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Students' Interest in Learning Japanese Language in the Japanese Language Education Study Program, University of Brawijaya

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ABSTRACT

Research related to education is a process of seeking knowledge that is expected to be useful in developing new things and solving problems related to educational issues. This research is a study that will focus on How Interest in Learning Japanese Language Students of the Japanese Language Study Program, Brawijaya University. The population of this study was 35 Japanese Language Education Students Class of 2023. Sampling was carried out using a proportional random sampling technique. The variable studied in this study was interest in learning. Data sources came from primary and secondary data. This study has a problem formulation of How Interest in Learning Japanese Language Students in the Japanese Language Education Program, Brawijaya University? This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. Data analysis uses Miles and Huberman analysis with 3 stages, namely data collection, data reduction, and drawing conclusions. The result 94.3% of respondents in the positive category is the strongest indicator that social support especially from family and friends plays a significant role in choosing the Japanese Language Education study program. This study is expected to identify the types of interests that motivate students in learning Japanese, so that educators can design engaging and effective Japanese language classes. This aligns with which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Keywords: Educational Science; Interest; Japanese Language; Descriptive Analysis

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1. Introduction

The phenomenon of young people's interest in Japanese continues to grow in various countries. According to the 2018 Survey Report on Japanese-Language Education Abroad from The Japan Foundation, the number of Japanese language learners globally reached 3.85 million people, an increase of approximately 9.1% from the previous survey^[1]. Indonesia ranks second in the world with more than 870,000 Japanese language learners, after China. This trend is inseparable from the influence of Japanese popular culture, such as anime, manga, J-Pop music, fashion, and cosplay, which sparks interest among young people in learning the language and culture by the Japan Foundation.

A student's interest in learning is naturally driven by their motivation in the learning process. This research related to education is a process of seeking knowledge that is expected to be useful in developing new things and solving problems related to educational issues^[2]. According to Dariyo, learning motivation is a person's drive to learn something in order to achieve a goal^[3]. A person will have high learning motivation if they are aware of and understand the goals they will achieve in the future. If someone understands their goals well, they will be motivated to be more active in learning. In relation to language learning, motivation can be an important factor in the process of learning a second language. Indrowaty et al. said the pragmatic approach is a learning approach that can improve students' speaking/kaiwa skills in the classroom^[4]. Rahman explains that when viewed from a social psychology perspective, motivation is one of the main factors in language learning. Interest in learning a foreign language, which is the object of the study, is analyzed to determine what makes someone want to learn a foreign language, especially Japanese, so that they choose the Japanese Language Education study program^[5].

The interest in learning Japanese and choosing a Japanese language program is inseparable from Japanese popular culture, such as anime, manga, films, music, cosplay, and so on, which has spread to various countries, including Indonesia. As explained previously, several factors have contributed to the emergence of various Japanese cultures in Indonesia. Taken from 2019 Survey Results of Japanese Language Education Institutions Abroad (Japan Foundation) in Jakarta, approximately 870,000 Indonesian students are studying Japanese, the second-highest number in the world

after China. This statement has led to an increase in Indonesian students studying Japanese, increasing their knowledge of both traditional and popular Japanese culture. This has led to many Indonesian teenagers following Japanese cultural developments and being influenced by the culture they learn. Examples include the influx of popular Japanese music known as J-Pop among Indonesian teenagers, the adoption of Japanese fashion trends known as Cost Play, and the holding of Japanese events such as Nihonbunka and others.

The increasing interest in learning Japanese in Indonesia has both positive implications and challenges. On the positive side, this could expand job opportunities in education, tourism, and creative industries related to Japan. However, the challenge is that not all students who choose Japanese Language Education programs have strong academic motivation, resulting in low achievement or low graduation rates. Research by Dörnyei confirms that motivation is a key factor in successful second language learning^[6]. A lack of internal motivation can reduce learning effectiveness even when the external environment is supportive. The interesting tool to use in education enables a more innovative teaching process in terms of improving learning processes^[7].

Various factors that influence students' interest in learning include: Motivation, interest, talent, and intelligence are key factors, while external factors include family, school, and community environments. In this study, the author is interested in examining students' interest in majoring in Japanese, specifically in Japanese language education. As is known, learning interest is influenced by both internal (from within) and external (from outside the individual). External factors also include available job opportunities.

Before entering a desired study program, students often look at the courses they are interested in. Some topics typically favored by students or learners in Japanese studies, as found in previous research^[8-10]:

1. History and Development of Japanese Culture:

- The evolution of Japanese culture from the Jomon period to modern times.
- The influence of Chinese and Korean culture on Japan.
- The role of samurai and shoguns in Japanese history.

2. Traditions and Culture:

- Tea ceremony (茶道, Sadō) and its philosophy.

- Traditional Japanese wedding ceremony.
- Major festivals such as Hanami, Tanabata, and Obon.

3. Art and Aesthetics:

- Ikebana (生け花) and the art of flower arranging.
- Ukiyo-e (浮世絵) and woodblock printing.
- The influence of Zen Buddhism on art and architecture.

4. Japanese Popular Culture:

- Anime and manga are expressions of modern culture.
- The development of the video game industry in Japan.
- J-pop idols and culture.

