

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of study

Students' learning engagement in education was a crucial aspect considered in this study. According to Nelson (2018), one of the vital components of the learning process is student engagement itself, which is why it has garnered significant attention in recent years. Students' learning engagement served as a framework to depict students' activity levels, attention to learning, and enthusiasm in participating in lessons. The higher the level of students' learning engagement in the classroom, the greater the impact on their learning outcomes (Bai Fenglei, 2024). Based on Gunuc and Kuzu (2014), students' engagement in the learning process was essential because it affected the effectiveness of teaching and students' academic success. Learning engagement in class had a close relationship with learning outcomes and academic success (Barnacle & Dall'Alba, 2017; Kahu & Nelson, 2018; Koranteng et al., 2019). To achieve satisfactory academic results, it was important for teachers to focus on students' engagement in the classroom. When students were highly engaged, they could more effectively absorb the information provided by the teacher and develop critical thinking skills. High engagement also elevated students' motivation, self confidence, and interest in learning. Therefore, the importance of students' learning engagement in the learning process could not be understated (Gul et al., 2017; Zeng et al., 2020). This means that every teacher should prioritize student engagement to enhance students' activity levels in class.

Student engagement encompasses three prominent dimensions: emotional, cognitive, and behavioral, all of which needed to be understood by teachers throughout the learning process. Emotional engagement referred to students' feelings while at school, including how they showed interest through interactions with peers, teachers, and the school environment (Ali et al., 2021; Gul et al., 2022). It also included how comfortable students felt in the classroom, which could significantly influence their interest in learning. Students experienced emotional engagement when they built positive relationships with friends or teachers, which in turn motivated them during learning activities. According to Nguyen (2016), behavioral engagement involved all observable aspects of students' behavior in the classroom, such as attendance and task completion. It could be observed through attentiveness to the teacher, consistency in attending classes, and adherence to school or classroom rules. Behavioral engagement reflected students' attitudes toward learning, including their willingness and discipline during classroom activities. Meanwhile, cognitive engagement referred to the intellectual involvement of students, such as when they asked questions or actively sought understanding of the learning material (Nguyen et al., 2016). Mister Gidion Maru and Christin Natalia Pajow (2019) stated that cognitive engagement was also related to student motivation and the strategies they used to achieve good performance, especially in English language learning. This type of engagement represented students' efforts to comprehend and participate actively in the learning process, which encouraged the achievement of optimal learning outcomes. However, one of the factors contributing to low student engagement was the teacher's limited classroom management ability. When the classroom environment lacked structure or support, students were more likely to become distracted, thus reducing their participation and academic performance (Aero, 2022). A poorly

managed class could hinder students' ability to grasp material, make lessons less interesting, and eventually lead to a decline in motivation and interest. Such conditions resulted in low emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement. For instance, a disorganized classroom with frequent disruptions often caused students to feel frustrated, leading to lower emotional engagement. Simultaneously, they became less cognitively involved due to a lack of focus, and their behavioral engagement declined as a result of reduced participation and discipline. Therefore, it was crucial for teachers to establish a well structured and supportive classroom environment (Murphy et al., 2019). A comfortable learning atmosphere helped foster all dimensions of engagement: cognitive (understanding the material), emotional (interest and motivation), and behavioral (active participation).

A lack of student engagement could also be attributed to the absence of innovation in teaching methods. This condition often resulted in the teacher's failure to spark students' enthusiasm and participation in the learning process, leading to boredom. The repeated use of the same method caused students to feel disengaged and uninterested in classroom activities (Wahyuli & Ifdil, 2020). For instance, when teachers continuously applied lecture-based approaches without interactive elements, students tended to lose motivation and interest. As a result, such approaches had no significant positive impact on students' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement. This eventually led to passive classroom behavior and minimal student involvement. Moreover, students' engagement in the classroom was also influenced by their individual learning styles. Every student possessed unique preferences in processing information whether visual, auditory, or kinesthetic. Therefore, it was essential for teachers to apply varied and innovative teaching strategies to accommodate diverse learning styles and foster active participation from all students.

Improving learning engagement was a critical aspect, as previously discussed. However, to successfully foster engagement, teachers needed to have a sound understanding of how to implement effective strategies that target emotional, cognitive, and behavioral involvement. According to Aziz (2016), teachers were expected to design and implement learning activities that could stimulate these three dimensions of engagement. Such efforts aimed to create a more interesting learning atmosphere, reduce boredom, and ensure the achievement of learning objectives.

