

A CASE STUDY OF STUDENTS' ENGLISH LEARNING INTEREST AT MTS. RADEN RAHMAT

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ABSTRACT

Learning interest plays a crucial role in promoting students' engagement and persistence in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). However, limited studies have explored how students' English learning interest develops within the context of pesantren-based junior secondary schools. This study aimed to explore students' English learning interest at MTs. Raden Rahmat and to identify the factors influencing through the Four-Phase Model of Interest Development. A qualitative case study design was employed involving forty eighth-grade students, with six students purposively selected for semi-structured interviews. One English teacher also participated as a key informant to provide complementary perspectives. Data were collected through questionnaires, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews and analysed using thematic analysis, while descriptive statistics were used to summarise the questionnaire results. Data triangulation was employed to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings. The findings revealed that 60% of the students demonstrated triggered situational interest, 25% maintained situational interest, and 15% exhibited emerging individual interest, whereas none reached the well-developed individual interest phase. Findings from the interviews further indicated that students perceived English as a difficult subject, low intrinsic motivation, and limited independent learning opportunities were the major factors hindering the development of their learning interest. Overall, the findings suggest that students' English learning interest remains predominantly at the situational level, influenced by meaningful classroom experiences and their perceptions of the relevance and value of English. Therefore, English teachers should implement interactive, contextual, and student-centred instructional practices to foster more sustainable individual interest in learning English.

Keywords: *English learning interest; Four-Phase Model of Interest Development; EFL; pesantren-based school.*

ABSTRAK

Minat belajar memiliki peran penting dalam meningkatkan keterlibatan dan ketekunan siswa dalam mempelajari bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing (English as a Foreign Language/EFL). Namun, penelitian yang mengkaji bagaimana minat belajar bahasa Inggris berkembang dalam konteks sekolah berbasis pesantren masih terbatas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi minat belajar bahasa Inggris siswa di MTs. Raden Rahmat serta mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi berdasarkan Four-Phase Model of Interest Development. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif dengan melibatkan 40 siswa kelas VIII, di mana enam siswa dipilih secara purposif untuk mengikuti wawancara semi-terstruktur. Selain itu, seorang guru bahasa Inggris turut dilibatkan sebagai

informan kunci untuk memberikan perspektif tambahan. Data dikumpulkan melalui angket, observasi kelas, dan wawancara semi-terstruktur. Data dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik, sedangkan statistik deskriptif digunakan untuk merangkum hasil angket. Triangulasi data diterapkan untuk meningkatkan keabsahan temuan penelitian. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa 60% siswa berada pada fase triggered situational interest, 25% pada fase maintained situational interest, dan 15% pada fase emerging individual interest, sedangkan tidak ada siswa yang mencapai fase well-developed individual interest. Temuan dari hasil wawancara lebih lanjut menunjukkan bahwa siswa menganggap bahasa Inggris sebagai mata pelajaran yang sulit, rendahnya motivasi intrinsik, serta terbatasnya kesempatan belajar secara mandiri menjadi faktor utama yang menghambat perkembangan minat belajar mereka. Secara keseluruhan, hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa minat siswa dalam belajar bahasa Inggris sebagian besar masih berada pada tingkat situasional, yang dipengaruhi oleh pengalaman belajar yang bermakna di kelas serta persepsi mereka terhadap relevansi dan pentingnya bahasa Inggris. Oleh karena itu, guru bahasa Inggris perlu menerapkan strategi pembelajaran yang interaktif, kontekstual, dan berpusat pada siswa untuk mendorong berkembangnya minat belajar yang lebih berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: minat belajar bahasa Inggris; Four-Phase Model of Interest Development; EFL; sekolah berbasis pesantren.

A. Introduction

English has become the dominant international language, serving as a primary medium for communication, education, science, technology, business, and intercultural interaction in the twenty-first century (Crystal, 2012). As globalization continues to reshape educational and professional demands, English proficiency is increasingly recognized as an essential competence that enables individuals to access global knowledge, participate in international collaboration, and enhance future career opportunities. Consequently, many countries, including Indonesia, have strengthened English education

within their national curricula to prepare students for these global challenges. However, in countries where English is learned as a foreign language (EFL), students often have limited opportunities to use English beyond classroom settings, making successful language learning highly dependent on meaningful instructional practices as well as students' psychological engagement in the learning process (Mulis, 2025). Therefore, understanding the factors that encourage students to actively engage in English learning has become an important concern in English language education research.