5. Language and Literature:

- An introduction to haiku and tanka in Japanese poetry.
- Classic novels such as “The Tale of Genji” and the works of Haruki Murakami.
- The role of language in Japanese culture and communication.

6. Philosophy and Religion:

- The basic principles of Shintoism and Buddhism.
- The concept of Wabi-Sabi (侘寂) in aesthetics and everyday life.
- The influence of Confucianism in Japanese culture.

7. Japanese cuisine:

- Japanese culinary traditions such as sushi, ramen, and kaiseki.
- Dining etiquette in Japan.
- The role of food in festivals and ceremonies.

8. Lifestyle and Society:

- Family structure and gender roles in Japan.
- Education and the school system in Japan.
- Work concepts and work ethic in Japanese companies.

1.1. Formulation of the Problem

So, to better understand why students choose to study in the Japanese Language Education study program, the prob-

lem formulation of this research is:

What influences the interest of students in learning Japanese in the Japanese Language Education Study Program, Brawijaya University?

1.2. Research Objectives and Benefits

Research purposes:

1. Describe the internal factors that influence students' interest in learning Japanese in the Japanese Language Education Study Program.
2. Describe external factors that influence students' interest in learning Japanese in the Japanese Language Education Study Program.

Benefits:

1. To find out the internal factors that influence students' interest in learning Japanese in the Japanese Language Education Study Program, including motivation, interest, talent, and intelligence.
2. To find out the external factors that influence students' interest in learning Japanese in the Japanese Language Education Study Program, including the family, school/campus, and community environments.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Literature Review

Likes/Interests

Furthermore, according to Slameto and Hattie, students who are interested in learning have the following characteristics^[11,12]:

- 1) Have a constant tendency to pay attention and remember something that is learned continuously.
- 2) There is a feeling of liking and enjoying a subject that interests you.
- 3) Gaining pride and satisfaction in something that interests you and having a sense of attachment to the activities that interest you.
- 4) Preferring something that interests him more than anything else.
- 5) Manifested through participation in activities and events.

Factors That Influence Interest

Internal Factors (Within Yourself)

1) Intrinsic Motivation:

Intrinsic motivation refers to the drive that everyone has to do something and the motivation to do something even without external stimulation. Motivation is considered intrinsic when it is specifically directed at the learning context and meets the needs of students, as well as achieving mastery of the values contained in the subject matter^[13]. Intrinsic motivation can be said to be the drive that arises from within individuals to carry out an activity because they feel interested or satisfied with the activity. In learning situations, intrinsically motivated students learn because they enjoy the learning process itself, not because of external rewards or pressure. This intrinsic motivation is closely related to curiosity and the need for deep understanding.

2) Readiness to Learn:

Learning readiness refers to a student's mental, emotional, and physical readiness to participate in learning activities. This preparation includes cognitive skills, emotional stability, and a physical state that allows students to focus and absorb the lesson content effectively. Motivation to learn is also influenced by prior experiences and existing knowledge. All students should understand the importance of academic readiness, as thorough preparation improves learning outcomes. It also helps students remain calm and study enthusiastically. Responses may be influenced by changing circumstances. This state combines three perspectives: the state of the body, mind, and soul^[14].

3) Personal Interest:

Personal interest is an individual's preference for a particular topic or activity, formed before the learning process begins. This interest may be due to previous experiences, family environment, or media exposure. Students who have a particular interest in a subject typically demonstrate a greater level of engagement in learning activities, which ultimately has a positive impact on their academic achievement. Learning interest reflects a student's desire to acquire knowledge. Psychologists classify learning interests into personal and situational interests. Personal interest is unique,

relatively stable, and refers to an individual's tendency to pay attention to certain stimuli, objects, or topics^[15].

External Factors (Outside of Self)

1) Learning Environment:

A learning environment is generally defined as a variety of situations and places that support learning activities. A learning environment can be defined in two ways. One refers to the physical environment, while the other refers to the non-physical learning atmosphere created by educational institutions and practitioners. A conducive learning environment is crucial for students in the learning process, as it can make their activities more enjoyable and increase concentration during learning^[16].

2) Teacher Influence:

Teachers play a crucial role in encouraging and maintaining student interest in the learning process. Engaging teaching methods, the application of various strategies, and harmonious interpersonal relationships between teachers and students can increase student interest in learning. Teachers who are deeply interested in the material they teach can usually increase student interest. The teaching approach implemented by Muhammad Furqon, SE, MA-13, aims to encourage student interest in learning. Several important points to note include the teacher's application of various teaching methods, providing motivation to students, effective classroom management, designing efficient learning media, providing awards and prizes to students, and forming study groups to support students^[17].

3) Social Support:

Social support from peers, family, and the community also influences learning interest. A supportive social environment, including positive encouragement from parents and friends, can increase students' motivation to learn. Furthermore, social interaction in study groups and discussions can also help increase interest and understanding of the material.

