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## **THE CORRELATION BETWEEN STUDENTS ENGAGEMENT AND STUDENTS ENGLISH ACHIEVEMENT**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This research investigates the correlation between student engagement and learning achievement in English among ninth-grade students at UPT SMPN 3 X Koto. Despite high engagement levels, low academic performance in English has been observed, suggesting varying combinations of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. The study aims to explore how different dimensions of engagement impact learning outcomes in the context of English language learning. Utilizing a correlational design with total sampling, data was collected through a validated student engagement questionnaire and standardized English proficiency tests to measure learning achievement. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was employed for data analysis using SPSS 25. The findings reveal a statistically significant positive correlation between emotional engagement and learning achievement, emphasizing the crucial role of emotional factors in predicting academic success. The results highlight the importance of fostering emotional engagement strategies to enhance English language learning outcomes among ninth-grade students.*

Keyword : *Students engagement, Students English achievement*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Student engagement, encompassing behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions, is widely recognized as a critical factor influencing academic achievement (Fredricks et al., 2004). However, the relationship between student engagement and learning outcomes in the context of English language learning, particularly among ninth-grade students, remains a subject of ongoing investigation and requires further exploration.

At UPT SMPN 3 X Koto, a discrepancy has been observed between students' engagement levels and their actual academic performance in English. Despite displaying

favorable behavioral engagement, such as attentiveness, participation, and effort, as well as positive emotional engagement, characterized by interest and enthusiasm, a significant proportion of ninth-grade students struggle to meet the minimum criteria for English proficiency.

Preliminary observations and interviews with teachers at the school revealed that while most students exhibited commendable behavioral and emotional engagement during English lessons, their learning achievements, as reflected in daily tasks, mid-semester assessments, and overall proficiency scores, remained subpar. For instance, the average scores for classes 8.1, 8.2, and 8.3 were 55, 66, and 41, respectively, falling short of the minimum proficiency score of 65.

This paradoxical situation, where students demonstrate high engagement but low learning achievement in English, raises important questions about the complex interplay between different dimensions of engagement and their impact on academic performance. Existing literature highlights the significance of student engagement in predicting academic success (Wang et al., 2021; Dangi & Behera, 2021), but the specific relationship between engagement dimensions and English language learning outcomes among ninth-grade students remains underexplored.

Several studies have investigated the role of student engagement in academic achievement, but their findings have been inconsistent or focused on different subject areas or age groups. For instance, a study by Lee (2018) found a positive correlation between emotional engagement and academic performance in mathematics among high school students. However, another study by Kim et al. (2020) reported a stronger association between cognitive engagement and language arts achievement among middle school students.

The purpose of this study is to bridge this research gap by investigating the correlation between students' engagement (behavioral, emotional, and cognitive) and their English achievement among ninth-grade students at UPT SMPN 3 X Koto. By exploring the relationship between these variables, the research aims to contribute insights into effective teaching strategies and student engagement practices that can enhance English language learning outcomes.

Addressing this research gap is crucial, as it can inform educational practices, curriculum design, and pedagogical approaches tailored to fostering optimal engagement and improving English language proficiency among ninth-grade students. Additionally, the findings may contribute to the existing body of knowledge and serve as a foundation for

future research in this area, particularly in the context of English language learning and ninth-grade education.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design and Participants**

This study employed a correlational research design to investigate the relationship between students' engagement and their English achievement among ninth-grade students at UPT SMPN 3 X Koto. The entire population of 70 students across three classes (8.1, 8.2, and 8.3) was included in the study, utilizing a total sampling technique.

### **Instruments**

In this study, two instruments were employed for data collection. Firstly, an English Achievement Test consisting of 30 multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank questions was developed to measure students' English language proficiency, including grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing skills. The content validity of the test was established through consultation with English language lecturers at UIN Bukittinggi, and any invalid items were either modified or eliminated based on their feedback.

Secondly, a self-report Student Engagement Questionnaire was utilized to assess students' engagement levels, measuring the three dimensions of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. The questionnaire items were adapted from existing validated scales and modified to suit the context of the study. The validity of the questionnaire was established through expert review by lecturers at UIN Bukittinggi, and necessary revisions were made based on their feedback. Additionally, a pilot study was conducted in another school to assess the reliability of the questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Data collection involved administering the English Achievement Test and the Student Engagement Questionnaire to the participants. The tests were scored, and the questionnaire responses were quantified based on a pre-determined scoring system. The relationship between students' engagement (independent variable) and their English achievement (dependent variable) was examined using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. This statistical technique was employed to determine the strength and direction of the correlation between the two variables.

