intelligence, maturity, and gender. External factors, on the other hand, come from the individual's environment, such as family, school, community, and surroundings (Nurziahman, 2021). Internal factors reflecting students' interest in learning include intelligence, talent, interest, and motivation (Khalijah et al., 2023).

External factors within the school environment that can spark students' interest include teaching methods, teacher characteristics, a calm and comfortable classroom atmosphere, and supporting learning facilities (Festiawan, 2020). Similarly, Sarah et al. (2021) identified external factors influencing students' interest, such as family environment, school environment, and community environment.

This aligns with efforts teachers need to undertake to stimulate students' interest in learning, as suggested by Suryani (2020). These factors include:

1. **Teaching Methods:** Teachers' roles in the learning process, such as acting as demonstrators or evaluators, play a crucial role.
2. **Teacher Characteristics:** Teachers should appreciate students' shortcomings, be kind, patient, disciplined, enthusiastic, and avoid threatening or harming students.
3. **Classroom Atmosphere:** A comfortable and calm learning environment encourages students to focus and engage in positive activities. Teachers should create an enjoyable learning atmosphere.
4. **Learning Facilities:** Adequate facilities such as whiteboards, projectors, practice rooms, teaching aids, and more enhance the learning process, making it more effective and varied. Adequate and engaging facilities help ensure effective and dynamic learning experiences.

METHOD

In this study, the researcher uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research method, which seeks to explain the resolution of existing problems based on the data obtained. Descriptive research aims to describe existing phenomena, whether natural or human-made. This research also focuses on analysis and description without intending to provide broader implications (Adiputra et al., 2021).

In this study, the researcher will also use qualitative methods involving field research and library research. According to Rahmadi (2011) in the book *Introduction to Research Methodology*, library research is a type of research that emphasizes discussions using written materials such as manuscripts, books, journals, newspapers, and other sources relevant to the topic. Conversely, field research is a type of research that primarily focuses on discussions by collecting data from sources as information, or, in other words, data obtained from respondents through interviews, observations, questionnaires, and other methods.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Factors Influencing the Interest of Students at SMK Bina Warga Bandung in Learning Subjects

1. Internal Factors

There are three internal factors that influence the students' interest in learning the core expertise subjects at SMK Bina Warga Bandung. The first factor is intelligence. Students' intelligence levels can be observed through their innate abilities, capacity, and understanding of the material. Based on the survey responses, the majority of students reported that they were able to comprehend the core expertise subjects well. The rest stated they were unsure of their understanding of the material. The survey responses indicate the presence of intelligence as an internal factor influencing students' learning interest. Furthermore, during interviews, students could succinctly explain the core expertise subjects, demonstrating their ability to learn and understand the material.

The next factor is talent. Talent is reflected in students' achievements and their mastery of the subject matter. Students who excel academically and master the material can be considered talented in that area. From the students' learning outcomes in the core expertise subjects, it was revealed that 60% of students achieved good grades (above the passing criteria). During interviews, the primary informant, a teacher of the core expertise subjects, noted that one student achieved a perfect score. Survey responses also showed that students

excelled and performed well in these subjects.

The last internal factor influencing students' interest in learning core expertise subjects is interest. Interest can be observed from students' attitudes during learning, which reflect their enjoyment, attention, and participation. Survey responses revealed that students found core expertise subjects interesting to learn. As a result, supporting informants among the students admitted that they felt happy and enthusiastic during lessons. Their interest motivated them to learn more about the hotel industry. During interviews, students also stated that understanding the basics of the hotel industry was essential for their hospitality major. Two out of three teachers interviewed also mentioned that students showed enthusiasm and enjoyment during the learning process. Mr. Erik, a key informant, emphasized that fostering students' enjoyment is a principle he upholds in managing lessons.

