

The Effectiveness of the *Aparatur Sipil Negara Mengajar* Program in Fostering English Learning Motivation Among Scavenger Children

Safrina Khaira K^{1*}, Ema Dauyah¹, Ferlya Elyza¹

¹Universitas Abulyatama, Aceh, Indonesia

*Corresponding author e-mail: safrinakhairac@gmail.com

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the impact of the *Aparatur Sipil Negara Mengajar* (ASNMG) program on scavenger children's motivation to learn English at Taman Edukasi Anak Pemulung Gampong Jawa, Banda Aceh. This study employed a qualitative research design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with three scavenger children from different educational levels and one English teacher involved in the program. The findings reveal that students' motivation is influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, including long-term participation (4–6 years), enthusiasm for attending classes, and increased interest in English through creative and interactive teaching methods such as songs and visual media. Teachers play an important role by providing praise, rewards, and positive reinforcement. Supporting factors include patient volunteer teachers, free learning opportunities, and extracurricular activities, while inhibiting factors include fatigue, late attendance, learning difficulties, and peer influence. Overall, the ASNMG program successfully fosters a positive learning environment and enhances students' motivation. The study recommends maintaining varied teaching methods and providing more personalized mentoring to sustain long-term motivation.

Keywords: *Aparatur Sipil Negara Mengajar* Program; Enhancing Learning Motivation; Scavenger Children Education

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A. Introduction

English has become one of the most widely used languages in the world and plays a crucial role in global communication, education, and access to information. As a global language, English proficiency is essential for individuals to participate in academic and professional opportunities. However, despite its importance, English proficiency

among Indonesian students remains relatively low compared to other ASEAN countries.

In Indonesia, unequal access to quality education continues to affect marginalized groups, including scavenger children who live in challenging socio-economic conditions. These children often spend their time collecting recyclable materials to support their families, limiting their opportunities for schooling and learning. As a result, they are frequently excluded from formal education and tend to experience low self-esteem and reduced motivation to learn.

Motivation is widely recognized as a key factor in second language acquisition, influencing learners' participation, persistence, and achievement ([Gardner, 2019](#); [Dörnyei, 1998](#)). Students who are motivated are more likely to engage actively in learning activities, overcome difficulties, and achieve better outcomes. While numerous studies have examined English learning motivation in formal education contexts, little is known about how motivation develops among marginalized learners in non-formal settings. Previous research has explored community-based education programs for street or poor children ([Nisa & Yoenanto, 2023](#)) however, studies focusing on volunteer-based teaching initiatives, such as the *Aparatur Sipil Negara Mengajar* (ASN-M) program, and their impact on English learning motivation remain limited.

However, there is a critical lack of research investigating how volunteer-driven, non-formal educational initiatives, such as the ASN-M program, influence second language (L2) motivation among highly marginalized groups, particularly scavenger children. The ASN-M program is a voluntary educational movement initiated by Indonesian civil servants to promote equitable access to education for all children, regardless of their economic background. The program provides free learning opportunities for marginalized children, including English instruction, through interactive and engaging teaching methods such as songs, games, and storytelling ([Indriani, 2020](#)). One of its implementations can be found at Taman Edukasi Anak Pemulung Gampong Jawa in Banda Aceh, where scavenger children participate in non-formal learning activities facilitated by volunteer teachers. Therefore, this study aims to explore how the ASN-M program influences the English learning motivation of scavenger children by identifying both facilitating and inhibiting factors affecting their motivation.

B. Methods

This study adopted a descriptive qualitative design to explore how the ASN-M program influences scavenger children's motivation in learning English. The research was conducted at Taman Edukasi Anak Pemulung Gampong Jawa, Banda Aceh. Data were collected through in-depth, structured interviews conducted face-to-face with four participants: three scavenger children (elementary, junior high, and senior high school levels) and one English teacher. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, and interviews lasted 10–15 minutes and were recorded with consent. The

collected data were analyzed using [Miles and Huberman's \(1994\)](#) interactive model, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

C. Results and Discussion

The result of this study revealed that the ASNM program significantly enhances the motivation of scavenger children in learning English. The findings are drawn from in-depth interviews with three scavenger children and one English teacher at Taman Edukasi Anak Pemulung Gampong Jawa Banda Aceh. The study found that the motivation of these children is influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, including their long-term participation in the program, positive teacher support, enjoyable learning atmosphere, and social interaction within the learning group.

The first finding shows that long-term involvement in the ASNM program builds intrinsic motivation among scavenger children. Most participants had joined the program for more than four years, indicating persistence and genuine interest in learning English. This is consistent with [Ryan & Deci \(2020\)](#), who argue that long-term engagement in learning reflects a stable intrinsic drive that comes from personal satisfaction and curiosity. Similarly, [Gardner \(2019\)](#) emphasizes that when students experience pleasure in the learning process, their motivation tends to be self-sustaining.

The second finding demonstrates that teacher encouragement and emotional support play a central role in shaping motivation. The teacher often provided praise, rewards, and verbal encouragement that made students feel valued. A supportive teacher-student relationship strengthens students' confidence and willingness to learn. Additionally, teachers in the ASNM program acted not only as educators but also as mentors and caregivers, which strengthened the emotional connection and increased students' commitment to the program ([Al-Mekhlafi & Nagaratnam, 2019](#); [Dörnyei, 1998](#)).