Course Overview

The Learning and Teaching Theory course is one of the basic courses in Education that aims to strengthen students' understanding of how the learning process occurs and how

learning should be designed and implemented to maximize student potential. Through this course, students will have the opportunity to examine various learning theories and practice applying them in learning contexts. The material discussed in this course is about the nature of learning and teaching, various learning theories such as behaviorist learning theory, cognitive learning theory and social learning theory, and their implications for learning, multiple intelligences and the constructivist approach. After studying this course, students are expected to be able to:

1. Apply the concept of learning and teaching comprehensively;
2. Apply the basic principles of behaviorist learning theory in the learning process;
3. Apply the basic principles and models of cognitive learning theory in learning;
4. Explain the concept and implications of social learning theory;
5. Applying multiple intelligence theories in designing learning;
6. Applying a constructivist approach in learning.

State of the art and novelty in the field being researched.

Able to identify internal and external factors that influence students' interest in learning Japanese in the Japanese Language Education Study Program, so that it can be used as input for the curriculum and courses needed by students in the future.

2.2. Research Methods

The research methods used in this research are:

In this study, the research objects are students currently studying in the Japanese Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Brawijaya University. Thus, the number of respondents in this study is approximately 35 respondents, from the Class of 2024, 2023, and 2022. The determination of respondents in this study will use the purposeful sampling method, which determines the sample of respondents who have certain characteristics up to the desired number based on certain considerations from the researcher. The method used in purposeful sampling is to determine the desired number of respondents, and then this number is used as the basis for taking the required sample units.

2.3. Implementation Stages in Research

Research Preparation

Preparation is a series of activities carried out before the research begins. In this case, the researcher will conduct research-related preparations, such as preparing media and instruments and determining the respondents to be studied.

Data Collection Technique

After research preparation, the researcher will collect data from respondents. The technique used is a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. For the qualitative method, the researcher will use a survey, and for the quantitative method, the G-Form distribution method. In the survey, the researcher will provide a sheet containing a number of questions to respondents. Meanwhile, in the G-Form, the researcher will provide a number of questions online to respondents. This is done so that the data obtained from respondents can be explored and obtained broadly and in-depth.

Data Processing and Analysis Techniques

In data processing and analysis, researchers will group the data obtained from respondents based on the identification of appropriate problems so that results and problem-solving can be obtained. Student interest in learning Japanese in the Japanese Language Education Study Program. In this case, the researcher will apply the theory of Miles and Huberman, which consists of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions^[17,18].

1. Data reduction is the process of selecting, classifying, and simplifying data obtained in the field into simpler forms. In this case, researchers will collect all data and group it into simpler forms.
2. Data presentation is the process of compiling data from the field. This process involves tentative assumptions about the problem being studied.
3. Drawing conclusions, which is the final part of the research. This section will answer the research problem formulation.

3. Results and Discussions

Based on the results of distributing questionnaires to 35 students of the Japanese Language Education Program at Brawijaya University, the following data were obtained (Table 1):

Table 1. Summary of Respondents' Answers.

Question	A (Strongly Agree)	B (Agree)	C (Disagree)	D (Strongly Disagree)
Question 1	11 respondents (31.4%)	19 (54.3%)	4 (11.4%)	1 (2.9%)
Question 2	16 respondents (45.7%)	14 (40.0%)	5 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Question 3	13 respondents (37.1%)	18 (51.4%)	4 (11.4%)	0 (0.0%)
Question 4	11 respondents (31.4%)	16 (45.7%)	6 (17.1%)	2 (5.7%)
Question 5	12 respondents (34.3%)	14 (40.0%)	7 (20.0%)	2 (5.7%)
Question 6	17 respondents (48.6%)	16 (45.7%)	2 (5.7%)	0 (0.0%)

For question number 1, namely,

1. What is the main reason you chose the Japanese Language Education Study Program?
 - A. I have been interested in Japanese culture and language for a long time (1)
 - B. I enjoy the process of learning a foreign language and feel satisfied when I understand new material (3)
 - C. I want to understand Japanese in depth, not just be able to communicate (4)
 - D. I find learning Japanese both enjoyable and personally challenging (2)

3.1. Analysis of Question 1

The results of the responses to Question 1 showed that the majority of respondents had a positive attitude towards

the statement (**Figure 1**). As many as 31.4% of respondents chose “Strongly Agree” with the answer. I have been interested in Japanese culture and language for a long time, and the second answer, namely 54.3% chose “Agree” with the answer. I feel learning Japanese is fun and personally challenging, so a total of 85.7% showed a tendency to support this statement.

However, 11.4% of respondents chose “Disagree,” answering, “I enjoy the process of learning a foreign language and feel satisfied when I understand new material,” and 2.9% “Strongly Disagree,” answering, “I want to understand Japanese deeply, not just be able to communicate.” This proportion indicates that despite strong support, a small portion of students expressed a different attitude. This polarization may indicate the existence of issues or variables that are considered relevant and trigger different emotional or rational responses among respondents.

