

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF DIFFICULTIES IN HISTORY SUBJECT AT SMA NEGERI MODEL TERPADU MADANI PALU

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to describe students' perceptions of history learning, analyze the influence of students' perceptions on history learning, and describe the level of students' learning motivation in history subjects at SMA Negeri Model Terpadu Madani Palu. This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. The research subjects consisted of the school principal, history subject teachers, and eleventh-grade students of SMA Negeri Model Terpadu Madani Palu. Data collection techniques were conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis involved the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results of the study indicated that students' perceptions of history learning were generally positive. Students viewed history as an important subject for broadening national insights, shaping character, and understanding the nation's journey. However, some students still experienced difficulties in understanding the chronology of events, remembering the names of historical figures, and memorizing important years in history. Students' perceptions of history learning were influenced by the teacher's teaching methods, the use of learning media, and the relevance of the material to daily life. Furthermore, the level of students' learning motivation was categorized as fairly good and increased when the teacher implemented interactive learning through discussions, the use of audiovisual media, and the provision of contextual examples. Thus, the application of varied and innovative learning methods is able to enhance positive perceptions as well as students' learning motivation in history learning.

Informasi Artikel

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ABSTRAK

INUL. 2026. *Persepsi Siswa terhadap Kesulitan dalam Mata Pelajaran Sejarah di SMA Negeri Model Terpadu Madani Palu*. Skripsi. Program Studi Pendidikan Sejarah, Jurusan Pendidikan Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial, Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Tadulako. Pembimbing I: Dr. Minarni Nongtji, S.Pd., M.Si. Pembimbing II: Dr. Hasan, M.Hum.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan persepsi siswa terhadap pembelajaran sejarah, menganalisis pengaruh persepsi siswa terhadap pembelajaran sejarah, serta mendeskripsikan tingkat motivasi belajar siswa pada mata pelajaran sejarah di SMA Negeri Model Terpadu Madani Palu. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian deskriptif. Subjek penelitian terdiri atas kepala sekolah, guru mata pelajaran sejarah, dan siswa kelas XI SMA Negeri Model Terpadu Madani Palu. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Analisis data menggunakan tahapan reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa persepsi siswa terhadap pembelajaran sejarah pada umumnya bersifat positif. Siswa memandang mata pelajaran sejarah penting dalam menambah wawasan kebangsaan, membentuk karakter, dan memahami perjalanan bangsa. Namun demikian, sebagian siswa masih mengalami kesulitan dalam memahami kronologi peristiwa, mengingat nama tokoh, serta menghafal tahun-tahun penting dalam sejarah. Persepsi siswa terhadap pembelajaran sejarah dipengaruhi oleh metode mengajar guru, penggunaan media pembelajaran, dan keterkaitan materi dengan kehidupan sehari-hari. Selain itu, tingkat motivasi belajar siswa tergolong cukup baik dan meningkat ketika guru menerapkan pembelajaran yang interaktif melalui diskusi, penggunaan media audiovisual, serta pemberian contoh yang kontekstual. Dengan demikian, penerapan metode pembelajaran yang variatif dan inovatif mampu meningkatkan persepsi positif sekaligus motivasi belajar siswa dalam pembelajaran sejarah.

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1. Introduction

History education is an essential component of the education system, aiming to equip students with a comprehensive understanding of historical events, alongside critical thinking skills required to analyze the past and its correlation with contemporary social, political, and economic conditions. Along with technological advancements, the educational sector is now faced with the challenge of integrating technological innovations, particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI), into the learning process. According to Fahrudin (as cited in Bahtiar Afwan, 2025), one notable approach within the educational context refers to a learning method that emphasizes a deeper and more applicable understanding of the subject matter, rather than merely memorizing or recalling information.

Learning motivation can stem from a variety of sources. Internal factors encompass an individual's innate desire to grow and develop, which may manifest as curiosity, a drive to achieve personal accomplishments, or the satisfaction derived from comprehending a complex concept. Conversely, learning motivation can also arise from external factors such as rewards, recognition, and social support. According to Rahmawati and Wahyuni (2021), both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation play a crucial role in enhancing students' enthusiasm for learning. Furthermore, learning motivation serves as a primary determinant of student success in the learning process. Individuals with high learning motivation tend to demonstrate focus, persistence, and resilience when facing academic challenges. Sari and Hamdu (2022) explain that learning motivation significantly influences students' level of engagement, concentration, and academic performance. Strong motivation also enhances students' tolerance for frustration and fatigue, thereby enabling them to better overcome learning obstacles.

