

## EXPLORING THE FACTORS INFLUENCING ELEVENTH GRADE SCIENCE STUDENTS' AVOIDANCE OF ENGLISH CLASSES AT SMA EFATA SOE IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2024/2025

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores the factors influencing students' avoidance of English classes and examines the impact of such avoidance on their language learning outcomes and overall educational experience. Using a qualitative approach, the writer collected data through questionnaires and interviews. The findings reveal that academic challenges, ineffective teaching methods, peer influence, social pressure, lack of motivation, emotional factors, perceived irrelevance, and external factors are primary contributors to students' avoidance. This behavior has a significant impact on their academic performance, language proficiency, and future opportunities. The writer emphasizes that addressing these factors is crucial to fostering more effective and engaging English language learning environments.

### 1. Introduction

English is widely recognized as a global language and holds substantial importance in education and professional development. However, in non-English-speaking contexts like Indonesia, learning English often poses significant challenges for students. At SMA Efata SoE, these challenges are reflected in the tendencies of eleventh-grade science students to avoid English classes, which adversely impacts their academic performance and limits their future opportunities.

Previous studies have highlighted various factors influencing students' engagement with English learning. Betal (2023) emphasized that students' motivation and external support systems, including family and peers, play a critical role in shaping their attitudes toward language learning. Additionally, Betal's research underlined the importance of context-specific teaching strategies to address learners' unique needs and challenges

The study focuses on identifying internal and external factors influencing students' avoidance behaviors and analyzing their impact on learning experiences. By addressing

these issues, the study aims to contribute to the development of effective strategies for enhancing student engagement and language proficiency.

## **2. Research Method**

This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach. Creswell (2009) qualitative method means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or group ascribe to a social or human problem. This method used to investigate the factors influencing students' avoidance of English classes. The study was conducted with 35 eleventh-grade science students at SMA Efata SoE, utilizing questionnaires and interviews as primary data collection methods.

A questionnaire was administered to all 35 students to gather initial insights into their attitudes toward English learning. Based on the responses, 15 students were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring a focus on individuals who demonstrated notable attitudes or avoidance behaviors. The selected participants provided diverse perspectives essential for addressing the research objectives.

The interviews were guided by structured, open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed and meaningful responses. These interviews were audio-recorded using a mobile application to ensure data accuracy and facilitate analysis. Ethical considerations, including informed consent and confidentiality, were prioritized throughout the research process.

Data analysis followed a systematic process, beginning with the transcription of recorded interviews. The researcher familiarized themselves with the data through repeated reviews of the transcripts. Inductive coding was employed to identify recurring themes, such as motivation, teaching methods, and peer influence. These themes were further analyzed to draw connections and provide interpretations aligned with the study's objectives.

## **3. Research Findings and Discussion (bold, 12 pt)**

### **Research Findings**

#### **Data from Questionnaire**

Before conducting the interviews, the writer distributed a questionnaire to 35 students from class 11 MIA 1 to identify those who were interested in learning English and those who avoided it. The questionnaire responses helped the writer determine the students who met the research criteria, such as showing patterns of avoidance or interest in learning English.

Based on the responses, the writer selected 15 students who fulfilled the criteria for further analysis. These students were chosen because their answers provided relevant and insightful data regarding the factors influencing English class avoidance, making them suitable participants for the interview stage. The following are the results from questionnaire of these 15 students:

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**Table 1. Questions with Agreement Scale Options**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Option</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Do you enjoy studying English?	Strongly Agree	3	20%
	Agree	2	13.3%
	Neutral	9	60%
	Disagree	-	-
	Strongly Disagree	1	6.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>
Do you think English is an important subject for your future?	Strongly Agree	8	53.3%
	Agree	2	13.3%
	Neutral	5	26.7%
	Disagree	-	-
	Strongly Disagree	-	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>
Do you find English assignments too challenging?	Strongly Agree	2	13.3%
	Agree	4	26.7%
	Neutral	8	53.3%
	Disagree	1	6.7%
	Strongly Disagree	-	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>
Do you believe that the English teaching methods your teacher use are effective?	Strongly Agree	5	33.3%
	Agree	8	53.3%
	Neutral	2	13.3%
	Disagree	-	-
	Strongly Disagree	-	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 2. Questions with Confidence/Comfort/Motivation/Difficulty Scale Options**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Option</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Do you feel confident when speaking English in class?	Very Confident	4	26.7%
	Somewhat Confident	4	26.7%
	Neutral	1	6.7%
	Somewhat Unconfident	7	40%
	Very Unconfident	-	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>
Are you comfortable participating in English class activities?	Very Comfortable	3	20%
	Somewhat Comfortable	1	6.7%
	Neutral	5	33.3%
	Somewhat Uncomfortable	5	33.3%
	Very Uncomfortable	1	6.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>
Do you feel that English lessons are difficult to understand?	Very Difficult	4	26.7%
	Somewhat Difficult	10	66.7%
	Neutral	-	-
	Somewhat Easy	1	6.7%
	Very Easy	-	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>
Do you feel motivated to improve your English skills?	Very Motivated	4	26.7%
	Somewhat Motivated	9	60%
	Neutral	1	6.7%
	Somewhat Unmotivated	-	-
	Very Unmotivated	1	6.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3. Questions with Frequency Scale Options**

