

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

#### **A. Research Design**

This research used a qualitative case study approach to investigate how students engaged with experiential learning activities and what challenges they faced in a remote learning environment like Desa Lonthoir. Because it offered deep and contextual insights that quantitative techniques were unable to capture, a qualitative approach was used in order to fully comprehend students' lived experiences (Creswell, 2014). The research focused on a particular context and aimed to comprehend the various dynamics impacting students' engagement in English learning activities, which made the case study approach especially suitable.

Two main techniques were employed to gather data: semi-structured student interviews and classroom observations. In order to directly observe the behaviors, interactions, and participation of students during experiential learning sessions, observations of the classroom were made. These observations provided non-intrusive information on how students interacted and collaborated in live classroom settings.

To investigate their individual viewpoints and reflections, only students participated in semi-structured interviews. The purpose of the interviews was to answer the study questions by concentrating on two main topics: (1) how students engaged in English experiential learning activities, and (2) what

specific challenges they encountered when putting experiential learning into practice in the remote setting of Desa Lonthoir. By comparing students' self-reported experiences with observed actions, this dual-method technique enabled data triangulation, which increased the findings' trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

## **B. Research Setting**

Desa Lonthoir is a small and geographically isolated community located in the Banda Islands, part of Central Maluku Regency, Indonesia. The village is situated on Banda Besar Island and can only be accessed by sea transportation from Banda Neira, the central hub of the Banda Islands. Travel to Desa Lonthoir from Banda Neira Harbor takes approximately 30 - 45 minutes by small boat, depending on weather and sea conditions. Boat transportation is limited, with services operating only twice a day, in the morning and in the afternoon, which contributes to the village's physical isolation. The area's tightly connected population, rich cultural variety, and remoteness made it a unique setting for investigating the use of experiential learning to get students engaged in learning English. Because of these features, Desa Lonthoir was a perfect place to research the use of experiential learning in settings with limited resources in challenging geographic conditions.

The primary junior high school in the region, SMP Negeri 94 Maluku Tengah, was located in Desa Lonthoir, Kecamatan Banda, Kabupaten Maluku Tengah, and served as the study location. For the youth in the area, the

school was the main source of formal education. It offered a curriculum based on the national education requirements of Indonesia and consisted of three grade levels, each with one class. As part of the standard curriculum, English was taught as a foreign language. The school had issues with a lack of technology, a small number of instructors, and inadequate resources for professional development. The majority of these teachers had no experience with experiential learning techniques.

The principal, a few of subject teachers, administrative staff, and other support staff serve as the school's organizational structure. While the principal was responsible for general management and decision-making, the teachers were responsible for classroom instruction and student supervision. The intimate and community-focused character of education in Desa Lonthoir, where teachers and learners engaged on a daily basis in a shared cultural setting, reflected in this framework.

This location was selected because it supported the goals of the study and provided a distinctive setting for investigating how experiential learning might increase student engagement while addressing barriers such as remoteness and resource constraints. In order to comprehend students' involvement in English learning activities and particular challenges they faced, the study primarily focused on student observation and interviews. Over the course of around eight weeks, data were collected through semi-structured student interviews and classroom observations to provide a comprehensive understanding of the students' educational experiences.

### **C. Population and Sample/Participants**

Participants in this study were junior high school students from SMP Negeri 94 Maluku Tengah, which is located in Desa Lonthoir, Kecamatan Banda, Kabupaten Maluku Tengah. The total student population was 64 students, divided into three grade levels (VII, VIII, and IX), with one class in each. Because the objective of this study was to explore the students' engagement in English classroom activities and the challenges they faced while implementing experiential learning in a remote educational setting, all students were included in the research population. However, a smaller number of participants were chosen as the study sample to allow for a more in-depth examination of students' experiences.

