

**EXPLORING STUDENTS' ANXIETY FACTORS
IN TAKING ENGLISH EXAMS AT SMPN 1 INDRALAYA**

A THESIS

BY

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FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION

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Certified that thesis entitled "Exploring Students' Anxiety Factors in Taking English Exams at SMPN1 Indralaya" is my own work and I did not do any plagiarism or inappropriate quotation against the ethic and rules commended by the Ministry of Education of Republic Indonesia Number 17, 2010 regarding plagiarism in higher education. Therefore, I deserve to face the court if I am found to have plagiarized this work.

Palembang, May 2024
The undersigned



Ratna Puri Cahyani
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved parents, family, and friends who always support me and encourage me to never give up. To myself who has been trying to finish this thesis.

MOTTO

You have every right to a beautiful life.

(Selena Gomez)

Believe in everything you do. Believe in your mistakes and grow from them.

(Taylor Swift)

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The Researcher,

Ratna Puri Cahyani

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EXPLORING STUDENTS' ANXIETY FACTORS IN TAKING ENGLISH EXAMS AT SMPN 1 INDRALAYA

ABSTRACT

This research aimed to determine students' anxiety levels, the factors that cause anxiety and the impact of the anxiety experienced by students during English exams. Qualitative methods were applied in this research with the data collection used were questionnaire and interviews. A total of 30 students filled out the questionnaire and then 10 students with the highest anxiety scores were taken for interviews. The research results showed that from the 30 students in the class 8.3, 4 students were at panic level, 16 students only experienced mild anxiety, 7 students were at moderate level anxiety, and 3 students were at severe level anxiety. Factors that cause student anxiety are lack of preparation, fear of failure, lack of self confidence, bad study habits, high expectations, lack of understanding the material and also overthinking are the internal factors experienced by students. It is also known that parents expectations, exam time pressure, friends, siblings, uncomfortable atmosphere and interference from other participants are factors originating from people and the surrounding environment that cause their anxiety. The results of the interviews show that students also experienced an impact on their body reactions, on their mental health, and also on their academic achievement caused by anxiety during English exams. Anxiety also has positive impacts on students, such as they are motivated to study more, get good grades and improve on the next exam.

Keywords: *Student Anxiety, Factors, Impacts, English Exam.*

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains several main points dealing with the topic of the research. It includes background of study, the problems of study, the objectives of study, and the significance of study. The details of the point are elaborated in each section.

1.1 Background of the Study

Indonesian schools are required by law to teach English as a foreign language, as per a 1967 edict by the minister of education and culture. English-language education is thought to be crucial for the international assimilation and advancement of science, technology, the arts, and culture. According to Sartika, T. (2019), the utilization of English within the delivery of learning is additionally one of the choices for a few schools in Indonesia. English has therefore become a required subject in Indonesia due to changes brought about by the country's successors as well as the advancement of English in these increasingly modern times. As of right now, at least seven hundred different languages are known to be spoken in Indonesia. Ningsih, A. N. M. (2019) stated that Indonesian and English complement each other position for the development of science. It is predicated on the reality that Indonesia has long been affected by globalization. According to Santoso, I. (2014), excellent mastery of foreign languages necessary as a means of absorbing knowledge that is developing in other countries and vice versa as a medium for disseminating knowledge that develops within it Indonesia outside. It goes without saying that in order for people to express themselves and reach their full potential, they need access to appropriate language and communication tools. Fortunately, English is the universal language understood by nearly everyone on the planet. In Indonesia, written English is frequently used. Maduwu, B. (2016) stated that in foreign language learning, practice the language being studied is the most important thing that students must do. Consequently, English is taught to students in Indonesian schools. In measuring Indonesian students' ability to speak English, an exam is needed.