This finding can also be explained through the lens of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), particularly in relation to the fulfillment of learners' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The supportive and caring approach of teachers fosters a sense of relatedness, as students feel emotionally connected and respected. At the same time, praise and encouragement help develop students' sense of competence by increasing their confidence in learning English. Furthermore, the flexible and enjoyable learning environment allows students to experience autonomy, as they can participate in learning activities without pressure. These elements work together to strengthen intrinsic motivation among the learners ([Ryan & Deci, 2020](#)). In contrast to previous studies ([Sulistyo, 2021](#)), which suggest that external rewards and non-formal learning environments may reduce intrinsic motivation, the findings of this study indicate a different result. This difference may be explained by the nature of rewards in the ASNM program, which are more informational rather than controlling. The rewards and praise function as positive feedback that supports learners' sense of competence rather than creating dependency. Moreover, the strong emotional bond

between teachers and students in this context may reduce the potential negative effects of extrinsic motivation.

The third finding relates to the use of interactive and enjoyable learning methods. The English teacher in ASNM used songs, games, and storytelling to create a fun learning atmosphere. This made the children eager to attend class regularly. Such creative learning strategies are supported by [Indriani \(2020\)](#), who found that interactive media increase learners' engagement and positive attitude toward English. Similarly, [Fauziyah \(2022\)](#) and [Karim & Sari \(2023\)](#) confirmed that incorporating play-based learning in community education increases vocabulary retention and motivation.

Moreover, extrinsic factors such as social recognition, group belonging, and appreciation also contributed to sustaining learning motivation. Children felt proud to be part of ASNM and enjoyed the sense of community within the learning group. Likewise, [Prastiyo \(2021\)](#) and [Rahadianto & Nugroho, \(2022\)](#) state that cooperative learning and peer relationships stimulate positive emotions that maintain students' motivation. Another important aspect found in this study is the role of the learning environment. The open and non-formal setting of ASNM allowed children to learn comfortably without the pressure of grades or exams. According to [Nisa & Yoenanto \(2023\)](#), such a relaxed learning atmosphere encourages self-expression and increases students' willingness to learn. The volunteer teachers' patience and understanding also helped overcome students' anxiety. The flexible learning spaces improve motivation among disadvantaged learners. In addition, religious and moral encouragement was found to indirectly support motivation. Teachers often reminded children about gratitude, honesty, and perseverance, linking moral values to learning spirit. The integrating character education in English learning helps students develop both academic and moral motivation.

However, the study also found several inhibiting factors. Fatigue from scavenging work, late attendance, and limited understanding of English words sometimes reduced motivation. Similar conditions were described by [Azhar & Putri \(2021\)](#), who found that street children often experience learning burnout due to dual responsibilities between work and study. Despite these obstacles, the persistence of scavenger children to continue learning indicates the strong influence of the ASNM program. The program's combination of care, creativity, and free access to education successfully cultivated both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. These findings are strongly supported by previous studies: [Ryan & Deci \(2020\)](#); [Gardner \(2019\)](#); [Al-Mekhlafi & Nagaratnam \(2019\)](#); [Dörnyei \(1998\)](#); [Indriani \(2020\)](#); [Fauziyah \(2022\)](#); [Karim & Sari \(2023\)](#); [Prastiyo \(2021\)](#); [Rahadianto & Nugroho, \(2022\)](#); and [Nisa & Yoenanto \(2023\)](#). These studies consistently show that a positive learning environment, supportive teachers, and engaging materials enhance motivation in learning English, particularly for young and marginalized learners.

On the other hand, three previous studies found results that did not fully align with this research. [Sulistyo \(2021\)](#) found that external rewards sometimes reduce intrinsic motivation when students become dependent on praise or prizes. The non-formal

learning without structured curriculum may fail to maintain long-term motivation. Lastly, [Lestari \(2022\)](#) discovered that volunteer teaching programs can lose consistency when teacher turnover is high. These differing findings suggest that the effectiveness of programs like ASNM depends not only on teaching strategies but also on continuity, consistency, and emotional connection between teachers and learners.

Overall, the findings of this study confirm that the ASNM program plays a transformative role in motivating scavenger children to learn English. By providing a supportive community, creative learning methods, and caring volunteers, the program meets both the cognitive and emotional needs of learners. The success of ASNM demonstrates that inclusive, non-formal education can effectively foster motivation and learning engagement among marginalized children in Indonesia.

D. Conclusions

This study concludes that the ASNM program plays a significant role in enhancing scavenger children's motivation to learn English in a non-formal educational context. Through supportive teacher-student relationships, creative learning methods, and a positive learning environment, the program successfully fosters both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation among marginalized learners. Theoretically, this study contributes to the understanding of second language motivation by demonstrating how intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors operate in a non-formal and marginalized learning setting. It highlights the importance of emotional support, enjoyment, and long-term engagement in sustaining learners' motivation. Practically, this study provides insights for educators, policymakers, and community programs on the importance of implementing flexible, engaging, and supportive learning approaches. The findings emphasize that volunteer-based programs like ASNM can serve as effective alternative platforms to support English learning among disadvantaged children. However, this study has several limitations. The small sample size ($n = 4$) and the focus on a single research site limit the generalizability of the findings. In addition, the use of interview data may be influenced by social desirability bias, as participants may provide responses they perceive as favorable. Future research is recommended to address these limitations by involving a larger number of participants and multiple research sites. A longitudinal or mixed-methods approach could provide deeper insights into the long-term impact of the ASNM program. Additionally, future studies may compare ASNM with other similar community-based programs to better understand its relative effectiveness.

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