Furthermore, students' perception of learning refers to their view or understanding of the information received throughout the instructional process. These perceptions can significantly influence their attitudes, motivation, and learning achievements. Maulidina and Suryadi (2022) explain that students' perceptions of the learning process exert a substantial impact on their motivation and academic outcomes. Such perceptions can be influenced by various factors, including instructional methods, textbooks, the quality of teacher instruction, the learning environment, and students' personal experiences. Therefore, it is essential to understand students' perceptions of various subjects, including history, to improve the quality of instruction and support students' character development.

This research is imperative because history as a subject plays a strategic role in shaping historical awareness, nationalism, and students' character. Wibowo and Susanto (2021) state that history learning serves as a vehicle for developing students' character and national identity. However, in high school educational practices, history is frequently perceived as a difficult, tedious subject that demands extensive memorization skills. Hidayat and Aman (2021) reveal that the majority of students consider history learning less engaging due to the dominance of the lecture method and the overwhelming amount of material to be memorized. Such negative perceptions have the potential to decrease learning interest, student participation, and overall academic outcomes.

Moreover, learning difficulties in history are not solely caused by students' academic capacities, but are also influenced by instructional methods, teaching materials, teachers' teaching styles, and the relevance of the material to students' daily lives. Prasetyo and Kurniawan (2023) explain that difficulties in learning history often arise because students are required to grasp numerous historical events, figures, locations, and dates simultaneously. If negative perceptions toward history learning are left unaddressed without appropriate solutions, the core objectives of history education—as a tool for shaping identity and critical thinking—will not be optimally achieved.

Research examining high school students' perceptions of difficulties in history is vital to identify the underlying causes of these challenges from the students' perspective. By thoroughly understanding students' perceptions, teachers and school authorities can design history learning strategies that are more contextual, engaging, and aligned with students' needs. Ningsih and Purnomo (2022) state that innovative and interactive history learning strategies can enhance students' interest in and comprehension of historical material. Therefore, this study is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of history education literature, as well as practical contributions for educators in improving the quality of the history learning process and outcomes at the high school level. Based on previous literature reviews and preliminary observations, the researcher feels compelled to conduct further exploration and in-depth research entitled "High School Students' Perceptions of Difficulties in History Subject at SMA Negeri Model Terpadu Madani". This study aims to determine students' perceptions of history, contribute to improving the quality of history learning and student motivation, and provide guidelines for educators to create positive and meaningful learning experiences.

Based on the aforementioned description, it can be concluded that students' perceptions of learning are

influenced by various interrelated factors, namely teacher-related factors, student-related factors, and learning environment factors. The formed perceptions subsequently impact students' attitudes toward learning, such as their level of participation, motivation, and learning outcomes. Therefore, this study aims to identify and analyze students' perceptions of the learning process and the factors that influence them, so that they can serve as valuable material for evaluation and improvement in school learning implementation

2. Method

This study employs a Classroom Action This study employs a qualitative approach, falling into the category of qualitative research. The research design is structured to enable the researcher to obtain answers to the research questions, utilizing a descriptive qualitative research design. According to Sukmadinata (2011), descriptive qualitative research aims to describe and depict existing phenomena, whether natural or human-engineered, by focusing primarily on characteristics, quality, and the interrelations between activities. The research was conducted at SMA Negeri Model Terpadu Madani, located on Jl. Soekarno-Hatta Bumi Roviga, Talise Village, Mantikulore District, Palu City, Central Sulawesi Province, with the postal code 94118. The study was carried out over a period of one month following the issuance of the research permit. The population consisted of students at SMA Negeri Model Terpadu Madani who attend history classes. These students were selected as research subjects because they are directly involved in the learning process and possess personal experiences and perceptions regarding the difficulty level of the history subject.