Among the various psychological factors influencing English language learning, students' learning interest has consistently been identified as one of the most significant determinants of classroom engagement and academic achievement (Hidi & Renninger, 2006a; Schiefele, 2009). Learning interest reflects students' curiosity, enjoyment, and willingness to participate actively in learning activities, encouraging them to explore new knowledge and persist when facing learning difficulties. Numerous studies have demonstrated that students with higher levels of learning interest are more likely to show greater motivation, confidence, active participation, and better learning outcomes than those with lower levels of interest (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020; Renninger & Hidi, 2019). This issue becomes particularly important in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, where students' exposure to English is generally limited to classroom instruction, making personal interest a crucial factor for sustaining learning engagement. Therefore, fostering students' learning interest should be regarded not only as a means of improving academic

achievement but also as a strategy for promoting meaningful and sustainable English language learning (Mulis & Farida, 2025)

Despite the increasing recognition of English as an essential subject within Indonesia's educational system, maintaining students' interest in learning English continues to be a considerable challenge. As English is learned as a foreign language (EFL), opportunities for authentic language exposure outside the classroom remain limited, causing students' learning experiences to depend largely on classroom instruction and school environments. Previous studies in Indonesian EFL contexts consistently indicate that students' English learning interest is influenced by multiple interconnected factors, including teachers' instructional strategies, classroom interaction, learning media, peer relationships, and the overall learning atmosphere (Dörnyei, 2005; Lamb, 2020; Mulis & Farida, 2025). These studies also suggest that while many students recognize the importance of English for future academic and professional opportunities, their classroom participation and enthusiasm often fluctuate according to the quality of

learning experiences provided. Therefore, understanding how students' learning interest develops within specific educational contexts has become increasingly important for improving English language teaching practices in Indonesia.

One educational setting that reflects these challenges is MTs. Raden Rahmat, an Islamic junior secondary school where English is taught as a compulsory subject within a learning environment that integrates both general and religious education. Similar to many Indonesian EFL classrooms, students at this school demonstrate diverse levels of interest in learning English, which are shaped by their classroom experiences, interactions with teachers and peers, learning activities, and the broader school culture. Preliminary observations conducted by the researcher indicated that although many students participated actively during engaging classroom activities, their enthusiasm and involvement varied across different learning situations. These variations suggest that students' English learning interest is a dynamic phenomenon influenced by multiple contextual factors rather than merely an individual

characteristic. Therefore, MTs. Raden Rahmat provides an appropriate context for exploring how students' learning interest develops through their everyday educational experiences.

A growing body of research has highlighted the important role of learning interest in promoting students' engagement and success in English language learning. Existing studies have examined this issue from various perspectives, including the relationship between learning interest and academic achievement, the influence of instructional strategies on students' motivation, and the effectiveness of interactive learning media in enhancing classroom participation. Collectively, these studies consistently demonstrate that students with higher levels of learning interest tend to participate more actively, show greater persistence in overcoming learning difficulties, and achieve better learning outcomes than those with lower levels of interest (Hidi & Renninger, 2006b; Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020; Renninger & Hidi, 2019). In Indonesian EFL contexts, similar findings have also been reported, indicating that engaging classroom activities, supportive

teacher–student interactions, and meaningful learning experiences contribute significantly to fostering students' interest in learning English (Mulis, 2025). These findings confirm that learning interest is an essential component of successful English language learning.

Although previous studies have made valuable contributions to understanding the importance of learning interest in English language learning, most have primarily focused on measuring students' learning interest quantitatively, examining its relationship with learning achievement, or evaluating the effectiveness of particular teaching strategies. While these approaches have provided important empirical evidence, they offer only limited understanding of how students' English learning interest develops through their everyday learning experiences within a particular educational context. Consequently, the dynamic interaction between classroom practices, teacher–student relationships, school culture, peer interaction, and students' personal learning experiences remains insufficiently explored, particularly in Indonesian Islamic junior secondary

schools. This limitation indicates an important research gap that requires further investigation through a qualitative case study capable of providing a more comprehensive and contextual understanding of students' English learning interest.

