

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introduction to the study, including the research background, problem identification, research limitations, research questions, research objectives, the significance of the study, and definitions of key terms. These sections are discussed as follows:

1.1 Research Background

In Indonesia, English is formally designated as a compulsory foreign language subject across all levels of formal education, including senior high school. However, since English occupies the status of a Foreign Language (EFL) in Indonesia, students have very limited opportunities to use English outside the classroom. Brown (2007) noted that EFL learners face significant difficulties in developing language proficiency because their exposure to the target language is largely confined to instructional contexts.

At the senior high school level English learning in Indonesia is often constrained by limited classroom exposure, making it difficult for students to develop strong communicative competence. Since English functions as a foreign language rather than a second language, opportunities to use it outside the classroom remain limited. Indonesia is also one of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world, with more than 700 local languages spoken alongside Bahasa Indonesia, meaning that English often becomes a third or even fourth language for many learners. Furthermore, developing learner autonomy remains challenging because students generally rely on formal instruction and have limited

opportunities to engage with English in their daily lives. Previous studies have emphasized the importance of autonomous learning outside the classroom, as classroom instruction alone is often insufficient to support language mastery (Nurchalis et al., 2022). Consequently, Indonesian EFL learners are required to demonstrate persistence and sustained effort in order to achieve success in English learning despite these contextual challenges.

Learning grit is essential in education, especially for students, as it is a key to success. Grit is one factor that contributes to a student's academic performance (Martin et al., 2022). The study determined that grit has a beneficial impact on students' satisfaction and individual success. Thus, realizing the value of grit has important implication for growth, education, and academic success (Wu et al., 2022).

The issue of low student persistence in school is an important obstacle to their learning (Kadmas, 2021; Potchen, 2022). This problem is indicated by a lack of consistent effort, commitment, and persistence in pursuing academic goals (Rone et al., 2023). Students who display low persistence sometimes struggle to sustain engagement and motivation in their studies, resulting in poor learning outcomes. A lack of intrinsic desire, unclear goals, or poor support structures may be the underlying causes. This lack of persistence can make it difficult for children to overcome academic challenges effectively, leading to disengagement, poor academic achievement, and a lack of comprehension of core concepts required for future learning goals. Addressing this problem takes multiple approaches that include techniques for improving motivation, fostering perseverance, and developing an environment conducive to sustained effort and learning engagement

(Cents-Boonstra et al., 2021). Therefore, it is crucial to examine students' learning grit and the factors that influence it. Thus, the problem can be solved, so that students have high learning grit.

Given the aforementioned issue, it is critical to understand the internal and external variables that may be associated with students' grit. The elements that come from within the students include motivation, self-efficacy, and psychological aspects. On the other hand, external factors include environmental factors, socioeconomic aspects, teachers, teaching methods, curriculum, and facilities and infrastructure.

The grit personality has been linked to self-efficacy (Cruz et al., 2021). Self-efficacy is a person's confidence in their ability to finish tasks and reach objectives (Bandura, 1997). Pupils with strong self-efficacy are more likely to successfully finish their tasks or assignments (Devisakti & Ramayah, 2022a). This confidence in their abilities motivates them to take on difficult projects and persevere in the face of adversity. Students with higher levels of self-efficacy are therefore more inclined to persist in their learning endeavours. They are more driven to succeed since they believe that setbacks are only temporary (Malureanu et al., 2021). Moreover, Wu et al. (2020) establish that self-efficacy is a person's subjective assessment of their capacity to complete a specific task. When someone has self-efficacy, they have faith in their capacity to overcome challenges and achieve their objectives (Hussain et al., 2021). Self-efficacy empowers students to realize their aspirations and ambitions. Therefore, students' self-belief that they can achieve their learning or academic objectives is the emphasis of academic self-efficacy.

Students' ability to develop grit is greatly influenced by their motivation. A force that sustains, motivates, and guides action toward a goal is called motivation (Wu et al., 2022). Motivation acts as the driving force behind sustained effort and perseverance when faced with challenging academic tasks. Highly motivated students have a strong desire to succeed, which drives their perseverance and resilience in the face of difficulties. Additionally, a few studies looked at how students' motivation and self-efficacy affected their academic achievement (Wu et al., 2020), motivation and self-efficacy on language achievement (Haerazi & Irawan, 2020; Khodadad & Kaur, 2016). There are also found that some studies investigated the correlation between learning grit on academic achievement (Alhadabi & Karpinski, 2020; Martin et al., 2022; Neroni et al., 2022).