Question	Option	Number of Responses	Percentage
Do you find English lessons engaging?	Always	4	26.7%
	Often	3	20%
	Sometimes	5	33.3%
	Rarely	2	13.3%
	Never	1	6.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>
Do you often avoid English in class?	Always	3	20%
	Often	3	20%
	Sometimes	4	26.7%
	Rarely	1	6.7%
	Never	1	6.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>

The above questionnaire results are from the 15 selected students who met the criteria to participate in the interview, chosen from the 35 students who completed the questionnaire. These 15 students were selected based on their responses, which indicated a clear distinction between those who are interested in learning English and those who tend to avoid English classes. The selection process ensured that the participants for the interview stage were representative of both groups, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of the factors influencing students' avoidance of English classes.

### **Data from Interview**

Through the interviews, the writer was able to identify the factors influencing students' avoidance of English classes. The following are the interview results from 15 science students at SMA Efata SoE. These findings provide a deeper understanding of the underlying causes behind their reluctance to engage in English learning, revealing both internal and external factors. The interviews offer valuable insights into students' perceptions, attitudes, and experiences, which are essential for addressing the challenges they face in English language acquisition and improving their overall learning experience. The interview results of 15 science students at SMA Efata SoE are as follows:

#### **1. Do you like learning English?**

The responses show a mixed attitude toward learning English. Out of 15 participants:

- Positive Attitude: 2 students strongly like learning English, while 3 somewhat like it.
- Neutral: 6 students expressed a neutral stance, showing occasional interest depending on the material.

- Negative Attitude: 4 students dislike or strongly dislike learning English, citing difficulty and lack of relevance.
2. Why do you like or dislike learning English?  
Students who enjoy learning English often link their interest to practical uses, such as wanting to study abroad or engaging with English content online. Conversely, those who dislike English mention its perceived difficulty, the difference between spelling and pronunciation, and uninspiring teaching methods. Peer influence and lack of intrinsic motivation also contribute to negative perceptions.
  3. Have you ever avoided English classes?  
All 15 students admitted to avoiding English classes at some point. Reasons varied from lack of understanding and difficulty adapting to teaching methods to embarrassment about speaking English.
  4. Have you had negative experiences that led to disliking English?  
Most students did not report significant negative experiences, except for 2 participants who felt embarrassed when laughed at by peers during class, which affected their willingness to engage in future lessons.
  5. What factors contribute to your avoidance of English classes?  
Key factors include:
    - Perceived difficulty in understanding English, particularly grammar and pronunciation.
    - Unengaging or unclear teaching methods.
    - Peer-related pressures, such as fear of judgment.
    - Lack of perceived relevance in daily life or future career plans.
  6. Have you observed your peers avoiding English classes?  
All students noted that avoidance of English classes was common among their peers, indicating a broader trend within the school environment.
  7. Could you describe your progress in English class?  
Most students expressed difficulty adapting and reported limited progress in their English skills, with only 2 students feeling they had achieved moderate proficiency. Lack of consistent motivation and understanding were key barriers.
  8. How about your English grades?  
Grades reflected the students' attitudes and engagement levels:
    - Positive Performance: 3 students reported satisfactory grades, attributing their success to consistent effort despite challenges.
    - Struggles: 12 students expressed dissatisfaction with their grades, citing avoidance and difficulty understanding the material as key reasons.
  9. Do you think avoiding English classes has affected your progress?  
All participants acknowledged that avoidance had negatively impacted their learning, leading to poor grades, limited proficiency, and a lack of confidence in using the language.
  10. What might you experience if you continue to avoid learning English?  
Students anticipate facing significant challenges, including:
    - Difficulty in pursuing higher education or international opportunities.
    - Limited job prospects, as many modern careers require English proficiency.
    - Struggles in adapting to technological advancements and global trends.