Purposive sampling was used to select participants, which meant that students were chosen specifically based on criteria relevant to the study's aims. The selection process was based on students' levels of classroom participation and engagement in English learning activities. Some participants were classified as active and highly engaged students, while others were passive or lacked confidence in their participation. This variant was purposefully chosen to acquire multiple viewpoints and better understand how experiential learning affected students with varying levels of engagement, motivation, and English competence. To demonstrate these various behaviors, five students in all were chosen from the English classrooms. With this method, the researcher was able to collect rich, comprehensive data and obtain a greater understanding of how students with varying engagement levels in a remote school context enjoyed experiential learning.

## **D. Data**

The qualitative data gathered for this study was intended to investigate the engagement of students and challenges of putting experiential learning into practice in a remote English classroom. Classroom observations and semi-structured interviews were the two main sources of the data. Through triangulation between observed actions and students' own narratives, these two data sources were chosen to ensure validity while offering a thorough grasp of the study emphasis.

Students themselves served as the study's main source of data, offering personal recollections of their challenges and engagement. Observations provided additional information to support and validate the conclusions gathered from interviews. By combining these two data sets, the research can be sure to include both the activities that students engaged in in the classroom and their interpretations and meanings of those activities.

## **E. Technique of Data Collection**

Two primary methods were used in this study to gather data: semi-structured interviews and classroom observation. These methods were chosen because they provided complementary perspectives on students' engagement and challenges when putting experiential learning into practice in a remote English classroom. To guarantee thoroughness and depth, the data collection was conducted over the course of four weeks, following a planned schedule.

## **1. Classroom Observation**

During English classes, participant observations were conducted to see how students engaged with experiential learning activities. Over the course of several times, the researcher observed four class sessions, paying particular attention to how the students engaged, interacted, and reacted to experiential learning activities including role-plays, group projects, and problem-solving exercises.

Throughout the procedure, a systematic observation guide was used to ensure uniformity and dependability. Key engagement markers including participation, attentiveness, and teamwork were incorporated in this handbook. Every observation session included thorough field notes to document the environment and offer verifiable proof of the practical use of experiential learning.

## **2. Semi-Structured Interviews**

Five students were selected through purposive sampling to participate in semi-structured interviews following the observations. In order to represent a wide range of experiences, the students reflected different degrees of participation and language skill. The interviews focused on exploring how students perceived their engagement in experiential learning and specific challenges they faced in Desa Lonthoir's remote learning setting. The use of open-ended questions encouraged thorough and genuine answers. With the participants' permission, audio recordings of each interview which lasted around 10 to 20 minutes were created in order to enable precise transcription and further analysis.

Table 3.1 Timeline of Data Collection

Stage	Activity	Timeline
Stage 1	Preliminary school visits and participant consent.	1-5 January 2025
Stage 2	Classroom observations.	6-13 January 2025
Stage 3	Conduct semi-structured interviews with students.	15-20 October 2025
Stage 4	Collect and analyse documents.	21-31 October 2025
Stage 5	Combine data and begin initial analysis.	1-15 November 2025

A thorough understanding of the students' engagement and challenges with experiential learning in a remote area was achieved through this systematic approach, which ensured that data collection was conducted completely and consistently.

## F. Research Instrument

Data for this study were gathered using two main research instruments: an interview guide and an observation guide. These instruments were designed to gather detailed data on students' participation in experiential learning exercises and the challenges they encountered in a remote learning environment. Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) and earlier research on student engagement, as well as the study's research questions and literature analysis, served as the foundation for the researcher's instrument development.

There were several steps involved in the instrument development process. First, the researcher thoroughly reviewed the current methods for observation and interviews as well as the relevant literature (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Second, two academic experts English language instruction developed and evaluated preliminary versions of the instruments. To make sure the questions were understandable, suitable, and in line with the goals of the study, the instruments were revised and improved based on input from these experts. By ensuring content validity, this procedure made sure the instruments measure what they are supposed to measure.

## **1. Observation Guideline**

The observation guideline aimed to systematically document how students acted and interacted during experiential learning activities in English classes. It consisted of two main components: (1) Student Engagement and (2) Challenges with Experiential Learning Implementation. Each part includes comprehensive field notes along with behavioral signs that were seen in the classroom. This structure enabled the researcher to obtain comprehensive and well-organized data on students' engagement and contextual learning challenges.