Based on preliminary interviews conducted with English teachers at SMA Negeri 7 Denpasar during the 2025/2026 academic year, several concerning patterns in students' English learning behavior were identified. The teachers reported that a considerable number of students tend to disengage when English tasks become challenging, frequently choosing to remain silent or copy their peers' work rather than attempting the task independently. Several teachers also noted that students commonly express negative beliefs about their own English ability, with statements such as feeling incapable of improving or believing that English is simply too difficult for them to master. Furthermore, the interviewed teachers observed that students' study habits tend to be examination-driven rather than consistent, meaning that many students only engage seriously with English learning when a test or assessment is approaching. Despite teachers' ongoing efforts to design varied, engaging, and communicative lesson activities, they consistently

reported that maintaining students' long-term motivation and persistence in English learning remains one of their most significant professional challenges. These teacher accounts strongly suggest that the difficulties students face in English class extend beyond limited language ability and are deeply rooted in psychological factors related to self-belief, motivation, and sustained learning effort, the very constructs that this study seeks to investigate.

Previous studies have often focused on these elements in isolation, analysing the contribution of grit to achievement or the effect of motivation or self-efficacy on academic performance (Alhadabi & Karpinski, 2020). Still, not much research has been done on the complex interplay among grit, motivation, and self-efficacy. There is limited empirical evidence that directly links how motivation and self-efficacy, when combined, contribute to the growth and durability of grit-learning, especially for high school pupils (Jiang et al., 2021). This research aims to fill this gap by investigating how these psychological factors interact to influence students' persistence and resilience in academic settings, offering a more comprehensive understanding of what drives learning grit. The study will provide new insights that could inform more effective educational strategies to foster grit among students, thereby enhancing their academic achievement and long-term success. For this reason, it is imperative to look into how students' grit on senior high school students in the academic year 2025–2026 is contributed by motivation and self-efficacy.

1.2 Problem Identification

Building on the background and insights from previous research and preliminary observations, several specific issues related to students' learning grit,

motivation, and self-efficacy have been identified among senior high school students.

In classroom practice, students frequently experience difficulties in maintaining focus during lessons, and many struggle to complete and submit assignments on time. These issues indicate a lack of sustained effort, perseverance, and learning consistency, which are essential for academic success, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, where continuous practice is required. Such classroom behaviours suggest that students may possess adequate cognitive ability but lack the non-cognitive qualities needed to persist when facing learning challenges.

Similar problems have been widely reported in previous empirical studies. Research has shown that low levels of grit, motivation, and self-efficacy are associated with students' difficulty in sustaining attention, completing tasks, and managing academic responsibilities (Alhadabi & Karpinski, 2020; Duckworth et al., 2007; Martin et al., 2022; Sun & Mu, 2023). These studies collectively indicate that students' learning problems are not solely caused by instructional factors, but are also strongly influenced by internal psychological variables.

These concerns are further supported by preliminary interviews with English teachers at SMA Negeri 7 Denpasar. Teachers reported that many students disengage when tasks become challenging, often choosing silence or copying peers rather than working independently. Students were also observed expressing negative beliefs about their English ability, reflecting low self-efficacy. Additionally, teachers noted that student engagement tends to be examination-driven rather than consistent, a clear indication of limited learning grit. Despite

teachers' efforts to create varied and engaging lessons, sustaining students' long-term motivation and persistence remains one of their greatest professional challenges.

These problems are interconnected and reflect underlying issues related to students' grit, motivation, and self-efficacy. Addressing them is crucial for improving educational outcomes and fostering a learning environment that supports sustained effort and resilience in the face of academic challenges.

1.3 Scope and Limitation

The limitation of this study is that it focuses exclusively on examining the predictive relationship between students' motivation, self-efficacy, and learning grit in English classes at SMA Negeri 7 Denpasar. The study involved Grade 10 students who completed the questionnaire, while a selected group of students participated in semi-structured interviews to provide a deeper understanding of the quantitative findings. Learning grit was examined through the dimensions of perseverance of effort and consistency of interest. The findings of this study should be interpreted within several limitations. The quantitative data were collected using self-report questionnaires at a single point in time; therefore, the findings indicate predictive relationships rather than causal relationships among the variables. In addition, the study was conducted in a single educational setting, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, this study examined only motivation and self-efficacy as predictors of learning grit, whereas other factors that may be associated with students' learning grit were beyond the scope of the present study.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the research background and research identification stated above, this study investigates three research questions as follows.

1. To what extent do students' motivation and self-efficacy, individually and jointly, predict their learning grit in English classes?
2. How do students describe their experiences of motivation, self-efficacy, and learning grit in English classes?
3. How do students perceive the role of motivation and self-efficacy in developing their learning grit in English classes?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

With reference to the research inquiries, the study aims to:

1. To investigate the extent to which students' motivation and self-efficacy, individually and jointly, predict their learning grit in English classes.
2. To explore students' experiences regarding their motivation, self-efficacy, and learning grit.
3. To explore students' perceptions of the role of motivation and self-efficacy in developing their learning grit in English classes.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The researcher anticipates that this research yield theoretical and practical benefits.