## Discussion

The results presented below highlight challenges that are frequently encountered in language learning environments and may be relevant to students in other similar contexts.

However, the writer acknowledge that such circumstances may vary in educational settings where English is more extensively integrated into daily activities, such as in institutions where English functions as the primary medium of instruction. In these environments, students are likely to have greater exposure to the language, which can mitigate some of the challenges contributing to avoidance. Consequently, while these findings provide valuable insights into common scenarios in certain educational contexts, they may not be universally applicable across all learning environments.

### **Factors Influencing Students Avoidance of English Classes**

Based on the analysis of the data from questionnaire and the interview, there are some factors that are considered to influence significantly the students' avoidance of English classes have been identified. These identified factors are discussed below, include:

#### **1) Internal Factors**

##### **a. Lack of Motivation**

Motivation is a crucial factor in language learning;

- ❖ The data on table 3, question number 9, indicates that students have varying degrees of motivation to improve their English skills. While 26.7% of students reported being "Very Motivated," 60% were only "Somewhat Motivated," and 6.7% felt "Very Unmotivated." The high percentage of students in the middle category suggests a general need to boost intrinsic motivation among learners.
- ❖ Many students still struggle with intrinsic motivation because they perceive English as irrelevant to their everyday lives. For example, one student mentioned that they felt no need to learn English because it was not necessary for everyday conversation. This lack of perceived benefit makes them less likely to invest time and effort in learning the language.
- ❖ Without clear personal goals or incentives, students are less likely to engage with the subject matter. The lack of clear personal goals or incentives hinders students' engagement with English language learning. For example, students who have not yet set aspirations such as studying abroad or using English in their future career often lack the drive to overcome the challenges of learning the language. Without goals, their commitment to learning diminishes, resulting in minimal progress.

##### **b. Emotional Factors**

Emotional experiences influence students' attitudes toward English:

- ❖ The result from questionnaire related to emotional responses such as confidence and comfort in class were also notable. 40% of students felt "Somewhat Unconfident" when speaking English in class, and another 33.3% reported feeling "Somewhat Uncomfortable" during English class activities. These emotional barriers likely contribute to avoidance behaviors and hinder engagement.
- ❖ The data from interview also shows that negative experiences such as being laughed at or making mistakes can lead to feelings of embarrassment, which can reduce the student's willingness to participate in class. When students make mistakes in English and are laughed at by their peers, it often leads to feelings of embarrassment and discourages them from participating in class activities in the future. For example, one student shared that they were teased after mispronouncing a word, which made them hesitant to speak English again. This creates a cycle of avoidance, where the fear of repeating the experience prevents them from actively engaging in class.

## 2) External Factors

### a. The Difficulty the Students Face in Learning the Language

The result of question number 5 from questionnaire shows that majority of students (66.7%) reported that English lessons were "Somewhat Difficult," with 26.7% finding them "Very Difficult." These perceptions of difficulty may discourage students from actively participating and increase avoidance of English classes. From the data, the writer can conclude that many students still find English difficult to understand, especially when it comes to grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and writing. For example:

- ❖ The complexity of grammar often confuses students, especially when they are dealing with topics such as tenses, verb forms, and sentence structures. These elements are fundamentally different from their native language, making it harder for them to understand the rules and apply them correctly.
- ❖ The difficulty of understanding advanced lesson or material. When teaching materials become too advanced for a student's current level of proficiency, it creates significant barriers to learning. These difficulties often arise when the curriculum moves faster than the student's ability to keep up, or when there is a gap between basic knowledge and new content.
- ❖ Confusion between how words are written and pronounced. English is notorious for its irregular spelling and pronunciation rules. Words often don't sound the way they're spelled, making it difficult for learners to connect the written and spoken forms.