Data collection techniques were carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted directly, involving regular recording and monitoring of real situations and activities at the school. Interviews served as a data collection method involving direct question-and-answer sessions with the interviewees. The objective of this process was to obtain firsthand information by posing several questions to the participants. Additionally, the researcher utilized documentation to collect data, which could be in the form of writings, images, or creative works. These include photographs, artwork, or institutional records. To strengthen the data and evidence in this study, the researcher required documentation in the form of written records or photographs. These methods were used by the researcher to gather data systematically, ensuring that the acquired data is accurate and can be analyzed in accordance with the research

objectives. In this study, titled "High School Students' Perceptions of Difficulties in History Subject," the instruments used included student interview guides, observation sheets for the history learning process, and documentation of learning outcomes.

Data reduction is the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the raw data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. This process was performed to filter the data, aligning it with the focus and formulation of the research problem so that the analyzed data is truly relevant and meaningful. Data reduction begins at the onset of data collection and is carried out continuously until the study is concluded. In this stage, the researcher selects vital information, groups data into specific categories or themes, codes the data, and summarizes it without altering its original meaning. Through data reduction, the initially complex and unstructured data becomes more focused, systematic, and easy to understand, thereby facilitating the researcher in the subsequent analysis phase. Data display is the next stage following data reduction; it is the process of organizing and presenting data in various formats, such as narrative descriptions, tables, matrices, charts, or diagrams. In qualitative research, data display typically takes the form of a narrative text that explains the research findings deeply and contextually. The purpose of data display is to assist the researcher in identifying patterns, relationships between categories, and emerging trends within the data.

3. Resultand Discission

This study presents an overview of the conditions of history instruction and students' perceptions of the difficulties they experience during the learning process at SMA Negeri Model Terpadu Madani Palu. Direct observations were conducted by the researcher during history classes using a predetermined observation guide. The focus of these observations encompassed the teacher's activities in delivering the material, students' engagement during the lesson, teacher-student interactions, the utilization of learning media and methods, as well as various forms of visible difficulties experienced by students while participating in history learning.

Through these observations, the researcher obtained information regarding the classroom learning environment, such as the students' attention span, their participation in learning activities, their ability to comprehend the material, and their responses to the historical topics presented by the teacher. Additionally, the observations aimed to identify factors presumed to influence the emergence of history learning difficulties, originating both from within the students themselves and from the ongoing instructional process in the classroom.

The results of these observations serve as preliminary data, which were subsequently integrated with interview findings and documentation to obtain a more comprehensive overview of students' perceptions of difficulties in the history subject. Consequently, the observational data functions as a vital source of information that reinforces the research analysis regarding the various constraints faced by students and the factors influencing their perceptions of history learning.

Students' Perceptions of History Learning

Based on the interviews conducted with the school principal, the history teacher, and 15 eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri Model Terpadu Madani Palu on July 13-14, 2026, it was revealed that students' perceptions of history learning are quite diverse. Some students view history as an essential subject because it provides knowledge regarding the nation's journey and the values of the heroes' struggle. However, other students still consider history a difficult subject due to the extensive amount of material to comprehend, particularly concerning chronological events, historical figures' names, and dates. These interview results are reinforced by observations conducted during the learning process, which indicate that students' levels of interest and comprehension vary according to their respective abilities.

The Principal of SMA Negeri Model Terpadu Madani Palu, Armyn, S.Pd., M.M., expressed his views regarding history learning at the school on Monday, July 13, 2026, at 09:15 WITA, as follows:

"In my opinion, history is one of the subjects that plays a vital role in shaping students' character, sense of nationalism, and national insight. Thus far, history learning at our school has run well, supported by teachers who possess competence in their respective fields. However, we also realize that every student has different learning capabilities, so their perceptions of history are not identical. Some students are highly enthusiastic about participating in lessons, while others still regard history as a subject that is quite difficult to comprehend. Therefore, the school continuously encourages teachers to utilize more engaging instructional methods so that students' interest in learning can steadily increase."

Based on the interview, it can be understood that the school administration views history learning not merely as a subject oriented toward material mastery, but also as a vehicle for student character building. Differences in student perceptions are considered natural, given the variations in learning abilities and interests of each student.