1.6.1 Theoretically

This study has important theoretical implications in educational psychology and human behaviour. It helps to understand how motivation and self-efficacy interact to foster the development of learning grit.

1.6.2 Practically

This research has significant implications for students, teachers, and educational institutions.

1. For The Teachers

Teachers should have a thorough understanding of the connection between learning grit, motivation, and self-efficacy while developing their lesson plans. Teachers can use this information to create learning experiences that promote intrinsic motivation, build a growth mindset, and enhance students' self-efficacy. Teachers can enable students to face problems with resilience, persistence, and a desire to succeed by utilizing strategies that inspire and sustain motivation while developing self-belief in their abilities.

2. For The Students

This study provides students with information that may change their approach to learning. Students who comprehend the connection between grit, motivation, and self-belief can take charge of their educational path. Understanding the role that self-efficacy plays in academic success, students may focus on increasing their confidence and belief in their abilities, therefore improving their grit in the face of challenge.

3. For The Principal

This study has significant implications for school principals in terms of setting educational policies and fostering an atmosphere that promotes learning. Principals can use the data to design specific strategies that help teachers develop students' motivation, self-efficacy, and grit.

4. For Other Research

For other researchers, this study provides the foundation for additional investigation into the complex connections between motivation, self-efficacy, and learning grit. Research in these areas can help us comprehend how motivation and self-efficacy work together to support the development of learning grit.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

1.7.1 Conceptual Definition

1. Learning Grit

Grit is defined as perseverance and passion for long-term goals. This construct is based on the theory introduced by Angela L. Duckworth, who conceptualizes grit as comprising two interrelated dimensions: perseverance of effort and consistency of interest. Perseverance of effort refers to sustained effort and resilience when encountering challenges or setbacks, while consistency of interest reflects the ability to maintain stable long-term interests and commitments over time. It is not just about working hard; it is about maintaining a steadfast focus on academic goals over an extended period, regardless of the difficulties encountered along the way. This idea of grit refers to an innate resilience that enables people to overcome setbacks or hardships and turn them into learning experiences rather than excuses to quit up. Students with high levels of grit are able to overcome obstacles and make steady progress toward their educational goals because of their unchanging love for learning and their relentless effort.

2. Motivation

Academic motivation refers to the psychological processes that initiate, direct, and sustain students' engagement in learning activities. This construct is

grounded in Self-Determination Theory developed by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan, which conceptualizes motivation along a continuum of self-determination. According to this theory, motivation consists of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to engaging in academic tasks for inherent interest and enjoyment, whereas extrinsic motivation involves engagement driven by external rewards, demands, or outcomes. Amotivation reflects the absence of intention or drive to act. Within academic settings, more autonomous forms of motivation—particularly intrinsic motivation—are associated with stronger persistence and sustained engagement in learning

3. Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is the conviction people have in their ability to carry out the necessary actions to complete particular tasks or produce desired results (Bandura, 1994). This idea is essential because it immediately affects people's thoughts, emotions, and actions when they encounter difficulties. High self-efficacy people are more inclined to take on challenging projects, persevere in the face of hardship, and see obstacles as chances to grow and learn rather than as dangers to be avoided. This confidence in their abilities empowers them to set higher goals, approach obstacles with a problem-solving mindset, and maintain a strong commitment to their objectives, even when they encounter setbacks.

1.7.2 Operational Definition

1. Learning Grit

In this study, grit refers to students' measurable level of perseverance and consistency in pursuing long-term academic goals, as assessed through a grit scale

adapted from Duckworth's construct. It is reflected in two primary indicators: sustained effort when facing academic challenges (perseverance of effort) and stability of academic interests over time (consistency of interest). The total score obtained from the scale indicates the level of students' grit, with higher scores representing stronger long-term persistence in academic pursuits.

2. Motivation

In this study, motivation refers to students' measurable level of motivation toward academic activities as assessed through a structured self-report questionnaire. It was assessed through a survey that evaluates students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivations related to their academic work. The survey included items that measure the intensity and direction of students' efforts towards completing assignments and participating in class activities. The total score obtained from the instrument represents the degree of students' academic motivation, with higher scores indicating stronger motivational orientation toward learning.

3. Self-Efficacy

In this study, academic self-efficacy refers to students' level of perceived confidence in handling academic demands, as measured through a validated self-report scale. It is indicated by students' confidence in understanding complex materials, completing assignments successfully, solving academic problems, managing learning challenges, and achieving desired academic outcomes. The overall score derived from the instrument represents the strength of students' academic self-efficacy, with higher scores indicating stronger beliefs in their academic capabilities.