In this study, students' English learning interest is viewed as a dynamic psychological construct that develops through continuous interaction between individual characteristics and the surrounding learning environment. Rather than being regarded as a fixed personal trait, learning interest evolves through students' classroom experiences, teacher support, peer interaction, instructional practices, and school culture, all of which influence students' engagement in English learning (Hidi & Renninger, 2006a; Renninger & Hidi, 2019). This perspective is particularly relevant in EFL contexts, where meaningful learning experiences play a crucial role in sustaining students' motivation and encouraging active participation. Therefore, exploring students' English learning interest from a qualitative perspective enables a more comprehensive understanding of how contextual factors shape students'

engagement throughout the learning process.

Against this background, the present study aims to explore how students' English learning interest develops within the educational context of MTs. Raden Rahmat, an Islamic junior secondary school in Indonesia. Using a qualitative case study approach, this study seeks to examine students' learning experiences, classroom practices, teacher support, peer interaction, and school culture that contribute to the development of their interest in learning English. The findings are expected to enrich the existing literature by providing a contextual understanding of English learning interest beyond quantitative measurement, while also offering practical insights for English teachers, school administrators, and future researchers in designing more engaging and meaningful English learning environments, particularly in Islamic secondary schools.

B. Method

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore how students' English learning interest within the educational context of MTs. Raden Rahmat, an Islamic

junior secondary school in Malang Regency, East Java, Indonesia. A qualitative case study was considered appropriate because it enables researchers to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context and to gain an in-depth understanding through multiple sources of evidence (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018). Since this study aimed to understand students' learning experiences and the contextual factors shaping their English learning interest rather than merely measuring its level, this approach provided the most appropriate framework for addressing the research objectives.

The participants consisted of 40 eighth-grade students who completed the questionnaire. Based on the questionnaire results, six students representing high, moderate, and low levels of English learning interest were purposively selected for semi-structured interviews. In addition, one English teacher participated as a key informant to provide complementary insights into students' classroom participation, learning behaviour, and instructional practices. The inclusion of students with different levels of learning interest, together with the

English teacher, enabled the researcher to obtain diverse perspectives on the phenomenon under investigation.

Data were collected through classroom observations, a questionnaire, and semi-structured interviews. Two non-participant classroom observations were conducted to document students' classroom participation, teacher–student interaction, and learning behaviour during English lessons. A 20-item questionnaire based on the Four-Phase Model of Interest Development (Hidi & Renninger, 2006c) was administered using a five-point Likert scale to obtain an initial overview of students' English learning interest and to assist in selecting interview participants representing different levels of interest. Subsequently, semi-structured interviews were conducted with six selected students and one English teacher to explore students' learning experiences, perceptions of English learning, and factors influencing the development of their English learning interest. The interviews lasted approximately 20–30 minutes, were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia to facilitate participants' responses,

audio-recorded with participants' consent, and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the school, informed consent was secured from participants and their parents, and pseudonyms were used to protect participants' identities throughout the study.

The collected data were analysed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2006) (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis involved familiarising with the data, generating initial codes, identifying and reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and interpreting the findings. Throughout the analysis, the Four-Phase Model of Interest Development (Hidi & Renninger, 2006b) served as the analytical framework for interpreting how students' English learning interest developed through their learning experiences within the school context.

To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, this study employed methodological triangulation by integrating data from classroom observations, questionnaires, and interviews, as well as source triangulation through information obtained from students and the

English teacher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member checking was also conducted with selected participants to confirm the accuracy of the interview interpretations. In addition, detailed field notes were maintained throughout the research process to strengthen the credibility and dependability of the findings.

C. Result and Discussion

1. Result

1.1 Overall Students' English Learning Interest

The questionnaire administered to 40 eighth-grade students indicated that English learning interest varied considerably among participants. Most students demonstrated relatively low levels of interest in learning English, as reflected in their limited enthusiasm for English lessons and their perception of English as a difficult subject. Nevertheless, a smaller proportion of students expressed positive attitudes toward learning English, suggesting that students' learning interest differed according to their individual experiences and perceptions.

The classroom observations supported these findings. During two classroom observations, only a few students actively responded to the

teacher's questions, volunteered to answer classroom tasks, or participated in classroom discussions. Most students tended to remain passive and became involved in classroom activities only after being directly prompted by the teacher. This observation indicates that students' classroom engagement was generally situational and highly dependent on teacher guidance.

The interview findings further confirmed the variations in students' English learning interest. One student expressed a positive attitude toward English learning by stating that she felt "happy" when learning English and "wanted to learn more deeply." This response suggests the emergence of personal curiosity toward learning English beyond classroom requirements. Another participant explained that English lessons became interesting only when the material was easy to understand, saying that "English lessons are interesting when I can understand them." This finding indicates that students' interest was closely associated with their level of comprehension during classroom instruction.