Furthermore, the history teacher, Moh. Nur, S.Pd., Gr., also shared his perspective regarding students' perceptions of history learning. The interview was conducted on Monday, July 13, 2026, at 10:00 WITA, during which he stated:

"Based on my teaching experience, most students actually possess an interest in historical material, especially when the topics are linked to daily life or delivered using engaging learning media. However, there are still some students who consider history a difficult subject because they have to grasp numerous events, historical figures, and chronological sequences. This perception often causes students to lack confidence during class. Therefore, I strive to employ various teaching methods so that students can be more active and easily comprehend the material being studied."

Based on the interview with the history teacher, it can be inferred that students' perceptions of history learning are influenced by the method of delivery, the utilization of learning media, and the characteristics of the subject matter itself. According to the teacher, employing varied methods can enhance students' interest and engagement during the learning process.

These interview results were further corroborated by a statement from one of the students, Chaisar. The interview was conducted on Tuesday, July 14, 2026, at 08:10 WITA, where he expressed:

"In my opinion, history lessons are actually interesting because they tell stories about various events that occurred in Indonesia and around the world. I enjoy it when the teacher explains the material through stories or displays images and videos because it makes it easier to understand. However, I still find it difficult when I have to memorize many historical figures' names and dates. If the material is too long, I often forget it when trying to answer questions. Despite this, I still try my best to follow the lesson properly."

Based on the interview with Chaisar, it can be understood that the student's perception of history learning tends to be positive. However, students still experience difficulties in understanding material that demands the ability to recall historical figures and chronological events.

Additionally, interview results were also obtained from Galang, another student at SMA Negeri Model Terpadu Madani Palu. The interview was conducted on Tuesday, July 14, 2026, at 08:25 WITA, during which he stated:

"I think history lessons are quite interesting because they discuss the journey of the Indonesian nation over

time. I like it when the teacher explains the material through discussions or provides examples related to current life. However, I still face difficulties when I have to memorize historical figures, years, and the sequence of historical events. The extensive amount of material sometimes makes it easy for me to forget if I do not review it at home. Therefore, I usually make simple notes to make it easier to remember what I have learned."

Based on the interview, it can be observed that Galang holds a positive perception of the history subject. Nonetheless, the student still encounters difficulties in comprehending material that requires the ability to remember chronological events and historical facts, highlighting the need for more effective learning strategies.

Subsequently, an interview was also conducted with Dimas on Tuesday, July 14, 2026, at 08:40 WITA. Based on the interview results, Dimas stated:

"I believe that history is an important subject because it provides knowledge about the nation's struggles and past events. However, I find historical material quite difficult to understand if it is only explained through textbooks or lectures. I understand the material more easily if the teacher uses learning media such as images, videos, or engaging presentations. With these media, it is easier for me to visualize historical events, making the material easier to grasp. In my opinion, the teacher's teaching style significantly affects students' enthusiasm for learning."

Based on the interview, it can be understood that students' perceptions of history learning are influenced by the instructional methods and media utilized by the teacher. The use of engaging learning media is deemed capable of increasing students' attention span and comprehension of historical material.

Furthermore, an interview was conducted with Gangzar on Tuesday, July 14, 2026, at 09:00 WITA. In the interview, Gangzar revealed:

"In my opinion, history is not actually a boring subject if it is explained in an interesting way. I like material that discusses the struggles of heroes and Indonesian history because it feels closer to our lives. However, I still frequently experience difficulties when asked to remember the year of an event or explain the relationship between one event and another. If the teacher provides opportunities to discuss with peers, I can understand the material more easily. Therefore, I hope history learning will incorporate more discussion activities and varied learning media."

Based on the interview with Gangzar, it can be concluded that students' perceptions of history learning are influenced by how the teacher delivers the material. Interactive learning, such as group discussions and the use of learning media, is considered capable of enhancing comprehension and mitigating students' difficulties in studying history.