In the rapidly evolving era of globalization, 21st-century skills have emerged as essential competencies that students must possess to succeed in academic and realworld contexts. These skills, widely recognized as the 6Cs critical thinking, creativity, culture, collaboration, communication, and connectivity have been emphasized as key elements in modern education (Anugerahwati, 2019). Aligned with the paradigm shift in educational approaches and the demands of 21st century learning, various innovative teaching methods have been introduced to improve student engagement and participation in the classroom. One such method is discovery learning. According to Hosnan (2016: 282), discovery learning is a model in which students independently discover information, thereby fostering active involvement in the learning process. Similarly, Alvira et al. (2022) explained that discovery learning encourages students to uncover learning concepts on their own, which promotes creativity and meaningful participation. These perspectives highlight that discovery learning not only motivates students to engage actively and creatively but also provides space for them to explore and construct knowledge independently. Therefore, discovery learning places emphasis on the process of exploration rather than solely focusing on the final outcomes. Within this model, students are encouraged to connect newly acquired knowledge with their prior experiences,

making learning more meaningful and applicable to real life contexts (Anwar, 2021; Nandy et al., 2021; Mai et al., 2022).

In the 21st century, discovery learning has played a significant role in enhancing student engagement throughout the learning process. As a student centered model, it actively involved learners in processes of exploration, investigation, and experimentation, while aligning with key elements of the 6Cs Collaboration, Communication, Critical Thinking, Creativity, Citizenship, and Character. Discovery learning has been shown to foster not only cognitive engagement but also emotional involvement and intrinsic motivation. According to Muhammad Minan Chusni (2021), this method stimulated curiosity, active participation, and enthusiasm by allowing students to investigate problems based on their personal interests. Mely Mukaramah et al. (2020) identified several advantages of applying discovery learning in the classroom. First, it equipped students with critical thinking and cognitive skills necessary for solving real world problems in the 21st century. Second, it enabled learners to construct understanding independently, thereby enhancing their analytical thinking. Third, it encouraged collaboration and communication among peers during classroom activities. Fourth, the model accommodated individual differences in learning pace and style, supporting more effective and personalized learning. Fifth, it built student confidence and teamwork essential attributes in a modern learning environment. Moreover, by positioning the teacher as a facilitator, discovery learning shifted the learning focus to students, thereby promoting more active participation in classroom discussions. It also helped students validate their own findings, which in turn strengthened their confidence in drawing conclusions. Finally, discovery learning emphasized creativity by providing students with opportunities to deeply

explore fundamental concepts and ideas, making it a powerful strategy to create meaningful and engaging educational experiences.

Student engagement has become an important factor in education in recent years. Various studies have highlighted its significance in language learning, particularly its impact on academic achievement and classroom dynamics. Additionally, the effectiveness of discovery learning in English language education has been well documented, though not yet widely applied in studies focused specifically on engagement. Latipah (2020) implemented the Flipped Classroom approach to improve vocabulary acquisition, aiming to enhance students' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement. Similarly, Karmila (2021) utilized the Talking Chips strategy to increase engagement in English learning. Mandasari et al. (2022) applied active learning strategies to foster greater classroom participation and motivation. While these studies emphasized specific teaching strategies such as Flipped Classroom, Talking Chips, and active learning, none of them specifically explored the integration of the Discovery Learning model to increase student engagement in English language classrooms. Further studies also investigated the use of online platforms to improve engagement. For instance, Inayati and Waloyo (2022) examined the application of Quizizz to boost student engagement and learning outcomes during online English lessons. Adhelia and Triastuti (2023) integrated digital tools like Quizlet, Padlet, and Flipgrid to enhance student engagement and speaking proficiency. While these studies provided insights into the effectiveness of online learning tools, they primarily focused on virtual learning environments. In contrast, the current study emphasized face to face classroom contexts, aiming to improve student engagement without compromising the effectiveness of learning. Several researchers have examined the impact of Discovery Learning on different areas of

English instruction. Tota Martaida et al. (2017) studied its influence on students' cognitive abilities. Putri et al. (2023) investigated the use of Discovery Learning in teaching grammar to seventh grade students. Muliati et al. (2020) demonstrated its effectiveness in improving students' reading comprehension, while Sarmini (2016) explored its role in enhancing overall learning outcomes in English subjects. Although these studies confirmed the benefits of Discovery Learning in improving specific language skills, none of them focused explicitly on its potential to improve student engagement across all three dimensions, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral.

This research focused on enhancing student engagement in the classroom and improving academic achievement in English language learning. It proposed the use of teaching methods designed to foster engagement, particularly through the implementation of discovery based learning. By actively involving students in the learning process, their academic performance could be improved. Previous studies have consistently shown a close relationship between classroom engagement and academic achievement (Barnacle & Dall'Alba, 2017; Kahu & Nelson, 2018; Koranteng et al., 2019). Engaged students tend to demonstrate greater motivation to understand the material, which in turn leads to better academic outcomes. Furthermore, active participation in classroom activities has been recognized as a key factor in successful learning and the achievement of satisfactory academic results, such as good grades (Ningsih, 2018). High levels of engagement are often associated with improved learning outcomes and a greater sense of academic satisfaction. Conversely, when students are not actively engaged, their learning outcomes tend to be lower and less satisfactory. Enry (2015) also noted that low engagement in the learning process could negatively affect students' academic performance.

