

THE INFLUENCE OF PEER ENVIRONMENT ON LEARNING MOTIVATION OF CLASS XI STUDENTS OF AL-AZHAR SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, MEDAN

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the influence of the friendship environment on the learning motivation of grade XI students of Al Azhar Superior High School Medan. The research uses a quantitative approach with an associative descriptive method. The population in the study was determined through random sampling techniques. Data collection was carried out using a Likert scale questionnaire which included two main variables, namely the friendship environment and learning motivation. The results of the study show that the friendship environment has a positive influence on students' learning motivation. Most respondents stated that their friends supported learning activities (68.9%) and did not influence them not to study (53.3% disagreed). In addition, 82.2% of students admitted to studying earnestly and 100% trying to understand the lessons given. These findings show that a positive friendship environment contributes to increased student learning motivation in excellent schools.

Keywords: *friendship environment, learning motivation, high school students*

1. INTRODUCTION

Education has an important role in shaping the quality of superior and competitive human resources. However, until now, one of the national problems that is still faced by the Indonesian education world is the low motivation to learn among students, especially at the high school level. Learning motivation is a psychological factor that determines students' academic success, because students who have high motivation tend to show better achievement and learning consistency (Rusydiyah et al., 2021). The social environment, especially peers, plays a central role in shaping adolescents' learning habits and academic attitudes because during this time they tend to interact more with peers than with parents or teachers.

In the national context, the Ministry of Education emphasizes the importance of creating a collaborative learning culture in schools that can encourage students to motivate each other and build a spirit of learning together (Rusweni et al., 2022). Previous research revealed that students with a positive and supportive social environment showed a significant increase in learning motivation compared to students with a competitive or negative environment. Thus, the friendly environment is an external factor that needs to be considered in efforts to improve the quality of national education, especially at the high school level.

Al Azhar Medan High School as one of the outstanding schools in Medan City is known to have a religious and competitive academic environment. However, initial observations in the field show that there is a variation in the level of learning motivation among grade XI students. Some students show high enthusiasm for learning because they have peers who are diligent, supportive, and remind each other in academic activities, while others experience a decrease in motivation due to the influence of less conducive friend groups (Yahya et al, 2022). This condition is exacerbated by the rampant excessive use of digital media beyond the needs of learning, which diverts students' focus from academic activities. As a result, there is a gap in the enthusiasm for learning among the student groups, which

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is thought to be closely related to the social environment in which they interact on a daily basis. This research has novelty in the social context and characteristics of the school. In contrast to previous research that focused on learning method factors or the role of teachers in increasing learning motivation. This study highlights the influence of the friendship environment as a key variable in the context of religious-based superior schools. Al Azhar Medan Superior High School is a unique location because it combines religious culture, high academic achievement, and complex social dynamics between students. Thus, this research is expected to provide a new scientific contribution related to how the dynamics of friendships in the environment of superior schools affect the learning motivation of grade XI students.

Various previous studies support the importance of social factors in influencing learning motivation. Rusydiyah et al. (2021) emphasized that a supportive learning environment, including social relationships between students, contributes to increased academic participation. Setriani et al. (2021) found a positive relationship between peer social support and the learning motivation of high school students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Similar results were shown by Yudha et al. (2024) who explained that social support in the form of appreciation and cooperation can increase students' commitment to academic tasks. G-Couns (2025) emphasizes the importance of guidance and counseling programs in building friendship groups that support the development of learning motivation. Meanwhile, research by Nabla Dewantara (2022) shows that students who have study friends with high academic orientation tend to show significant improvements in learning achievement. Based on this description, this study aims to analyze the level of learning motivation of grade XI students of Al Azhar High School Medan, describe the characteristics of their friendship environment, and test how much the friendship environment affects students' learning motivation. In addition, this research also seeks to provide recommendations for schools in creating a positive social environment and supporting students' learning spirit. It is hoped that the results of this research can enrich the literature in the field of educational psychology and become a reference for excellent schools in developing effective social development strategies.

2. IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with an associative descriptive method, which aims to describe and find out the relationship between the friendship environment and the learning motivation of grade XI students of Al Azhar Superior High School Medan. This approach is used because it allows researchers to obtain a measurable picture of how much the social environment of peers influences students' enthusiasm for learning, without manipulating the variables studied. With this method, the results of the research are expected to provide a factual understanding of the phenomenon of student learning in excellent schools. The subjects in this study are all grade XI students of Al Azhar Medan Superior High School for the 2025/2026 school year, which totals 180 students. The population in this study was taken using a random sampling technique which included 3 classes or a total of 48 people.

The research instrument used was in the form of a closed questionnaire with a five-level Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5). The questionnaire consists of two main parts, namely the friendship environment scale and the learning motivation scale. The friendship environment scale was developed based on indicators of peer social support, interaction quality, positive conformity, and sense of community, while the learning motivation scale was compiled based on the theory of Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan), including aspects of goal orientation, perseverance, learning interest, and achievement drive. The data collection procedure is carried out by distributing questionnaires directly to all grade XI students in the school environment with permission from the principal and counseling guidance teachers. The researcher ensures that the filling out of the questionnaire is done anonymously and voluntarily, so that students can give honest and objective answers.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Peer

Peer comes from two words, namely friend and peer. "In the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language, peer has the meaning of friend, friend". Peers are friends who are the same age, can also be called friends who are the same age both in the school environment and in the home environment, for example playmates, classmates studying at school and the like.

The Impact of Peer Associations

According to Rahmayanti Della (2023), in a relationship, of course, it will have an impact on a person, some of these impacts have a positive impact and some have a negative impact. Students who enter the scope of positive peers will also have a positive impact on their personality, as for the positive impact of peer association, including:

a. The personality of students who will be more mentally and mentally prepared to face the life that God has determined in the future, or it can also be called an attitude that always thinks positively. b. The individual personality of students who can sort out good deeds and can instill a sense of solidarity between friends. c. Will gain broad insight and knowledge, for example knowledge about culture through peer-to-peer sharing. d. Students can hone their talents by practicing their talent skills with fellow peers. e. Students can also channel their opinions for the betterment of peer groups. f. Encourage individuals to be independent.

Peer association does not only leave a positive impact, but also leaves a negative impact or influence on individual students. The negative impacts of peer association include: a. Unhealthy peer association will make it difficult for the individual child to accept other individuals who do not have the same thing, b. Differences between peers and other peers can cause envy in other friends. c. Armed with the disease of the heart, namely envy and envy, it is undeniable that competition will arise between peers. d. In addition, there will also be conflicts between peer groups with each other. e. Individuals who do not get along with their peers will become a closed person.

The Essence of Learning Motivation

Learning motivation is a desire that arises in students that causes learning activities (Tuti, 2019). The existence of learning motivation will ensure the continuity of learning activities and that provides the direction of learning activities, so that the desired goals of the learning subject can be achieved. Motivation and learning are two things that are interrelated. Learning motivation is a staple in carrying out learning activities, so without motivation a person will not carry out learning activities. Learning motivation is the tendency of students to do all learning activities that are driven by the desire to achieve the best possible achievement or learning outcomes. The motivation to learn in each individual can be different, so there are students who just want to avoid bad grades even to avoid punishment from educators, and the orientation is only to get high grades, but there are also students who really want to develop insight and knowledge.

Characteristics of Learning Motivation

Learning motivation traits are signs or characteristics that show that a person has the drive, passion, and desire to learn in order to achieve certain goals. This means that the characteristics of learning motivation are indicators that we can see or feel, which indicates that someone has motivation in learning. According to Fitriya et., al (2025) these characteristics are usually seen from the behavior, attitude, and effort shown by students in the learning process. Motivation has the following characteristics: 1) Diligent in facing tasks (can work continuously for a long time and never stop before completion). 2) Tenacious in the face of difficulties (not attached to despair). 3) Show interest in learning. 4) Showing interest in various problems for adults (e.g. development, politics, economics and others) 5) Prefer to work independently. 6) Provide decisions on what will and will not be done to achieve those goals. Suharni (2021) stated that students can be said to have high learning motivation if they have the following characteristics; 1) Diligent in facing tasks 2) Tenacious in facing difficulties 3) Does not require outside encouragement to excel, 4) High enthusiasm for learning (happy, diligent in studying, and full of enthusiasm), 5) Likes new science, etc.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data obtained through the questionnaire distributed to the respondents, an overview of the influence of the friendship environment on student learning motivation was obtained as follows:

1. Peer support in learning. Most respondents stated that their friends supported learning activities. A total of 31 respondents (68.9%) answered *yes*, 14 respondents (31.1%) answered *neutrally*, and only 3 respondents (6.7%) disagreed. This data shows that most students have a positive and supportive friendship environment in learning.
2. Influence of friends not to study. The statement "my friends often influence not to study" gets the opposite response. Only 10 respondents (22.2%) *agreed*, 14 respondents (31.1%) *were neutral*, and 24 respondents (53.3%) disagreed. This means that most students do not feel that their friendship environment has a negative influence on learning activities.
3. Distractions from friends while studying. For the statement "my friends often interrupt me while I study", 22 respondents (48.9%) *disagreed*, 20 respondents (44.4%) *were neutral*, and 6 respondents (13.3%) *agreed*. These results show that most students are not distracted by friends in the learning process, although there are still a small number who experience distractions.

4. Seriousness in learning. On the learning motivation indicator, the statement "I study hard" showed positive results with 37 respondents (82.2%) *agreeing*, 10 respondents (22.2%) *neutral*, and only 1 respondent (2.2%) *disagreeing*. This indicates that most students have high motivation to learn.
5. An attempt to understand the lesson. In the statement "I always try to understand the lessons given", as many as 45 respondents (93.75%) *agreed*, and 3 respondents (6.25%) *were neutral*. No respondents expressed *disagreement*. This reinforces the indication that students' motivation to learn is at a high level.

The results of the study show that the friendship environment has a positive influence on students' learning motivation. Based on the data, the majority of respondents stated that their friends supported learning activities, did not interfere, and did not affect them to be lazy to study. This shows that the social atmosphere around students plays an important role in shaping their enthusiasm and attitude towards learning activities. Peer support can be a major driving factor for students in increasing learning motivation. When a person is in a group that has good enthusiasm and learning habits, he or she tends to imitate these behaviors due to the social identification process. According to Albert Bandura's Social Learning theory, a person learns through observation of the behavior of others, especially peers who are considered close and influential. In this context, friends who are diligent in studying, like to discuss, and have high ideals will set a positive example that is contagious to other members of the group.

On the other hand, the results of the study also show that the negative influence of friends is relatively small. Only a small percentage of respondents stated that friends often influenced them not to study. These findings illustrate that most of the students' friendship environments in this study are in the conducive category, where relationships between friends are based on support and cooperation, not on bad influences or deviant behavior. This condition is especially important because a negative social environment—such as friends who like to play excessively, skip school, or don't care about assignments—can lower students' enthusiasm for learning. In addition to external factors from peers, the results of the study also confirm that students' internal motivation is quite strong. The statements "I study hard" and "I always try to understand the lesson" obtained the highest percentage in the agree category. This indicates that most students have an intrinsic drive to excel and understand the lessons. According to the learning motivation theory from Deci and Ryan (Self-Determination Theory), intrinsic motivation arises from the desire in the individual to master something, not solely due to external pressure or influence. In this case, peer support acts as a reinforcer that helps maintain the spirit of learning. Positive social interaction has also been shown to increase students' confidence and comfort in learning. Students who have supportive study friends are usually more courageous to express their opinions, ask questions to teachers, and be active in class discussions. This sense of community can reduce learning anxiety and increase participation in the learning process. Conversely, students who are in a passive or indifferent peer environment tend to lose motivation easily.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results of the research and discussion, it can be concluded that the friendship environment has a positive influence on students' motivation to learn. The majority of students stated that their friends supported learning activities, did not interfere, and did not influence them to be lazy to study. This support plays a role in increasing students' enthusiasm, seriousness, and effort in understanding the lessons. These findings suggest that healthy friendships can be an external factor that strengthens students' intrinsic motivation. Emotional support, cooperation in learning, and positive habits in peer groups can create a fun and productive learning atmosphere. Thus, the more positive the students' friendship relationships, the higher their motivation will be in learning.

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