The Influence of Students' Perceptions of History Learning

Based on the interviews conducted with the school principal, the history teacher, and several students at SMA Negeri Model Terpadu Madani Palu on July 13–14, 2026, it was revealed that students still experience various difficulties in the history learning process. These difficulties relate to the students' ability to comprehend the material, recall the chronology of events, remember the names of historical figures, and explain the cause-and-effect relationships of historical events. In addition, variations in learning capabilities, students' interests, and the instructional methods employed by the teacher also serve as factors influencing the level of student comprehension of historical material. Although the teacher has endeavored to deliver the material through various methods, some students still require guidance and repetition of the material to achieve optimal understanding. Therefore, the interview results regarding the difficulties experienced by students in the history subject are outlined as follows.

The Principal of SMA Negeri Model Terpadu Madani Palu, Armyn, S.Pd., M.M., during an interview conducted on Monday, July 13, 2026, at 10:30 WITA, expressed that:

"Based on our monitoring results, there are still several students who encounter difficulties in following history lessons. These difficulties are generally apparent when students are asked to comprehend material containing numerous historical facts, chronological sequences, and historical figures' names. Differences in each student's academic capacity also influence their level of understanding of the material taught. Therefore, the school consistently provides support to teachers so they can implement more varied learning strategies to help students grasp historical material better. We hope that through these various efforts, the learning difficulties experienced by students can be minimized."

Based on the interview, it can be understood that the school administration recognizes the ongoing learning difficulties experienced by some students in history education. According to the principal, these difficulties are influenced by the complex characteristics of historical material and the distinct learning capabilities of each student. Consequently, the school continuously encourages teachers to implement instructional strategies capable of enhancing students' comprehension of historical material.

Furthermore, the interview results with Moh. Nur, S.Pd., Gr., as the history teacher, on Monday, July 13, 2026, at 11:00 WITA, explained that:

"Throughout my teaching experience, the difficulties most frequently experienced by students are understanding the interrelationships between historical events and recalling their chronological sequence. Some students are able to follow explanations well, but others require repeated explanations to truly grasp the material. In addition, there are still students who perceive history as identical to rote memorization, leading them to put less effort into understanding the underlying meaning of each event studied. I usually provide examples that are close to their daily lives and engage students in discussions to make the material easier to comprehend. Through this approach, some students show an increase in comprehension, although they still require continuous practice."

Based on the interview with the history teacher, it can be inferred that students' learning difficulties are not only caused by the large volume of material to be studied, but also by the persistent assumption that history solely demands memorization skills. Therefore, the teacher strives to apply various learning methods so that students can understand the core material in a more profound manner.

Moreover, the interview results with Gede, a student at SMA Negeri Model Terpadu Madani Palu, conducted on Tuesday, July 14, 2026, at 08:15 WITA, revealed that:

"I find it difficult when studying material that covers many historical figures' names and dates because I often mix them up when trying to remember them. Even though the teacher explains it well, I still need time to understand the content as a whole. Usually, I have to re-read the material at home to understand it better. If I only listen to the explanation once in class, I often forget it when doing assignments or answering questions. In my opinion, using videos or images would make historical material easier to understand."

Based on the interview, it can be observed that the difficulties experienced by Gede are mostly related to the ability to recall historical facts. The utilization of more engaging learning media is considered capable of helping students comprehend the material more easily. Subsequently, the interview results with I Ketut on Tuesday, July 14, 2026, at 08:35 WITA, stated that:

"In my opinion, historical material becomes difficult when we have to explain the relationship between one event and another. I often understand the story, but I struggle when asked to explain it back using my own words. Additionally, the lengthy material makes me forget quickly if it is not reviewed. I usually discuss it with friends to make it easier to understand the material. This method is quite helpful for me when facing assignments or exams."

Based on the interview, it can be understood that I Ketut experiences difficulties in connecting historical concepts and re-explaining the material that has been learned. Peer discussion is one of the methods used by the student to overcome these difficulties.

Furthermore, the interview results with Andi on Tuesday, July 14, 2026, at 08:50 WITA, revealed that:

"The difficulty I experience most often is memorizing the years and the sequence of historical events. I actually like history lessons, but the large volume of material requires me to study repeatedly. If the teacher provides examples through images or videos, I grasp the content faster. I also find it easier to learn through discussions with friends compared to just reading books. In my opinion, variations in teaching styles greatly help students understand history lessons."