However, several participants also reported limited engagement during English lessons. One student explained that attention depended largely on the lesson topic, stating that "If the topic is interesting, I pay attention during the lesson." Another participant admitted that classroom participation was inconsistent, explaining that "Sometimes yes, and sometimes no," when asked whether the student usually paid attention during English lessons. These responses indicate that students' learning interest tended to fluctuate according to classroom situations rather than reflecting a stable personal interest.

Overall, the questionnaire, classroom observations, and interview findings consistently indicated that students' English learning interest remained relatively low. While several students had begun to recognize the value of learning English and demonstrated positive attitudes toward the subject, the majority still viewed English primarily as a compulsory school subject rather than as a personally meaningful competence. The consistency of evidence obtained from the three data sources strengthened the credibility of

this interpretation through methodological triangulation.

Table 1. Summary of Students' English Learning Interest

N O	Data Source	Key Findings	Interpreta tion
1	Questionnaire (40 students)	Most students reported relatively low interest in learning English, while a smaller proportion expressed positive attitudes toward English learning.	Students' English learning interest was generally low, although individual variations were evident.
2	Classroom Observation (2 sessions)	Most students participated only after teacher prompts, whereas only a few actively engaged in classroom activities.	Students' classroom engagement was predominantly passive and situational.
3	Student Interviews (6 students)	Four students reported limited interest because they perceived English as difficult and rarely used it outside the classroom. Two students expressed positive interest due to their awareness of English	Students' learning interest was influenced by both instructional experiences and personal awareness of the value of English.

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As summarized in Table 1, evidence obtained from the questionnaire, classroom observations, and interviews consistently indicates that students' English learning interest remained relatively low. Although a small number of students demonstrated positive attitudes toward English learning, the majority participated passively and viewed English primarily as a compulsory school subject. The convergence of findings across the three data sources strengthened the credibility of the interpretation through methodological triangulation.

1.2 Factors Influencing Students' English Learning Interest

Classroom observations revealed that students' English learning interest was influenced by several interconnected classroom factors. Throughout the two observation sessions, English instruction was predominantly conducted through teacher explanations and printed textbooks, with relatively limited opportunities for interactive learning activities, collaborative discussion, or the integration of multimedia resources. Consequently, classroom interaction was generally teacher-centered, and many students participated only when they were directly invited to respond.

These classroom conditions appeared to limit students' active engagement and spontaneous participation during English lessons.

The interview findings supported the classroom observations. Several students explained that their interest in learning English depended largely on the way the lesson was delivered. One participant stated, "If the topic is interesting, I pay attention during the lesson," indicating that engaging learning materials and classroom activities encouraged greater participation. Another participant explained that English lessons became enjoyable only when the material was easy to understand, suggesting that students' comprehension played an important role in sustaining their learning interest.

The interview findings further supported the classroom observations. Several students explained that their interest in learning English was strongly influenced by the way the lesson was delivered and by their understanding of the learning materials. One participant stated, "If the topic is interesting, I pay attention during the lesson," indicating that engaging learning topics encouraged greater classroom participation. Another student explained that English lessons became enjoyable only when the material could be understood, suggesting that students' comprehension played an important role in maintaining their interest. In contrast, some participants admitted

that their classroom engagement was inconsistent, as reflected in one student's response, "Sometimes yes, and sometimes no," when asked whether they usually paid attention during English lessons. These responses indicate that students' English learning interest was highly dependent on instructional practices and classroom experiences rather than representing a stable individual interest.

Overall, findings from classroom observations, student interviews, and the teacher interview consistently demonstrated that students' English learning interest was shaped by both instructional and personal factors. Teacher-centered instruction, limited learning resources, and students' perceptions of English as a difficult subject reduced classroom engagement. Conversely, meaningful learning activities, relevant lesson topics, and students' awareness of the importance of English for future education and technology contributed to stronger learning interest. The convergence of evidence across multiple data sources strengthened the credibility of these findings.

Table 2. Summary of Factors Influencing Students' English Learning Interest

NO	Factors	Findings
1	Teaching method	English instruction was predominantly teacher-centered, limiting students' active participation during classroom activities.
2	Learning media	Printed textbooks were the primary

3	Learning facilities	instructional resource, with limited use of interactive learning media.
4	Students' awareness	Limited instructional facilities restricted the implementation of more engaging and technology-supported learning activities. Students who recognized the importance of English for technology, communication, and future careers demonstrated stronger interest in learning English.