### b. Teaching Method

The effectiveness of teaching methods plays an important role in student engagement with English, but unfortunately the data the author found showed that the methods used were inadequate. This can be seen through the answers given by P1, P9 and P15 to interview question number 5. The following is the detail explanation:

- ❖ Unengaging or boring teaching methods lead to a lack of motivation. Uninteresting or boring teaching methods significantly reduce students' motivation to learn, as they feel disconnected from the material. For example, when lessons rely heavily on lectures or memorization without interactive activities, students may lose interest and struggle to retain information.
- ❖ Lack of variation in teaching methods, such as not including games, group discussions, or multimedia tools, made the learning process feel monotonous. For example, translating sentences repeatedly without practicing speaking or listening may fail to address different learning styles, leaving visual or auditory learners unengaged. Innovative approaches, such as using role-playing games or language learning apps, can better engage students and improve comprehension.

### c. Peer Influence and Social Pressure

Peer interactions also play a significant role in students' avoidance of English:

- ❖ Students often feel embarrassed or ashamed when they make mistakes in front of classmates, leading to avoidance of speaking English. For example, P13 and P15 shared that they were hesitant to speak in class after being laughed at for mispronouncing words. This fear of making mistakes hindered their participation and negatively impacted their desire to practice English.

- ❖ Several students mentioned that they were teased or made fun of by their peers for making mistakes in pronouncing or reading English. Examples of teasing from classmates contributed significantly to students' avoidance of English classes. One student shared that they were teased for misreading an English text, which caused feelings of embarrassment and reluctance to participate in future lessons. Such incidents created negative associations with English learning.
- ❖ Fear of being judged by others can cause students to disengage and avoid participation in English classes. Fear of judgment, triggered by previous negative experiences, prevents students from fully engaging in English lessons. For example, some students said they avoided class discussions because they were worried about being judged or laughed at for their language mistakes. This fear reduced their confidence and overall participation in class activities.

d. Perceived Relevance of English

A lack of perceived practical use of English can lead to avoidance. Question number 4 from questionnaire show that 53.3% of students "Strongly Agreed" and 13.3% "Agreed" that English is important for their future, indicating that most students understand its relevance. However, a significant portion (26.7%) were neutral, highlighting a need to further reinforce the practical applications of English in their lives.

- ❖ Students may not see the need to learn English if they do not believe it will be useful in their daily lives or future careers, especially in regions where English is not the primary language of communication. In areas where English is not widely spoken, students often struggle to find practical reasons to learn it. For example, one participant explained that they did not feel the need to learn English because it was not important for their daily interactions or future aspirations. This lack of relevance made English a lower priority in their learning journey.
- ❖ Some students mentioned that English is not necessary for their day-to-day activities or future aspirations, leading to a lower priority on learning it. The perception that English was not necessary for their daily lives or long-term goals further reduced students' motivation to learn the language. For example, students who did not plan to work in an English-speaking environment or travel abroad may not see much benefit in mastering English, resulting in disinterest and avoidance.

e. Time and Fatigue

External factors, such as time and energy, also impact students' willingness to attend English classes:

- ❖ From the interview especially from question number 5, P13 noted that he feels tired or overwhelmed by other commitments, which diminishes his focus and energy for learning English. A busy schedule with multiple commitments often leaves students feeling too tired to focus on English lessons. He also shared that as students they also had extracurricular activities that drained their energy, making them less motivated or less able to actively participate in English class.

f. Negative Past Experiences

Past experiences with the subject can affect students' attitudes:

- ❖ Students who had previous struggles or failures in English, such as receiving low grades or failing to understand certain concepts, might develop a

negative association with the subject, leading to avoidance. Past failures, such as consistently low grades or difficulty understanding grammar and vocabulary, can create negative mindsets toward English. P1 and P5 in interview session with question number 8 admitted that their poor academic performance in English made them feel unable to improve, which led them to not study the subject at all.

### **The Impact of Students' Avoidance of English Classes**

Based on the interview results above, students' avoidance of English classes has several negative impacts on both their language learning progress and their overall learning experience. These impacts can be categorized into the following areas:

#### **a. Poor Academic Performance**

Many students acknowledged that their avoidance of English lessons resulted in poor academic performance, particularly in terms of grades and language proficiency. This is because regular attendance and active participation in class are essential for understanding the language and mastering its components, such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and speaking skills. For example:

- ❖ P1 and P5 expressed that their grades in English were not good, and they believed that if they had attended more classes and paid better attention, their scores could have improved.
- ❖ P2, P9, and P15 also mentioned that by avoiding English classes, they missed out on crucial lessons, leading to difficulties in understanding the material and poor performance on tests.