Based on the interview, it can be noted that the learning difficulties experienced by Andi are influenced by the characteristics of historical material, which requires the ability to remember chronological events. Moreover, the utilization of learning media and group discussions is deemed capable of enhancing students' comprehension of the material being studied.

Finally, the interview results with Rizky on Tuesday, July 14, 2026, at 09:10 WITA, explained that:

"In my opinion, history lessons will be easier to understand if the teacher provides explanations step-by-step and not too fast. Sometimes I am still confused about differentiating between similar events, so I need further explanation from the teacher. I also frequently create summaries of the material to make it easier to study before exams. This method is quite helpful for me in remembering the main points of historical material. Although I still encounter difficulties, I continue to try my best to follow the lessons well so that my grades remain satisfactory."

Based on the interview with Rizky, it can be concluded that every student has a different learning style in overcoming history learning difficulties. The creation of material summaries and the teacher's systematic explanations serve as factors that help students comprehend historical material better.

Students' Learning Motivation Levels Toward History Learning

Based on the interviews conducted with the school principal, the history teacher, and several students at SMA Negeri Model Terpadu Madani Palu on July 13–14, 2026, it was revealed that the students' learning motivation level toward history learning is categorized as relatively good, despite remaining variations in motivation among individual students. Some students demonstrated high enthusiasm in participating in history lessons because they consider the subject essential for expanding national insight and understanding the trajectory of Indonesian history. Conversely, other students admitted that their learning motivation occasionally declines when the subject matter is deemed excessive or when the instructional methods lack variation. Consequently, the teacher endeavors to cultivate a more engaging learning atmosphere through the utilization of learning media, group discussions, and the provision of examples closely related to students' daily lives. The interview results

regarding students' learning motivation levels toward history learning are outlined as follows.

The Principal of SMA Negeri Model Terpadu Madani Palu, Armyn, S.Pd., M.M., during an interview conducted on Monday, July 13, 2026, at 13:15 WITA, stated that:

"According to my observations, students' learning motivation toward the history subject is quite good. This is evident from their attendance during lessons, their engagement when the teacher provides opportunities for discussion, and their willingness to complete the given assignments. Nevertheless, the level of motivation for each student naturally varies as it is influenced by their learning interests, academic capabilities, and how they perceive the importance of history as a subject. Therefore, the school continuously encourages teachers to be capable of creating active, creative, and joyful learning environments so that student motivation can steadily increase. We hope that history learning does not merely become a means of acquiring grades, but is also capable of shaping the character and sense of patriotism within the students."

Based on the interview, it can be understood that the school principal evaluates students' learning motivation toward history learning as generally quite good. However, this motivation still needs to be continuously enhanced through school support and teacher innovation in implementing the instructional process. Furthermore, the interview results with Moh. Nur, S.Pd., Gr., as the history teacher, conducted on Monday, July 13, 2026, at 13:45 WITA, revealed that:

"Throughout my teaching, I observe that the majority of students possess a reasonably good learning motivation, particularly when lessons are conducted interactively. They appear more enthusiastic when given opportunities to discuss, present group work, or observe video screenings related to the historical material. However, there are a few students whose motivation remains low because they perceive historical material as too extensive and difficult to comprehend. Therefore, I strive to provide motivation at the beginning of the lesson and connect historical topics with daily life so that students feel history has practical benefits for their lives. Through this approach, I have noticed an increase in student participation during the ongoing learning process."

Based on the interview with the history teacher, it can be inferred that students' learning motivation is influenced by the instructional strategies applied by the teacher. The teacher believes that interactive and contextual learning is capable of increasing students' enthusiasm for learning, thereby making them more active in participating in history lessons.

Moreover, the interview results with Fajar, a student at SMA Negeri Model Terpadu Madani Palu, conducted on Tuesday, July 14, 2026, at 09:30 WITA, revealed that:

"I am quite motivated to join history lessons because I want to know about the struggles of the Indonesian nation in the past. In my opinion, history provides many

lessons that can serve as examples for current life. I am more enthusiastic when the teacher explains the material using images or videos because it makes it easier for me to understand the lesson content. Additionally, I feel challenged when the teacher provides opportunities to discuss with peers. This makes me more active while participating in history learning."