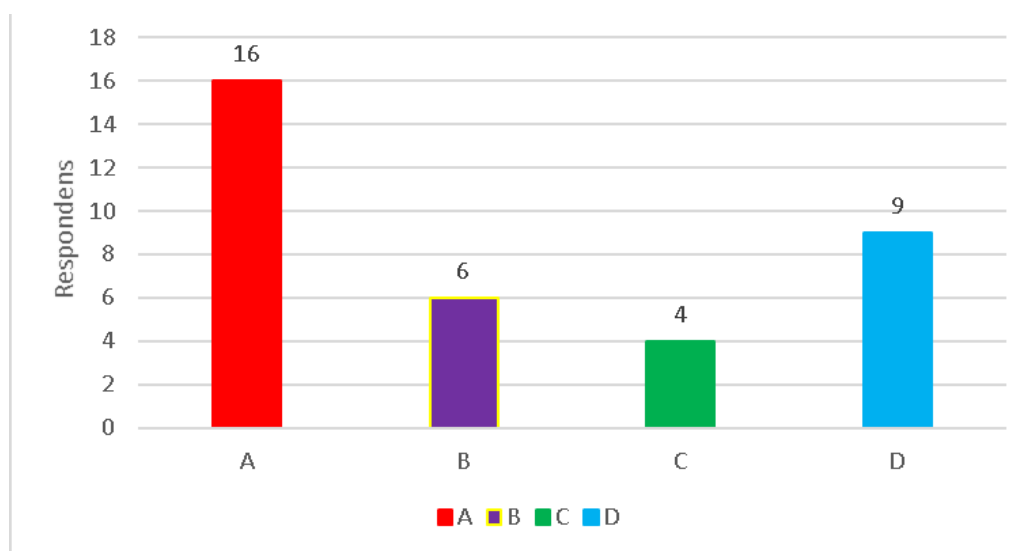


Figure 1. Bar Chart of Respondents' Results for Question 1.

Based on the data presented in the bar chart, it can be concluded that the majority of respondents expressed a positive attitude toward the statement in Question 1, with 63% agreeing or strongly agreeing. However, approximately

37% of respondents expressed the opposite attitude. The distribution of responses, which was more concentrated in the extreme categories, indicates a tendency towards polarization of attitudes among respondents. This implies that the issue discussed in Question 1 has sufficient appeal or impact to trigger a strong response from the majority of participants.

Discussion of question no. 2, which asks the following,

2. What best describes your condition when you started studying in the Japanese Language Education Study Program?
 - A. I already has basic skills or has studied Japanese before (1)
 - B. I feel that my mental and physical condition is ready to undertake lectures (2)
 - C. I am confident that I can follow the rhythm of learning because of my previous academic experience (3)
 - D. I prepared myself long before starting to study in this department (4)

3.2. Analysis of Question 2

In Question 2, support for the statement increased. 45.7% of respondents stated “Strongly Agree” with the an-

swer, “I already have basic skills or have studied Japanese before,” and 40.0% “Agree” with the answer, “I feel mentally and physically ready for college.”

Meanwhile, only 14.3% chose “Disagree,” with the answer “I am confident that I can keep up with the pace of learning because of my previous academic experience,” and none stated “Strongly Disagree,” with the answer “I prepared myself well before starting studying in this major.” This distribution indicates that the statement in Question 2 was widely accepted by the majority of respondents and did not generate significant resistance (**Figure 2**). Most likely, this item touches on generally accepted positive aspects, such as the benefits of learning or the relevance of Japanese language studies in academic and professional contexts.

A total of 45.7% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement, “I already have basic skills or have studied Japanese before.” This indicates that nearly half of the students enter with initial linguistic skills. This could mean they come from high schools or vocational schools that already have Japanese language courses, or independent study. Implication: Students with these initial skills are likely to adapt more quickly to initial courses such as Shokyu (basic level), potentially creating a learning gap with beginner students.

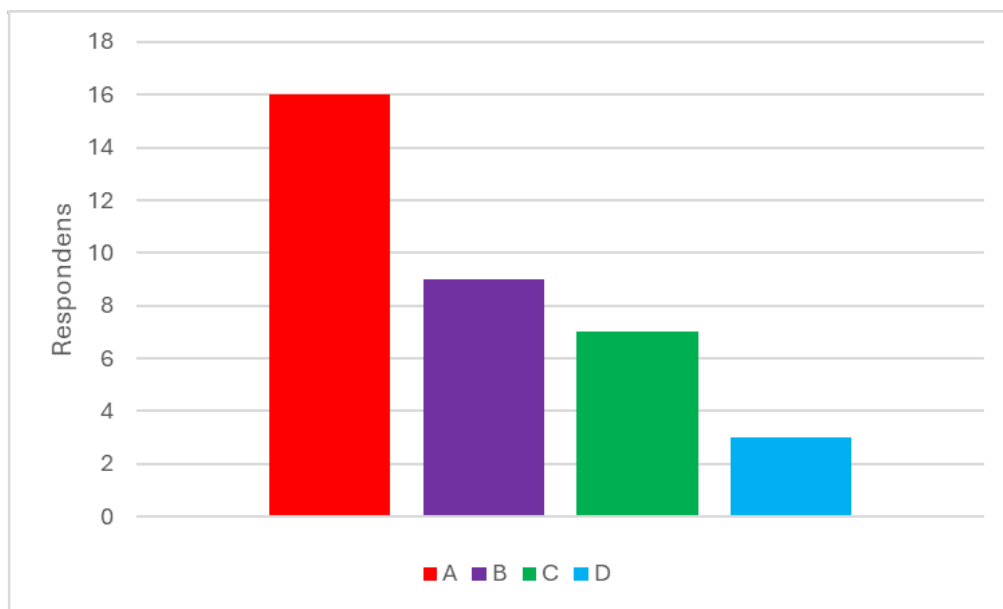


Figure 2. Bar Chart of Respondents' Results for Question 2.