The student engagement component focused on three types of engagement: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. This categorization was adapted from the engagement framework proposed by Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004), which conceptualizes student engagement as a multidimensional construct encompassing behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions.

Behavioral engagement emphasized students' active participation in experiential activities such as role-playing, group projects, and project-based assignments, as well as their attention to instructions, peer collaboration, and task completion. Emotional engagement involved observing students' emotive responses throughout activities, such as indicators of interest, excitement, confidence, disinterest, anxiety, or decrease. Cognitive engagement focused at how students displayed critical thinking, problem solving, reflection, and the capacity to connect learning activities with previous knowledge or language abilities.

The challenges in implementing the experiential learning component addressed both logistical and student-related issues encountered during the learning process. Logistical issues included limited learning materials, time limits, and classroom space, all of which had the potential to hinder student engagement. Student-related issues included difficulty comprehending instructions, hesitancy to participate related to anxiety or lack of confidence, language barriers and differences in participation levels among students. This observation guideline was assessed qualitatively, using recurring actions and responses to identify themes and patterns.

## **2. Interview Guideline**

The semi-structured interview guideline was designed to explore students' viewpoints and experiences in greater depth. In the context of the research questions, it focused on four main areas. Students were encouraged to openly express their opinions through the use of open-ended questions, which provided rich qualitative data.

The four main focus areas were as follows:

1. Background and Learning Experience
2. Engagement in Experiential Learning Activities
3. Challenges in Experiential Learning
4. Reflections on Learning

Due to the qualitative character of the research, thematic analysis was employed to interpret the data obtained from interviews. Observation notes and interview transcripts were examined for recurring themes and patterns, following the procedures of Braun & Clarke (2006). This approach enabled the researcher to identify meaningful categories related to students' engagement and challenges during experiential learning, ensuring that the data were analyzed systematically and contextually.

## **G. Data Analysis**

In this study, qualitative data consisted of words, observations, and descriptions gathered from student interviews and classroom observations. Thematic analysis, a method for methodically finding, analyzing, and interpreting patterns or themes within qualitative data, was employed to examine the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach was selected because it provides a flexible yet detailed framework for exploring students' engagement and challenges in experiential learning within a remote educational context.

To enable the researcher to constantly improve focus and interpretation, data analysis in qualitative research took place concurrently with data

collection (Creswell & Poth, 2016). This ensured that the analytic procedure stayed tightly linked to the goals and context of the study.

The thematic analysis in this study followed six phases proposed by Braun and Clarke (2012):

### **1. Familiarization with the Data**

The researcher studied the observation notes and interview transcripts many times to acquire a thorough knowledge of the students' participation and expressions. Important elements, such as students' emotional reactions during collaborative tasks and their learning reflections, were identified for additional investigation at this phase.

### **2. Generating Initial Codes**

Following familiarization, the researcher classified relevant data segments relating to student engagement (e.g., motivation, interaction, excitement) and learning challenges (e.g., lack of confidence, limited resources). Each code was clearly noted on the transcripts and observation sheets.

### **3. Identifying Themes**

The initial codes were organized into major themes that represented repeating ideas. For example, engagement-related codes generated themes such as active engagement and emotional engagement, whereas challenge-related codes generated themes such as lack of resources and language anxiety.

### **4. Reviewing Themes**

The researcher reviewed and improved the themes to ensure that they correctly reflected the whole dataset. This method involved comparing the themes

to the original transcripts to ensure that the participants' actual statements were consistent with their interpreted meanings.

### **5. Defining and Naming Themes**

Each subject was clearly stated to convey its main significance. For example, emotional engagement defined students' passion and pleasure of experiencing activities, whereas resource constraint indicated the infrastructural challenges that restricted participation. Each subject was supported by illustrated examples from interviews and observations.

### **6. Writing the Report**

In the last step, the themes were combined into a cohesive narrative that linked the findings to Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) and related literature. The paper focused on how experiential learning enhanced behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement while also showing the contextual problems that students in Desa Lonthoir encountered.