Based on the interview, it can be noted that Fajar's learning motivation stems from a sense of curiosity toward historical material combined with engaging instructional methods. Learning media and discussion activities serve as key factors that enhance students' enthusiasm for learning.

Subsequently, an interview was conducted with Ardi on Tuesday, July 14, 2026, at 09:45 WITA. Based on the interview results, Ardi stated that:

"I have the motivation to study history because I want to achieve good grades and understand the material taught by the teacher. Although some topics are quite difficult, I still try to re-read the material at home to understand it better. I feel more confident when the teacher provides opportunities to ask questions if there is material I do not yet understand. Support from the teacher prevents me from giving up easily when experiencing learning difficulties. Therefore, I always try to follow the lessons earnestly."

Based on the interview, it can be understood that Ardi's learning motivation is not only influenced by the desire to achieve good learning outcomes, but also by the teacher's support during the instructional process. The teacher's attention provides an incentive for the student to continue striving to comprehend historical material. Furthermore, the interview results with Naufal on Tuesday, July 14, 2026, at 10:00 WITA, revealed that:

"In my opinion, history lessons are quite interesting if explained in a fun way. I am more enthusiastic about participating in lessons when the teacher invites students to discuss or provides examples of events related to current life. This approach makes me feel that history is not just about memorizing years and names of figures. I also become bolder in expressing my opinions during the learning process. This has further increased my motivation to study history."

Based on the interview, it can be observed that Naufal's learning motivation increases when learning takes place actively and offers opportunities for students to participate. Thus, varied instructional methods play an important role in enhancing students' learning motivation.

Finally, an interview was conducted with Reza on Tuesday, July 14, 2026, at 10:15 WITA. Reza expressed that:

"I always try to follow history lessons well because I realize that history is an important part of the knowledge that must be understood as an Indonesian citizen. I feel more motivated when the teacher gives rewards to students who actively answer questions in class. This encourages me to prepare myself before participating in the lesson. Additionally, support from

friends also makes me more enthusiastic about studying together when facing exams. In my opinion, a comfortable classroom atmosphere also influences students' learning motivation."

Based on the interview with Reza, it can be concluded that students' learning motivation is influenced by various factors, including rewards given by the teacher, peer support, and a conducive learning atmosphere. These factors are capable of increasing students' enthusiasm in participating in history learning.

Students' Perceptions of History Learning

Based on the research findings obtained at SMA Negeri Model Terpadu Madani Palu, it was revealed that students' perceptions of history learning tend to be positive. The majority of students view history as an essential subject that provides knowledge regarding the trajectory of the Indonesian nation, the struggles of heroes, and national values that can be applied in daily life. This positive perception is further supported by the interview results with the school principal and the history teacher, who stated that history education is one of the subjects responsible for shaping students' character, sense of nationalism, and historical awareness.

The research findings indicate that students' perceptions of history learning are not only influenced by the subject matter studied, but also by the instructional methods employed by the teacher. Students noted that history learning becomes more engaging when the teacher utilizes learning media such as videos, images, presentations, and group discussion activities. Conversely, lessons that exclusively rely on the lecture method for extended periods cause some students to feel less interested in participating.

These findings align with perception theory, which posits that perception is an individual process of receiving, organizing, and interpreting information obtained through learning experiences. The perceptions held by students are influenced by their experiences during history lessons, including the teacher's method of delivering material, the use of instructional media, and the classroom learning environment. Therefore, the more engaging the learning process experienced by the students, the more positive the perception formed toward the history subject.

The results of this study also reinforce previous research indicating that the utilization of varied instructional methods can enhance students' interest, attention, and positive perceptions of history learning. Consequently, teachers play a vital role in cultivating an enjoyable learning process so that students no longer perceive history as a subject that merely requires rote memorization.