3.3. Analysis of Question 3

3. What is your personal reason for being interested in entering the Japanese Language Education Study Program?

- A. I have an interest in anime, manga, J-POP (1)
- B. I have family members or friends who like Japanese culture (4)
- C. I am interested in the Japanese education system or way of life (2)
- D. I feel comfortable and enjoy learning Japanese compared to other languages (3)

The distribution of responses to Question 3 reinforces the consistent positive trend (**Figure 3**). 37.1% of respon-

dents chose “Strongly Agree,” with the answer being “I am interested in anime, manga, and J-POP,” and 51.4% chose “Agree,” with the answer being “I am interested in the Japanese education system or way of life.”

Meanwhile, only 11.4% stated “Disagree” with the answer “I feel suited and enjoy learning Japanese compared to other languages,” and no one stated “Strongly Disagree” with the answer, “I have family members or friends who like Japanese culture.” The cumulative achievement of 88.5% in the positive category reflects very good acceptance of the content of the statement, and indicates that the topics discussed are relevant and in line with students’ expectations or experiences. This can reflect the effectiveness of the teaching approach or learning materials offered.

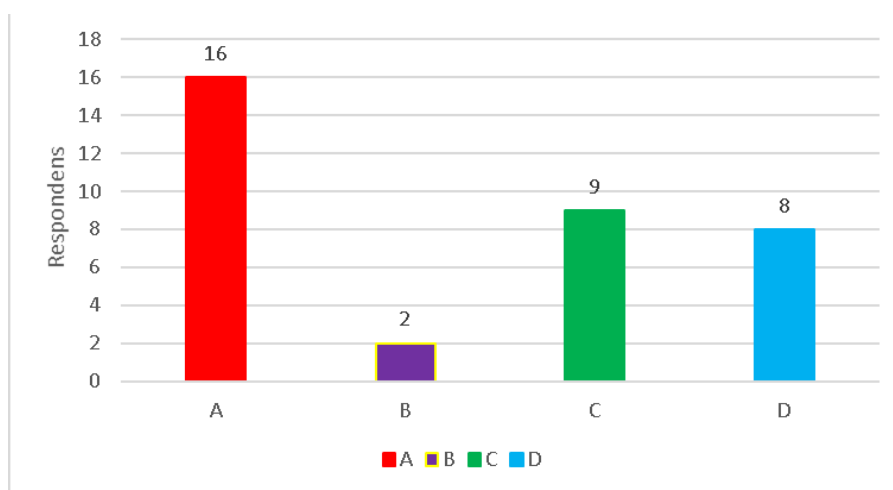


Figure 3. Bar Chart of Respondents’ Results for Question 3.

The distribution of responses to Question 3 showed that 88.5% of respondents were in the positive category, confirming that Japanese Language Education students’ interest is primarily driven by Japanese popular culture and Japanese cultural and educational values. This presents a strategic opportunity for curriculum development that integrates popular culture elements early in the course, then focuses on strengthening language competency and developing a deeper understanding of the culture.

3.4. Analysis of Question 4

4. What is the most supportive thing in your current college environment for learning Japanese?

- A. Comfortable facilities and study rooms (2)

- B. Pleasant class atmosphere and interaction with friends (1)
- C. Campus programs that support learning interests, such as clubs, seminars, etc. (3)
- D. Access to adequate teaching materials and supporting technology (4)

Unlike the previous question, Question 4 showed a slight decrease in the intensity of support (**Figure 4**). 31.4% of respondents chose “Strongly Agree” with the answer “Enjoyable classroom atmosphere and interactions with friends,” and 45.7% “Agree” with the answer “Comfortable facilities and study rooms,” bringing the total support to 77.1%.

Meanwhile, 17.1% stated “Disagree” with the answer “Campus programs that support learning interests, such as clubs, seminars, etc.,” and 5.7% “Strongly Disagree,” with

the answer being, “Access to adequate learning materials and supporting technology.” The higher percentage of disagreement compared to the previous question indicates that the statement in Question 4 may relate to more challenging

aspects, such as learning difficulties or obstacles in following Japanese language lessons. This data suggests that there are a number of students who experience certain obstacles or doubts.