2. External Factors

External factors influencing students' interest in learning core expertise subjects include school, family, and social environment. School factors involve teachers' attitudes, learning activities (methods and media), and facilities provided by the school. Survey responses indicated that a pleasant teacher attitude, creative learning activities, and adequate learning facilities contributed to students' interest in studying core expertise subjects. Interviews with students, serving as supporting informants, revealed that Ms. Melia's formal and serious teaching style helped them focus on learning, while Mr. Erik's relaxed and conversational approach provided a practical understanding of the hotel industry. Observations by the researcher also found that lessons were supported by adequate facilities, such as laboratories, practice rooms, and teaching aids like hotel equipment models.

Family factors also play a role. According to Ms. Melia, a primary informant, students' interest in learning is mainly supported by their family circumstances. A supportive family environment makes it easier for teachers to guide students at school. Survey responses showed that a comfortable family atmosphere and parental support could enhance students' learning interest.

Last, social environmental factors influence students' interest. These include the students' social relationships at school and at home. Data revealed that peer relationships significantly impacted students' interest in learning. Students often discussed core expertise subjects with friends and helped each other understand the material taught by teachers.

The internal and external factors identified in this study align with the theories proposed by Sawawa et al. (2018) and Sarah et al. (2021). According to Sawawa et al., one internal factor influencing students' learning interest is interest itself. Subjects that spark students' interest are easier to learn and retain because interest enhances learning ability. Sarah et al. identified family and school factors as external influences, such as parental attention, family relations, home atmosphere, and economic conditions, as well as teaching strategies, peer relationships, and school facilities.

The Most Influential Factor on Students' Learning Interest in Core Expertise Subjects

The most influential factor on students' learning interest is their inherent interest, which is demonstrated through feelings of enjoyment, enthusiasm, and the desire to engage in learning the core expertise subjects. Interest serves as a motivational source, driving students to take action in pursuit of their goals. With this intrinsic interest, students can effectively learn the core expertise subjects despite external obstacles. This is evident from their high willingness to learn and their awareness of the importance of these subjects. By studying the core expertise subjects, students hope to deepen their understanding of the foundational aspects of their chosen hospitality major.

Another significant factor is the school environment, which includes teachers' attitudes and teaching methods, as well as the learning media and facilities provided. Teachers' interactions and teaching styles play a crucial role in fostering students' learning interest. As motivators and role models, teachers guide students' interests toward productive learning. Creative and varied teaching methods and media also contribute to maintaining students' enthusiasm. Additionally, adequate learning facilities enable students to grasp the material more effectively, such as practical tools and real-world examples related to the hotel industry.

How Internal and External Factors Influence Students' Learning Interest

Internal factors influence students' learning interest by fostering their natural curiosity and engagement with core expertise subjects, which they perceive as essential for their chosen major. This intrinsic interest drives students to focus and actively seek knowledge about the material, leading to consistent and enthusiastic learning behavior.

External factors enhance students' internal motivation, creating an environment that supports and amplifies their interest in learning. These factors develop over time; when students' intrinsic interest is supported by a conducive external environment, such as positive teacher attitudes or a harmonious family setting, their learning becomes more effective. The alignment of internal and external factors ensures that students maintain strong learning interest, enabling them to overcome challenges and achieve optimal outcomes in their studies.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion that can be drawn based on the data presentation and discussion outlined above regarding the various factors influencing students' interest in learning the core expertise subjects indicates that the learning process for these subjects, both in the foundational tourism and hospitality subtopics, has been designed with different teaching methods by the two teachers. The findings of this study reveal that the internal factor of students' interest, particularly in terms of enjoyment and participation during classroom lessons, significantly affects their learning interest in the core expertise subjects.

This factor is further supported by the stimulus from school factors and parental contributions, such as support in fostering students' learning interest. The school factor, specifically related to educators and their teaching methods, plays a critical role in stimulating students' learning interest. If teachers' attitudes and teaching approaches are creatively and exploratively designed, prioritizing students' enjoyment during the learning process, it will generate even greater interest from the students.

Additionally, the family, especially parents, also acts as a supporting factor that encourages their children to be enthusiastic about learning. Parental support, through attentive behavior and efforts to create a comfortable atmosphere, enhances students' interest in their learning activities.

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