Difficulties Experienced by Students in History Subject

Based on the research findings, it was identified that students still encounter various difficulties in following history lessons. These difficulties primarily relate to the large volume of material to be comprehended, remembering historical figures' names, memorizing the years of occurrences, understanding historical chronology, and explaining the cause-and-effect relationships of historical events. These challenges were consistently articulated by the school principal, the history teacher, and the students who served as research informants. The history teacher explained that some students still assume history education is identical to memorization activities, leading them to focus more on recalling facts rather than understanding the underlying meaning of an event. This condition causes students to forget the learned material more easily, particularly during learning evaluations. Meanwhile, students expressed that they comprehend the material more easily when the teacher utilizes engaging learning media and provides opportunities for discussion.

The findings of this study correspond with learning difficulty theory, which explains that learning difficulties are obstacles experienced by learners in achieving instructional objectives. These obstacles can be caused by internal factors, such as students' learning capabilities and motivation, as well as external factors, such as instructional methods, learning media, and the learning environment.

Furthermore, the research results also indicate that the utilization of varied learning media and instructional strategies can assist students in mitigating difficulties when comprehending historical material. Thus, teachers need to implement more interactive learning experiences so that students do not merely memorize historical facts, but are also capable of understanding the meaning and interrelationships of historical events in a more profound manner.

Students' Learning Motivation Levels Toward History Learning

Based on the research findings, it was identified that the level of students' learning motivation toward history learning falls into the moderately good category. The majority of students demonstrate a willingness to participate in history lessons because they recognize the importance of understanding the history of the Indonesian nation. This motivation is evident in student participation during the instructional process, their willingness to complete assignments, and their desire to achieve good learning outcomes.

Nevertheless, the research results indicate that the level of learning motivation varies among individual students. Some students possess high learning motivation due to

their interest in historical material and the instructional methods utilized by the teacher. Conversely, several students admitted to being less motivated when lessons are delivered in a monotonous manner or when the volume of material studied is excessive, making it difficult to comprehend.

The findings of this study align with learning motivation theory, which posits that motivation is an internal drive within an individual that prompts them to engage in learning activities to achieve specific goals. Learning motivation is influenced by internal factors, such as personal interest and the desire to succeed, as well as external factors, including teacher support, the learning environment, the utilization of instructional media, and rewards provided during the learning process.

The history teacher explained that the utilization of discussion methods, technology-based learning media, and the provision of opportunities for students to express their opinions can enhance students' learning motivation. This statement is further corroborated by the interview results with students, who reported being more enthusiastic when learning is conducted actively and involves student participation.

Consequently, it can be understood that learning motivation plays a highly critical role in enhancing student success in grasping historical material. The higher the learning motivation possessed by the students, the greater the effort they exert to comprehend the material, overcome learning difficulties, and achieve optimal learning outcomes.

4. Conclusion

Based on the research findings regarding "Students' Perceptions of Difficulties in History Subject at SMA Negeri Model Terpadu Madani Palu," several conclusions can be drawn as follows:

First, students' perceptions of history learning at SMA Negeri Model Terpadu Madani Palu generally demonstrate a positive trend. The majority of students view history as an essential subject that provides knowledge about the nation's journey, fosters a sense of nationalism, and shapes students' character. This positive perception is influenced by the teacher's method of delivering material, the utilization of learning media, and the classroom learning atmosphere. Nevertheless, there are still some students who regard history as a fairly difficult subject due to the extensive amount of material that must be comprehended and memorized.

Second, the difficulties experienced by students in history learning encompass challenges in understanding historical concepts, remembering the names of historical figures, memorizing the years of occurrences, and explaining the cause-and-effect relationships of historical events. Furthermore, variations in individual learning capabilities, the large volume of subject matter,

and a lack of variation in instructional methods also contribute to the students' level of comprehension. To overcome these difficulties, the teacher endeavors to employ various instructional strategies, such as group discussions, the utilization of learning media, and step-by-step explanations to make the material more accessible to students.

Third, the level of students' learning motivation toward history learning falls into the moderately good category. Students' learning motivation is influenced by their interest in the history subject, the use of engaging instructional methods and media, teacher support throughout the learning process, and a conducive learning atmosphere. Students demonstrate higher learning motivation when lessons are conducted actively and interactively, providing them with opportunities to participate in the learning process. Therefore, enhancing learning motivation serves as a crucial factor in helping students mitigate learning difficulties and improve their comprehension of historical material.

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