This study was conducted to develop English learning activities based on the Discovery Learning model in order to enhance students' engagement, particularly in the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions. Based on preliminary classroom observations, it was found that students often remained passive during the learning process. Additionally, there were no clear guidelines available for teachers to effectively increase student engagement in English classrooms. Current teaching practices in the observed context also tended to be teacher centered and heavily reliant on traditional instructional methods, which contributed to students' low motivation and limited participation. Although several previous studies have investigated the application of discovery learning in English education, its specific impact on improving student engagement across all three domains cognitive, emotional, and behavioral has not yet been thoroughly explored. Therefore, this research responded to the need for more innovative and student-centered instructional strategies by designing learning activities that could support teachers in fostering active learning environments and simultaneously developing students' 21st-century competencies.

1.2 Problem identification

Student engagement in learning is a crucial aspect that teachers need to consider, as it encompasses emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions. Based on initial observations and interviews conducted during the preliminary stage of this study, it was found that many students were not yet fully engaged in classroom learning activities, particularly in English lessons. The level of engagement appeared low, with approximately 80% of students not demonstrating significant participation during the learning process. According to the observation instruments, several engagement indicators showed consistently low scores. Many students were rarely if

ever active in asking or responding to the teacher's questions. This was evident, for instance, when the teacher posed a question and only two students raised their hands to answer. A lack of confidence and fear of making mistakes were commonly cited as reasons for their reluctance. Furthermore, students exhibited limited interest in the learning material, as indicated by their minimal verbal participation and lack of curiosity driven questioning during lessons. Behaviorally, many students were observed chatting with peers while the teacher was delivering the lesson. Even when questions were addressed to them, several students remained unresponsive and continued their conversations, showing disengagement from the instructional process. Interviews with students further revealed that they often felt bored due to the monotonous, teacher-centered approach employed in the classroom. Interviews with teachers confirmed that instruction was predominantly textbook driven. Teachers admitted to relying heavily on textbooks as the primary learning source, and expressed challenges in designing learning activities that could foster student engagement. A lack of professional development and limited exposure to active learning models were identified as contributing factors to this issue. This condition highlights the need for interventions aimed at assisting teachers in developing more engaging and student-centered learning activities. Dependence on textbooks alone tends to foster passive learning, where students primarily listen to explanations without opportunities for meaningful interaction. Moreover, textbookbased instruction without the integration of innovative models restricts students' chances to develop essential 21st century skills, such as problem-solving, creativity, collaboration, and communication. Without active learning approaches, students' creativity is stifled, and opportunities for authentic engagement are significantly reduced.

1.3 Research limitation

This study was conducted in Class VIII B during the even semester. This class was selected based on the results of preliminary observations and interviews with the English teacher, which indicated that student engagement in this class remained relatively low. The teacher reported that most students in Class VIII B tended to be passive during lessons, rarely asked questions, and were less active in class discussions and learning activities. This study also had several limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, it focused solely on the development of English learning activities at the junior high school level, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other educational levels, such as elementary or senior high school. Second, the learning activities designed in this study were based exclusively on the Discovery Learning model, thereby excluding other instructional models that might also be effective in enhancing student engagement. Additionally, the study was limited to eighth grade students, meaning that the learning materials were developed for specific topics aligned with the curriculum at that level. Consequently, the findings may not be applicable to different topics, grade levels, or other subject areas.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How is the VIII grade students' learning engagement in SMPN 5 Singaraja?
2. How can the prototype of Discovery Learning activities be developed to enhance students' engagement in VIII grade of SMPN 5 Singaraja?
3. How is the quality of the developed Discovery English learning activities in Class VIII of SMPN 5 Singaraja?

1.5 Research Objectives

1. General objective: was to develop English learning activities that enhance students' learning engagement in Class VIII of SMPN 5 Singaraja through the implementation of the Discovery Learning model.
2. Specific objectives:
 1. To explore the VIII grade students' learning engagement in SMPN 5 Singaraja.
 2. To design and develop a prototype of Discovery Learning activities aimed at enhancing student engagement in class VIII of SMPN 5 Singaraja.
 3. To evaluate quality of the Discovery Learning Activities prototypes for English Class in class VIII of SMPN 5 Singaraja.

1.6 Significance Of Study

1. Theoretical

The theoretical benefit of this research is that it contributes to the development of English learning activities and provides teaching models such as discovery learning that are effective in increasing student engagement.

2. Practical

1. The benefits for teachers

The benefit of this research for teachers is to obtain new references in increasing student involvement in carrying out the teaching and learning process in the classroom using the discovery learning model.

2. For students

This research can be used to increase student involvement in the learning process by implementing English language learning activities using the discovery learning model.

3. The benefits for schools

For schools, this research can provide input or suggestions in addressing low student engagement by developing English language learning activities.