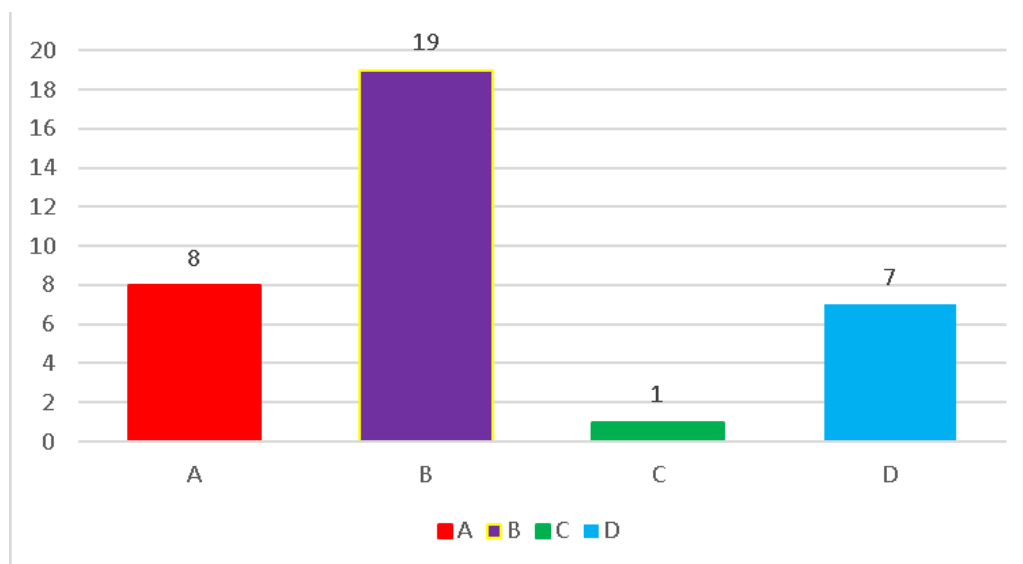


Figure 4. Bar Chart of Respondents' Results for Question 4.

The total support for the learning environment factor in Question 4 was 77.1%, slightly lower than the previous question. This indicates that while the classroom atmosphere and physical facilities are quite positive, the supporting program and technology access remain areas that need improvement. Focusing on strengthening these two areas has the potential to increase student motivation and learning effectiveness in the Japanese Language Education Study Program.

3.5. Analysis of Question 5

5. What thing about the lecturer most influenced your interest in learning Japanese?
 - A. Creative and fun teaching methods of lecturers (1)
 - B. Lecturers provide motivation and enthusiasm to continue learning (4)
 - C. Lecturers often use interesting learning media (3)
 - D. Good relationship between lecturers and students in class (1/2)

In Question 5, positive responses remained dominant, but slightly lower than in the previous question (**Figure 5**).

34.3% of respondents chose “Strongly Agree,” with the answer being, “The lecturer’s teaching methods are creative and enjoyable,” and 40.0% “Agree,” with the answer being, “Good relationships between lecturers and students in class.”

Meanwhile, 20.0% chose “Disagree”, with the answer being “Lecturers often use interesting learning media”, and 5.7% “Strongly Disagree” with the answer being “Lecturers provide motivation and enthusiasm to continue learning”. The total of 74.3% who supported indicates that the majority still has a positive attitude, but the increasing percentage of respondents who disagree indicates that the statement in this question touches on more complex or subjective issues, such as personal motivation, study time, or other external factors that influence learning interest.

The total support of 74.3% indicates that the majority of students positively assess the influence of lecturers on Japanese language learning interest. However, the higher percentage of disagreement compared to the previous question indicates complex factors—such as personal motivation and the quality of learning media—that need improvement. A combination of creative methods, good relationships, varied media, and ongoing motivation from lecturers can be an effective formula for strengthening learning interest.

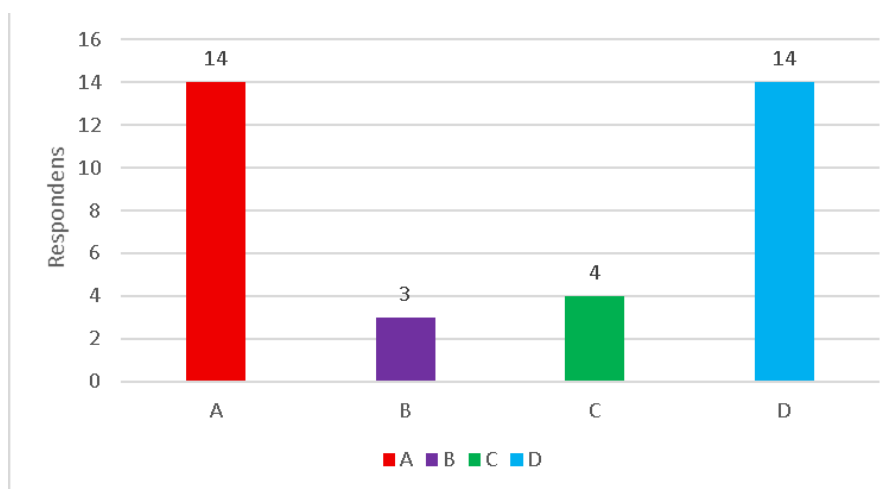


Figure 5. Bar Chart of Respondents' Results for Question 5.

3.6. Analysis of Question 6

6. Who supported you the most in choosing the Japanese Language Education Study Program?
 - A. Parents and family provide encouragement and blessings (1)
 - B. My friends encouraged me to take this major (2)
 - C. There is a community or study group that helps me get interested in entering this major (4)
 - D. My surroundings support my choice, including high school teachers or community leaders (3)

Question 6 received the most positive response of all the items presented (Figure 6). 48.6% of respondents chose "Strongly Agree" with the answer "My parents and family give me encouragement and blessing," and 45.7% chose

"Agree" with the answer "My friends encouraged me to take this major."