1.3 Students' English Learning Interest Viewed through the Four-Phase Model

The findings indicate that most participants demonstrated characteristics of Triggered Situational Interest, the earliest phase of interest development proposed by Hidi and Renninger (2006). Classroom observations revealed that students generally participated in English lessons because of teacher instructions rather than personal curiosity. Their attention was typically stimulated by external classroom conditions, such as the teacher's explanations or specific classroom activities, but this interest was often temporary. Interview data further supported this interpretation, as several students admitted that they

paid attention only when the lesson topic was interesting or easy to understand. These findings suggest that students' engagement was primarily triggered by situational factors instead of internally developed interest.

A smaller group of students demonstrated characteristics of Maintained Situational Interest. These students consistently participated in classroom activities and remained engaged throughout the lesson despite the predominance of teacher-centered instruction. Interview responses indicated that their interest was sustained when learning activities were understandable, relevant, and enjoyable. Nevertheless, their engagement continued to depend largely on classroom conditions and teacher support, indicating that their interest had not yet developed into a stable individual disposition.

Evidence of Emerging Individual Interest was identified among two interviewed students. Unlike most participants, these students explained that they wanted to continue learning English because they recognized its importance for accessing technology, understanding digital information, and preparing for future educational and

career opportunities. One participant stated that he or she wanted to "learn English more deeply," reflecting the development of personal value toward English learning beyond classroom requirements. These responses indicate that English had begun to acquire personal meaning, representing the transition from situational to individual interest.

No clear evidence of Well-Developed Individual Interest was identified among the participants. Although a few students expressed positive attitudes toward learning English, none demonstrated consistent independent learning, self-initiated practice outside the classroom, or long-term commitment to developing English proficiency. Therefore, the findings suggest that students' English learning interest had generally not progressed to the highest phase of the Four-Phase Model of Interest Development.

Overall, the findings indicate that students' English learning interest was predominantly situated within the early phases of the Four-Phase Model of Interest Development. Classroom experiences, instructional practices, and students' perceptions of the usefulness of English influenced how

their interest developed. These findings demonstrate that learning interest is dynamic and develops gradually through meaningful educational experiences, as proposed by Hidi and Renninger (2006).

Table 3. Classification of Findings
Based on the Four-Phase Model

NO	Phase	Evidence from the Present Study	Interpretation
1	Triggered Situational Interest	Most students participated only after teacher prompts and showed temporary attention during lessons.	Students' interest was primarily stimulated by external classroom conditions.
2	Maintained Situational Interest	A small number of students consistently participated in classroom activities.	Their interest was sustained by supportive classroom experiences but remained situational.
3	Emerging Individual Interest	Two students recognized the importance of English for technology and future careers.	Personal value toward English learning had begun to develop.
4	Well-Developed Individual Interest	No participants demonstrated independent English learning beyond classroom activities.	No evidence of stable individual interest was identified.

Overall, the questionnaire, classroom observations, and interview findings consistently indicated that students' English learning interest remained relatively low. While several students had begun to recognize the importance of English for their future, the majority still viewed English primarily as a compulsory school subject rather than a personally meaningful skill. The consistency of findings across the three data sources strengthened the credibility of the interpretation regarding students' English learning interest.

2. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that students' English learning interest at MTs. Raden Rahmat varied considerably among participants. While a small number of students demonstrated positive attitudes toward English learning, the majority expressed relatively limited interest and participated passively during classroom instruction. Rather than merely reflecting students' individual preferences, these findings suggest that English learning interest is shaped by a combination of personal awareness, instructional practices, and the broader learning environment. This supports the view of Hidi and

Renninger (2006) that learning interest develops through continuous interactions between learners and their educational experiences rather than existing as a fixed personal characteristic.

2.1 Why did many students demonstrate limited English learning interest?

One important finding of this study is that many students demonstrated limited interest in learning English because they perceived English as having little relevance to their daily lives. Interview data revealed that several students rarely encountered situations requiring them to use English and therefore considered the subject less meaningful. This finding aligns with the Four-Phase Model of Interest Development, which emphasizes that learning interest is unlikely to develop when learners fail to recognize the personal value of the learning content (Hidi & Renninger, 2006c; Renninger & Hidi, 2020). Without meaningful personal relevance, students' engagement tends to remain situational and externally driven rather than internally sustained.

