

# Analysis of Students' Enthusiasm for Learning in Preparing for State University Entrance Exams at SMAN 2 Batu

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## Abstract

Enthusiasm is an attitude of students characterized by great eagerness or interest, as well as active participation in learning. This study aims to understand the enthusiasm of students at SMAN 2 Batu in preparing for state university entrance exams. The selection process for university admission requires readiness to help students achieve their desired university. This study explores various factors contributing to student motivation and examines how these elements affect their academic performance and preparedness for exams. Using a combination of surveys and interviews, data was collected from a representative sample of students. The results indicate that personal ambition, family encouragement, and access to quality educational resources are key determinants of student enthusiasm. Furthermore, the study found that social interactions and participation in school activities significantly enhance students' commitment to their studies. This research concludes that fostering a supportive and resource-rich learning environment is crucial to maximizing student enthusiasm and success in entrance exams. These findings provide valuable insights for educators and administrators in developing strategies to support student engagement and achievement.

**Keywords:** enthusiasm; motivation; academic achievement; high school students

## 1. Introduction

The improvement of education quality is a global educational development target and an integral part of efforts to comprehensively enhance human quality (Friskilia & Winata, 2018). Education itself is an effort to improve human resources in intellectual, psychological, and social aspects (Suwardi, 2012). Success can be measured by changes in thinking, attitude, and skills (Jannah, 2017). Education involves several levels, including elementary school, middle school or equivalent, high school or equivalent, and higher education, to achieve a prosperous, safe, and happy life.

The transition between each educational level, particularly from high school to university, presents several challenges. During high school, students are expected to participate well, regularly, and disciplined in learning while adhering to school regulations (Sudrajat, 2008; Wahyuni in Dahlia, 2020). This phase requires significant dedication and motivation, as students must master various subjects and develop enthusiastic learning habits and effective study strategies. Kimble (1961: 31) stated that learning is a form of absolute change that influences human behavior and motivates individuals to keep improving.

Learning is a process that results in new behavioral changes not caused by maturation and is temporary, resulting from positive responses (Nasution, 1999). Moreover, learning involves physical and psychological activities that lead to new, relatively stable behaviors in individuals. Purwanto (2006) argues that learning motivation is a conscious effort to direct behavior toward achieving desired outcomes. According to Hamalik (2008), motivation is a change in energy within a person, evidenced by feelings and reactions aimed at achieving specific goals. Martaniah (2006) asserts that students with high achievement motivation

possess traits such as confidence in facing situations and tasks, future orientation, preference for moderately difficult tasks, efficient time use, preference for mature partners, and resilience in completing tasks.

Learning motivation is crucial in the learning process because it drives individuals to achieve their goals. Human behavior is determined by motivation, which provides direction, enthusiasm, and perseverance (Santrock, 2008). From a behavioral perspective, motivation is influenced by external rewards and punishments. This concept suggests that behavior can be controlled and motivated through specific activities.

In recent years, there has been increasing recognition of the diverse nature of student motivation and its impact on academic success. Achieving success in academic and non-academic fields is influenced by factors such as self, environment, friends, parental support, family, and school. According to Bloom (in Azwar, 2002), academic achievement is the success someone achieves in learning. Academic achievement is an accomplishment or result that signifies a level of expertise in academic work, recognized through competitions or goal attainment (Kartini Kartono & Dali Gulo, 2006). Djamarah (2002) defines academic achievement as an impactful result that brings change to an individual as the culmination of learning.

This study aims to analyze various factors influencing student motivation at SMAN 2 Batu, including intrinsic factors, family and peer support, and the role of school resources. By identifying these key motivators, the study seeks to inform educators and policymakers on how to create an environment that promotes academic excellence and enhances students' readiness for higher education.

## 2. Method

This study employs a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative research methods to provide a comprehensive analysis of students' enthusiasm for learning in preparation for state university entrance exams at SMAN 2 Batu. The combination of surveys and interviews allows for a broad and in-depth examination of the factors influencing student motivation. This research utilizes an explanatory mixed-method design (Cresswell, 2008).

The study participants include 30 students at SMAN 2 Batu who are preparing for state university entrance exams. Selection was done using stratified random sampling to ensure the sample represents the entire spectrum of academic performance and diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. A structured questionnaire was developed to measure various dimensions of student motivation, including intrinsic motivation, parental support, peer influence, and access to school resources. The survey employed a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 students to gain deeper insights into their personal experiences, challenges, and strategies in preparing for the entrance exams. These interviews were recorded and transcribed for thematic analysis.

Quantitative data was collected through an online survey distributed to students, ensuring anonymity and confidentiality. For the qualitative part, interviews were conducted either in person or via video call, depending on the students' preferences and availability. Descriptive statistics, such as mean and standard deviation, were calculated for each survey item. Inferential statistics, including regression analysis, were used to identify significant predictors of students' enthusiasm for learning. Thematic analysis was employed to identify common themes and patterns from the interview transcripts. Coding was done manually, and inter-rater reliability was ensured by having two researchers independently code the data and resolve any discrepancies through discussion.

### 3. Results and Discussion

The survey results indicate that intrinsic motivation, parental support, and access to quality educational resources are significant predictors of students' enthusiasm for learning. Students who reported higher personal interest in their studies and received more encouragement and support from their families showed greater enthusiasm and readiness for entrance exams.

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Intrinsic Motivation	4.2	0.7
Parental Support	4.0	0.8
Peer Influence	3.8	0.9
School Resources	4.1	0.6
Extracurricular Activities	3.9	0.8

The regression analysis shows that intrinsic motivation ( $\beta = 0.45, p < 0.01$ ), parental support ( $\beta = 0.35, p < 0.01$ ), and school resources ( $\beta = 0.30, p < 0.01$ ) significantly predict students' enthusiasm for learning. Peer influence and participation in extracurricular activities also have a positive impact, though less pronounced. This aligns with Dimiyati and Mudjiono's view that one of the factors influencing learning motivation is the student's environmental conditions, including peer interactions. Santrock (2003) argues that the function of peers is to increase positive social activities, as students want to spend time with their peers. Thus, the findings that peer influence and extracurricular participation have a positive but less significant impact align with experts emphasizing the role of peers in enhancing learning motivation.

The interviews provided deeper insights into individual students' experiences and perceptions. (1) Intrinsic Motivation Many students expressed a genuine interest in subjects related to their desired university programs. This enthusiasm is a major driver of their sustained efforts and commitment to exam preparation; (2) Parental Support Students highlighted the crucial role of parental encouragement in maintaining their motivation. Emotional support, practical assistance with study schedules, and positive reinforcement were frequently mentioned; (3) Peer Influence Positive peer interactions and study groups were identified as important factors in fostering a collaborative learning environment, helping students stay motivated; (4) School Resources Access to well-equipped libraries, quality teaching, and additional preparatory courses were seen as significant advantages. Students valued these resources for providing essential academic support; (5) Extracurricular Activities Participation in extracurricular activities helped students manage stress and maintain a balanced lifestyle, contributing to their overall enthusiasm and readiness for exams.

### 4. Conclusion

Based on the research results, students exhibit varied levels of enthusiasm and motivation in preparing for state university entrance exams. Intrinsic motivation, parental support, and access to quality school resources emerged as the main determinants of students' enthusiasm for learning. Additionally, peer influence and participation in extracurricular activities play supportive roles in enhancing student engagement and academic performance

These findings suggest that a holistic approach, combining academic support with motivational and psychological interventions, is essential for creating a conducive learning environment. Educators and policymakers should focus on creating resource-rich environments

and fostering supportive communities to maximize student enthusiasm and success in entrance exams.

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