CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains six sections. The first is background of the research. The second is research problem and this section followed by section three which is research objective. The next section is about scope and limitation. The fifth section talks about research significance. And the last one is about definition of key terms.

1.1 Research Background

Language holds great significance for humans, particularly in communication. English, being an international language, plays a crucial role in connecting people from different nations. However, mastering English can be challenging for Indonesians due to factors such as limited knowledge, lack of interest, and the perception that English is a difficult language, encompassing aspects like vocabulary, pronunciation, and writing.

Stress is a common experience among people, including students. According to Alfiah et al. (2019), stress can affect anyone, including students, and is characterized by emotional or physical tension that can lead to negative feelings such as anger, nervousness, or frustration. Naik (2022) defines stress as any situation that can pose a threat or danger to one's well-being. Stress is also the body's response to demands or challenges.

As a writer, I have also encountered this. During my high school years, I faced significant pressure from school, family, and my own expectations. There were

numerous assignments to complete before exams, additional tutoring sessions after school, and many concerns about my future after graduation, such as whether to pursue further education or enter the workforce. However, the primary source of stress often originates from school itself, with assignments and extra coursework being the main contributors to academic stress.

I have also taught senior high school students and observed their behavior during lessons. Many of them often felt bored, lacked enthusiasm, and were restless. Since the classroom environment was very quiet, many students asked me to play song during lessons to help them stay motivated and reduce stress.

Each semester, students face academic demands and pressures that can lead to physical and psychological disorders, as the body responds to these demands as stress. According to Babicka-Wirkus et al. (2021), stress is a common aspect of student life and can influence their coping strategies in response to academic demands. This is because academic tasks are inherently stressful. As students progress through grades, the pressure to learn and the complexity of lessons increase, contributing to feelings of stress. This stress can also impact brain function, potentially slowing students' ability to absorb and process new material. Students often report experiencing high levels of academic stress during specific times in each semester, such as during exam preparation, competition for class rankings, and when trying to master a large syllabus in a short period (Edjah et al., 2020). Various methods can be used to reduce stress, including the use of songs.

Song has become an essential element for humans, offering both calmness and the ability to uplift mood. Toader et al. (2023) suggest that the brain is the central control center of the human body, processing music and subsequently influencing us in various ways. According to Harvey (1987), music can positively impact neural functions and hormonal activity, promoting the healthy functioning of the body's immune and regenerative processes. This indicates that songs can provide relaxation for students, as the brain processes music and affects various aspects of our being. Utilizing songs for learning purposes can be beneficial, as they are inherently enjoyable for people.

This study aims to explore how incorporating songs into English learning activities can decrease students' stress levels during the process of learning the language.

1.2 Research Problem

Given the background, it's clear that students require a method to alleviate stress and enhance the enjoyment of learning, such as using songs. From this, the research problem can be formulated as: "How does integrating songs into English learning can decrease academic stress among EFL learners at SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Malang?"

1.3 Research Objective

Based on the research question provided, the objective of this study is to demonstrate how the use of songs can decrease academic stress among 11th-grade students at SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Malang while learning English.

1.4 Scope and Limitation

This study will investigate whether songs can decrease academic stress among 11th-grade students at SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Malang while learning English. The researcher will also inquire about the reasons behind students' beliefs regarding the stress-reducing effects of songs. These obtained from the results of the cluster random sampling method with a lottery technique in which the researcher received papers written in class 11 which were obtained at random. Researchers also feel that in grade 11, students feel a lot of stress and anxiety because they are going to the final grade where there will be a lot of assignments, additional lessons, and also exam preparation.

1.5 Research Significance

The findings of this study are expected to be beneficial for the researcher, the students, the teachers, and others involved in education. The results are anticipated to reduce academic stress among students, thereby enhancing the learning process through the use of songs. This study is expected to contribute to:

a. Researcher

The results of this study aim to enlighten the researcher about the significance of a positive learning environment achieved through stress reduction among students, which can be achieved for every student through the use of songs.

b. Teachers

For teachers, the study results can assist in refining their teaching strategies to create a less stressful learning environment. It is hoped that this

understanding will lead to more effective teaching practices and a deeper appreciation of students' needs.

c. Students

For students, the study aims to help reduce their academic stress, leading to a more enjoyable learning experience. Additionally, it aims to promote good mental health, which is crucial for optimal learning.

d. Others

This study aims to enhance understanding of the importance of reducing academic stress among students, which could benefit a wide range of people and serve as a valuable reference for future researchers.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

In the study titled "The Use of Song to Decrease Academic Stress among EFL Learners at SMA Muhammadiyah 1 Malang," the researcher will provide definitions for key terms to aid in understanding the study.

a. Academic Stress

Academic stress refers to the individual's subjective perception of the demands or pressures they face in an academic setting. It encompasses a range of physical, behavioral, cognitive, and emotional reactions that arise from the challenges posed by academic requirements. Academic stress is categorized as distress, indicating a negative impact on well-being. It occurs when students feel unable to cope with the demands placed on them, often resulting from various academic stressors. These stressors are aspects of the learning environment that create pressure, such as attending classes,

studying for extended periods, academic dishonesty, a high volume of assignments, poor academic performance, and anxiety related to examinations (Octasya & Munawaroh, 2021).

Recently, academic stress among school students has escalated due to the multitude of academic pressures they encounter. These pressures include numerous assignments, exams, and school activities that they must complete. Moreover, students are expected to achieve high grades, not only by their teachers but also by their parents. These expectations compel students to work harder, leading to increased levels of stress.

b. Song

Songs are a powerful way to communicate messages. They can evoke and express emotions such as hope, desire, joy, and even madness. A song consists of a series of notes that blend with harmonious and complete rhythms, along with poetic lyrics, creating a beautiful harmony. It is widely acknowledged that listening to songs can offer comfort and relaxation. This is because song is processed by the brain, which serves as the control center of the human body, and can subsequently affect us in various beneficial ways. Song has been shown to positively impact nerve function, promoting overall bodily health. Hanser (1999), (Thoma et al., 2013) suggest that preferred music genres have the most profound impact on relaxation and stress reduction among listeners. This implies that selecting the appropriate song is crucial. Opting for a genre that resonates

with students can enhance their comfort, mood, and motivation to engage in learning.