#### **b. Limited Understanding and Proficiency in English**

Avoiding English classes leads to a gap in students' understanding of the language because they miss out on key lessons that build upon previous knowledge. English learning is cumulative, meaning that each class introduces new vocabulary, grammar, and language structures that are necessary for mastering the language. When students skip classes, they fail to absorb these concepts, which makes it increasingly difficult to catch up. The following are the evidence from students:

- ❖ P1, P6, and P7 stated that their struggles with understanding English material and lack of participation made it harder for them to grasp the concepts and improve their proficiency.
- ❖ P5 mentioned that they could not speak English well and did not understand the lessons fully, reflecting the difficulty of learning a language without consistent exposure.

#### **c. Reduced Motivation to Learn**

Avoidance often stems from a lack of motivation to engage with the language, and this lack of engagement further perpetuates the cycle of avoidance. When students don't see the value in learning English, they are less likely to actively participate in classes, leading them to skip lessons or disengage entirely, for instance:

- ❖ P4 and P10 felt that English wasn't necessary for their daily life, so they had no strong reason to put effort into learning the language, resulting in a lack of enthusiasm for English classes.
- ❖ P5 admitted that they were often too lazy to study, which highlights how the absence of motivation to attend class impacts their overall learning experience.

#### **d. Fear and Anxiety When Speaking English**

Avoiding English classes due to fear or embarrassment about speaking can significantly impact students' confidence and increase anxiety when using the

language. When students avoid speaking English in class, they miss out on valuable opportunities to practice and improve their skills, which in turn reinforces their insecurities. The fear of making mistakes, such as mispronunciations or incorrect grammar, can prevent them from engaging fully with the language, leading to a lack of progress. As this cycle continues, students often experience a decline in their confidence, becoming increasingly anxious about speaking in front of others. This anxiety can make them avoid speaking even more, further hindering their development. The following are students' answers:

- ❖ P7 and P14 mentioned feeling embarrassed and shy when they made mistakes, especially when classmates laughed at them. This fear of ridicule discouraged them from speaking in class, which led to missed opportunities for language practice.
- ❖ P12 and P15 also mentioned that the lack of support from peers and the fear of mispronunciation made them more reluctant to speak English, which contributed to their avoidance of learning.

e. Long-term Impact on Future Opportunities

Several students acknowledged that continued avoidance of English classes would have negative consequences for their future, recognizing that English has become a crucial skill in today's globalized world. Many students identified the importance of English for career opportunities, academic success, and international communication. Without sufficient proficiency in English, students may face challenges in securing desirable jobs, as many employers require English-language skills, especially in multinational companies or industries that involve global collaboration. Here are students' answers:

- ❖ P1 and P2 worried about struggling in the future because English is an important international language, and they might face difficulties in career and education without adequate English skills.
- ❖ P9 and P7 highlighted concerns about missing out on opportunities like scholarships, international job prospects, and the ability to communicate in global contexts.

f. Struggles in Adaptation and Classroom Engagement

Students who avoid English lessons often find it difficult to adapt to the class and engage with the material because they miss key learning opportunities and struggle to keep up with the content. Regular absences or lack of participation in lessons lead to gaps in their understanding, making it harder to follow future lessons that build on previous knowledge. This lack of engagement further compounds their difficulty in grasping concepts such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Additionally, without consistent exposure to the language, students may find it challenging to develop necessary skills, such as reading comprehension, listening, and speaking.

- ❖ P3, P4, and P6 shared that they struggled to adapt to English class because they did not fully understand what was being taught, further hindering their ability to keep up with their peers.
- ❖ P12 explained that when the teaching methods were unengaging, they lost focus, which resulted in them not paying attention and struggling to understand the material.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the findings and previous discussions, the writer can conclude that:

- 1) Through the analysis of data collected from questionnaires and interviews, the writer identified several key factors contributing to students' avoidance of English classes. They are academic challenges, teaching methods, peer influence and social pressure, lack of motivation, emotional factors and perceived relevance and external factors.
- 2) Students' avoidance of English language classes significantly impacts their academic performance, language proficiency and long-term opportunities. By missing out on active lessons and practice, students experience gaps in their knowledge and perform poorly. Avoidance also reduces their self-confidence and motivation, creating a cycle of alienation that limits progress in language acquisition. Over time, these challenges limit access to future academic and career prospects, as English language proficiency becomes increasingly important for global communication and professional success.

#### 5. References (bold, 12 pt)

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