Meanwhile, only 5.7% stated "Disagree" with the answer "My environment supports my choice, including high school teachers or community leaders", and no one chose "Strongly Disagree" with the answer "There is a community or study group that helps me get interested in choosing a college major". A total of 94.3% of respondents who supported indicated that the statement in Question 6 was very resonant with students' experiences and perceptions. It is suspected that this item is related to intrinsic motivation, such as personal interest or the relevance of learning Japanese to future goals. This high level of agreement reflects the program's success in building students' emotional and cognitive attachment to the learning material.

For all the Questionnaire questions that have been distributed, there is a graph below,

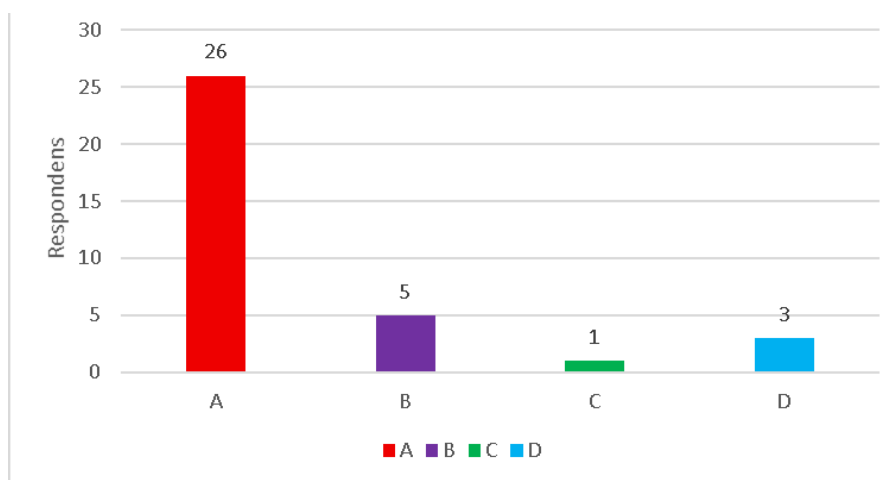


Figure 6. Bar Chart of Respondents' Results for Question 6.

With 94.3% of respondents in the positive category, Question 6 is the strongest indicator that social support—especially from family and friends—plays a significant role in choosing the Japanese Language Education study program. This suggests that the department’s promotional strategy can be strengthened by involving family, expanding community networks, and maximizing peer recommendations to attract prospective students.

In general, the majority of respondents showed quite high interest in learning Japanese.

On Question 6, which was thought to be related to personal motivation or learning relevance, 94.3% of respondents chose A or B, indicating a very strong positive attitude.

Only a small proportion of respondents showed negative attitudes (C and D), ranging from 5.7% to 22.8% depending on the question.

3.7. Discussion of Research Results

Based on the analysis of Questions 1 to 6, a consistent positive trend of support for students’ interest in choosing and studying in the Japanese Language Education Study Program was generally found, although there were variations in intensity for each factor.

3.7.1. Internal Student Factors

From Questions 1 and 2, it can be seen that the students’ initial readiness is quite high, both in terms of basic Japanese language skills and mental and physical readiness. As many as 45.7% of respondents in Question 2 admitted to having basic Japanese language skills, which is an important asset for adapting to initial learning. Good mental and physical readiness (40% agree) shows that students are able to face the challenges of college, although a small number still doubt their academic abilities. This data is consistent with Moleong’s, learning motivation theory, which places self-readiness and previous learning experience as determining factors for the success of second language learning^[19].

3.7.2. Interest Factor in Japanese Culture

The results of Question 3 confirmed that Japanese popular culture, such as anime, manga, and J-POP, is the main gateway for students’ interest, with 37.1% “Strongly Agree” and 51.4% “Agree” regarding their interest in the Japanese education system and way of life. This phenomenon is in

line with the Japan Foundation survey (2019), which found that exposure to popular culture is one of the biggest motivators for Japanese language learners globally. However, this interest needs to be integrated into the learning material so that it does not just become an initial interest, but develops into ongoing academic motivation^[1].

3.7.3. Learning Environment Factors

Question 4 shows that a pleasant classroom atmosphere and comfortable facilities are the main environmental factors that support interest in learning (a total of 77.1% positive). However, support from campus programs (clubs, seminars) and access to learning technology still have room for improvement. This shows that physical facilities need to be balanced with relevant extracurricular activities to strengthen motivation^[20–22].

3.7.4. Lecturer Role Factor

The results of Question 5 revealed that creative teaching methods and good lecturer-student relationships had a significant influence on learning interest (a total of 74.3% positive). However, the use of interesting learning media and the provision of intensive motivation from lecturers is still not optimal. This indicates the need for innovative pedagogical training for lecturers, such as project-based learning, gamification, and the integration of popular culture into the material.

3.7.5. Social Support Factors

Question 6 was the factor with the highest support score (94.3% positive), where family encouragement and friend support played a big role. Strong family support shows that this choice of major is not only a personal desire of the student, but also has social legitimacy. This finding is in line with research by Schunk et al., which states that social support has a direct influence on the sustainability of learning motivation^[23,24].