This finding is also consistent with previous studies reporting that

students' interest in English learning is closely associated with their perceptions of the usefulness of English for academic, social, and future professional purposes (Lamb, 2020; Papi et al., 2022). However, the present study extends previous research by demonstrating that students' awareness of English as a valuable life skill differs considerably within the same classroom context. While quantitative studies generally report the level of students' learning interest, the present qualitative case study provides a deeper understanding of how students interpret the relevance of English in their own lives.

2.2 Influence of Instructional Practices

Another important finding concerns the influence of instructional practices on students' English learning interest. Classroom observations showed that English instruction was predominantly conducted through lecture-based teaching supported by printed textbooks, with limited use of interactive learning media. Although this instructional approach enabled the teacher to deliver the lesson efficiently, it provided relatively few opportunities for students to actively

participate, collaborate, or experience enjoyable learning activities. Consequently, many students became passive recipients of information rather than active participants in the learning process.

This finding supports previous research suggesting that interactive learning environments play a crucial role in triggering and maintaining students' situational interest (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020; Papi et al., 2022). According to Hidi and Renninger (2006), situational interest is often initiated through engaging classroom experiences that stimulate learners' curiosity and attention. Therefore, the limited use of instructional media observed in this study may explain why many students demonstrated only temporary classroom engagement without developing stronger personal interest in learning English.

2.3 Personal Awareness as a Driver of Emerging Individual Interest

An interesting finding of this study is that a small number of students demonstrated stronger English learning interest because they recognized the importance of English in responding to technological development and future educational opportunities. Unlike other participants

who viewed English merely as a compulsory school subject, these students perceived English as a valuable tool for accessing digital information, understanding technological developments, and preparing for future careers. This finding suggests that students' awareness of the practical value of English contributes significantly to the development of their learning interest.

This finding supports the Four-Phase Model of Interest Development, particularly the concept of Emerging Individual Interest, in which learners begin to assign personal value to learning activities and voluntarily engage in learning beyond external classroom requirements (Hidi & Renninger, 2006c; Renninger & Hidi, 2020). The interview data indicate that these students' interest was no longer solely influenced by classroom instruction but also by their personal aspirations and perceptions of English as an essential skill in the digital era.

Similar findings have been reported by previous studies emphasizing that students' perceptions of English as a global language positively influence their willingness to learn and sustain

engagement in English classrooms (Lamb, 2020; Papi et al., 2022).

Overall, the findings demonstrate that students' English learning interest develops through the interaction between meaningful learning experiences and students' personal awareness of the value of English. While engaging classroom activities, teacher support, and positive peer interactions play an important role in triggering situational interest, the transition toward a more sustained individual interest appears to depend on whether students recognize the personal relevance and future benefits of learning English. These findings reinforce the Four-Phase Model of Interest Development proposed by Hidi and Renninger (2006) while providing contextual evidence from an Indonesian Islamic junior secondary school. Therefore, fostering students' English learning interest requires not only effective instructional strategies but also learning experiences that help students perceive English as meaningful and valuable in their academic and future lives.

D. Conclusion

This study explored the development of students' English

learning interest within the educational context of MTs. Raden Rahmat through classroom observations, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews. The findings indicate that students' English learning interest is shaped by the interaction between meaningful classroom experiences, teacher support, peer interaction, and students' awareness of the value of English for their academic and future aspirations. While engaging learning activities and supportive classroom environments play an important role in triggering situational interest, the development of a more sustained individual interest depends on students' ability to perceive English as personally relevant and beneficial.

These findings support the Four-Phase Model of Interest Development proposed by Hidi and Renninger (2006), demonstrating that learning interest develops gradually through continuous interactions between learners and their educational environment. Furthermore, this study contributes contextual evidence from an Indonesian Islamic junior secondary school, highlighting how classroom experiences and students' perceptions of English jointly influence the development of learning interest.

The findings imply that English teachers should not only employ engaging instructional strategies but also create meaningful learning experiences that help students recognize the practical value of English in their daily lives and future opportunities. Future research is recommended to investigate the development of English learning interest across different educational settings and over a longer period to better understand how learning interest evolves over time. Ultimately, fostering students' English learning interest requires not only effective teaching practices but also learning environments that enable students to experience English as meaningful, relevant, and valuable beyond the classroom.

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