Exams are one component that must be taken by all students and are a requirement in the education system in Indonesia. Agustin, Y. (2015) stated that English may be a language that's very much in request by the Indonesian individuals which is able gotten to be a genuine danger to Indonesian if there is no good understanding and function of the two languages. Based on the release of the English Proficiency Index (EPI), Indonesia's score in the English Proficiency Index is ranked 453rd and are in the low proficiency

group and Indonesia is also ranked 15th among 24 Asian countries (E.F. Education first Ltd, 2020). It means that Indonesian society in general does not have power basics in English. Low levels of student proficiency are likely to be a significant problem in English learning in Indonesia. During school, test anxiety when taking exams is one of the causes of students not getting maximum results.

Student anxiety in taking exams is a common phenomenon. This is a natural response for many students in preparation before and during exams. Anxiety can occur in various situations, one of which is during an exam or commonly known as test anxiety. Anxiety is the most common problem in student assessment giving rise to psychological symptoms, which can affect students' motivation, focus, and social relationships and are all important for academic success (Son et al., 2020). Exams are a must for each student to find out their achievements in lessons including English lessons. It is stated by Dincer & Dariyemez (2020) that Anxiety plays an essential role in determining a student's success or failure in foreign language classes. Students may be afraid of a subject for several reasons. Some of them are afraid to take the class even when it comes to exams. Macintyre and Gardner (1991) categorize several student anxieties including one of them, test anxiety. Students who experience test anxiety usually put a lot of pressure on themselves. This situation can lead them to irrational thoughts and self-doubt which makes it difficult for them to think logically during exams.

Anxiety is a disorder that causes nervousness, fear and worry that can affect the way we feel or behave towards something. According to Ningsih & Agustin (2022), students have anxiety regardless of their readiness to learn, for example they worry about what other people think of them when they display their English, the familiarity of the topics used in English learning, how low their achievements are, and etc. Therefore, because English is a compulsory subject in high school and must be followed by all students, it is not uncommon for this anxiety to occur when they take an English exam. Al-Shboul et al. (2013) found that language anxiety affects learning processes and results achieved by students. This issue is a concern in this research because of curiosity about what students experience during exams or English proficiency tests with a focus on the factors that cause them to experience anxiety. Anxiety in students must be known. This is very important because by knowing and detecting the anxiety experienced by students, teachers can help students to be alert, providing advice both psychologically and physically. Anxiety can also affect student performance when taking exams or assessments. By knowing what factors cause test anxiety, students and teachers can

minimize the negative impact of anxiety itself. This is supported by the opinion of (Chan & Wu, 2004) who said that there is the potential to trigger anxiety in learning a foreign language and finding language learning difficulties is a good predictor of anxiety in a foreign language learning environment. In some cases, students tend to feel afraid, worried that they have not done well, inability to think logically, self-doubt, some even give up and fail. Therefore, researcher want to know more about the anxiety level, factors and impacts experienced by students when they take English exams, especially in grade 8 students in junior high schools.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

The problem formulated in this study, include:

1. What is the anxiety level of students during English exams at SMPN 1 Indralaya?
2. What factors contribute to students' anxiety during English exams at SMPN 1 Indralaya?
3. What are the impacts of anxiety during English exams on students at SMPN 1 Indralaya?

1.3 The Objectives of the study

The research aims to:

1. To find out the students' anxiety levels during English exams at SMPN 1 Indralaya.
2. To find out the various factors that contribute to students anxiety during English exams at SMPN 1 Indralaya.
3. To find out the impacts of anxiety during English exams on students at SMPN 1 Indralaya.

1.4 The significance of the study

The results of this research are expected to provide information regarding student anxiety factors in taking English exams faced by students at the junior high school level. This research also allows other researchers to compare the similarities and differences of students' anxiety factors during exams with the findings or results of their future research.

Apart from that, for the principal of SMPN 1 Indralaya, Kabupaten Ogan Ilir, Sumatera Selatan, this research can be a reference for gaining new insight into the factors and problems of student anxiety that occur in the school environment.

For teachers and parents, by knowing the factors and impacts of student anxiety, it is hoped that both the school and teachers can support and guide them so that they can consider ways to minimize the occurrence of this anxiety.

This research can be used as media to share information about the factors of student anxiety during English exams and can motivate students to learn English better and make themselves better prepared.

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