3.7.6. Relationship between Factors

Initial interest in popular culture (Question 3) is reinforced by family support (Question 6) and students’ initial readiness (Question 2). The learning environment (Question 4) and the lecturer’s creativity (Question 5) play a role in maintaining motivation during the lecture stage. Relatively weaker factors, such as access to technology (Question 4) and use of learning media (Question 5), can be the focus of

future development.

3.8. Implications

For Study Programs: It is necessary to integrate Japanese popular culture into the early semester curriculum as an engagement strategy. **For Lecturers:** Increasing the variety of media and technology-based learning methods and

these statistics show that over 85% of students consistently exhibit positive attitudes toward learning Japanese. This finding supports the importance of further research into the factors that strengthen or hinder this interest. **Figure 7** is an analysis of each question item based on the data in the Respondent Answer Summary Table, arranged in structured paragraphs with academic, logical, and flowing language:

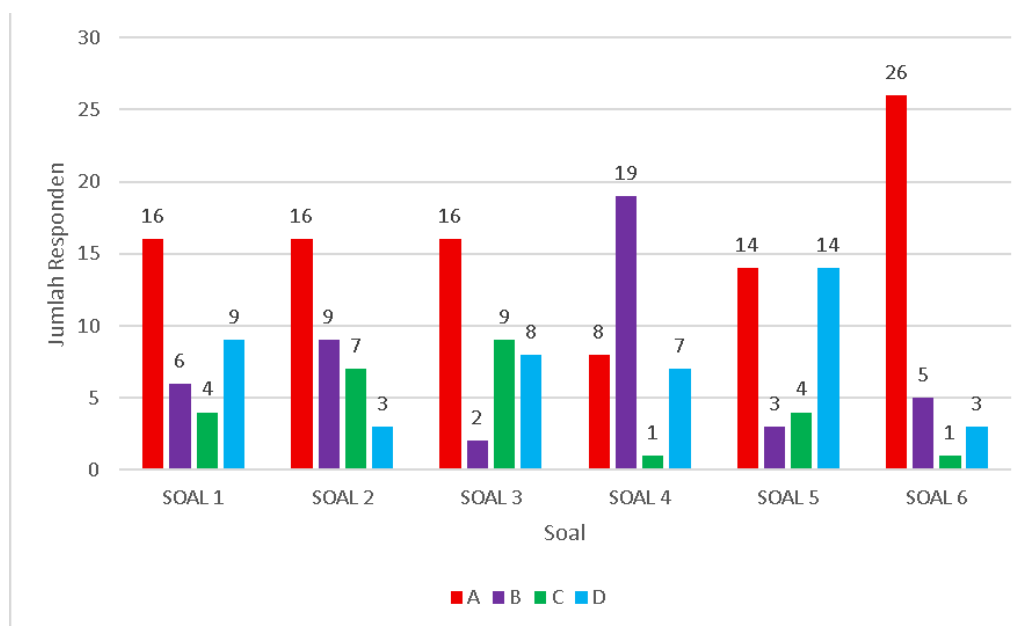


Figure 7. Bar Chart of Respondents' Results for All Respondents.

4. Conclusions

The findings of this study indicate that students' interest in choosing and pursuing the Japanese Language Education Study Program at Universitas Brawijaya is strongly supported by multiple interrelated factors. Internal readiness, encompassing both prior knowledge of Japanese and mental preparedness, provides a solid foundation for successful adaptation to academic challenges. This readiness is further reinforced by a genuine attraction to Japanese culture, particularly through popular media such as anime, manga, and J-POP, which serve as initial motivators for engagement in language learning.

In addition, the learning environment and lecturer support emerge as significant determinants of sustained motivation. A positive classroom atmosphere and adequate facilities are essential in maintaining enthusiasm, yet the study highlights the need for strengthening extracurricular programs

and the integration of technology-based learning tools. Similarly, while lecturer creativity and supportive interaction contribute positively, there remains a gap in the innovative use of teaching media, suggesting the necessity of continuous pedagogical development.

Social support, particularly from family and peers, stands out as the strongest factor in legitimizing and encouraging students' academic choices, aligning with theoretical frameworks that emphasize the importance of external reinforcement in sustaining long-term motivation. Importantly, the interconnection among these factors suggests that cultural interest and self-readiness are most effective when combined with strong social backing, engaging learning environments, and innovative teaching approaches.

Overall, this study concludes that more than 85% of students demonstrate consistently positive attitudes toward learning Japanese. To build upon this strength, study programs should strategically integrate Japanese cultural ele-

ments into the curriculum, while lecturers are encouraged to adopt diverse, technology-enhanced, and student-centered teaching methods. Future research may further explore how these motivational factors evolve over time and identify strategies to address weaker areas, such as access to technology and innovative media use, ensuring that student interest develops into sustained academic achievement.

Author Contributions

S.A.I.: Being responsible and corresponding author, doing this job 25 hours per week, with all paragraph in this article; F.A.S.: Becoming a Secretary who collects data, doing this job 20 hours per week, and responsibility on Methods; F.E.R.: Becoming a Technical Coordinator working on various technical matters, doing this job 20 hours per week and responsibility on template.

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Data Availability Statement

Data is available from: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1AurljOH2y9xGQex2s59Z_QBCifp3S8vdz0qU_D_52ec/edit?sp=sharing.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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