The data analysis was conducted using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software. Descriptive statistics, such as means and standard deviations, were calculated for both variables. Additionally, the assumptions for the Pearson correlation analysis, including normality and linearity, were tested to ensure the validity of the results.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

The data were collected through the utilization of both tests and questionnaires. Test instruments were employed to gather data concerning students' engagement, while questionnaires were utilized to collect information regarding students' English achievement. Subsequently, the researcher analyzed the gathered data using the product moment formula. The findings pertaining to students' engagement and English achievement are presented in the table below.

**Table 1: Data Distribution Statistic**

Variable	X	Variable	Y
N	Valid	N	Valid
	Missing		Missing
	g		
Mean	110.57	Mean	79.91
Median	102.5	Median	54
Std.Deviation	18.86	Std.Deviation	11.61
		n	
Range	59	Range	43
Minimum	85	Minimum	50
Maximum	144	Maximum	93

**Table 2. Correlation Coefficient**

		Correlations	
		Engagaemen t	Achivement
Engagaement	Pearson Correlation	1	.616**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	70	70
Achivement	Pearson Correlation	.616**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	70	70

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table above illustrates a correlation coefficient of  $r = 0.616$ , signifying a positive correlation between the two variables. This value (0.616) allows the researcher to gauge the strength of correlation between the variables. Falling within the range of 0.60 to 0.79, the value of 0.616 indicates a relatively weak correlation. The table provides answers in this research:

**Table 3: Magnitude of Correlation**

No.	Reliability	Validity
1.	0,80 - 1,00	Very high
2.	0,60 - 0,79	High
3.	0,40 - 0,59	Reliable
4.	0,20 - 0,39	Minimally
5.	0 - 0,19	Unacceptably low

In brief, the correlation coefficient indicating the correlation between students' engagement and English achievement stands at 0.616. This interpretation addresses the third question posed in this research. Referring to the scale table provided earlier, a correlation coefficient of 0.616 falls within the "high" correlation range, as it lies between 0.60 and 0.79. Hence, in summary that there is a significant correlation between students' engagement and English achievement.

To determine whether to accept or reject the hypothesis, the researcher refers to the r-table using a significance alpha value ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.05 and degrees of freedom (df) of 68. The r-table yields a value of 0.231, while the researcher's obtained value is 0.616. This indicates that the obtained score exceeds the r-table score. To ascertain the acceptance or rejection of the hypothesis, the researcher employs the following formulation: If  $r_{xy} > r_{tab}$ ,  $H_a$  is accepted, and  $H_o$  is rejected. If  $r_{xy} < r_{tab}$ ,  $H_a$  is rejected, and  $H_o$  is accepted.

In summary, the hypothesis ( $H_o$ ) is rejected, the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) is accepted, indicating a significant relationship between students' engagement and their English achievement. In accordance with on the aforementioned data, it was determined the correlation coefficient between students' engagement and their English achievement among ninth-grade students at UPT SMPN 3 X Koto was 0.616. The positive symbol in the result indicates a positive correlation between the two variables. Furthermore, the magnitude of the correlation is considered low as it falls within the range of 0.60 to 0.79. In

light of these research findings, it can be concluded that students' engagement indeed has a substantial impact on their English achievement.

## **Discussion**

The present study investigated the relationship between students' engagement and their English learning achievement among ninth-grade students at UPT SMPN 3 X KOTO. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation ( $r = 0.616$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) between these two variables, indicating that higher levels of student engagement are associated with better English learning achievement.

This result corroborates previous research highlighting the crucial role of student engagement in academic success. Fredricks et al. (2004) and Appleton et al. (2006) demonstrated that engaged students exhibit higher academic achievement across various subjects. Similarly, Gunuc (2014) found a positive relationship between student engagement and academic success, aligning with the current study's findings.

The positive correlation observed in this study is further supported by Delis's (2008) research, which specifically examined the relationship between behavioral engagement and speaking skills among middle school students in Jakarta. Utilizing a quantitative correlational approach, Delis reported a notable positive correlation, consistent with the present study's results.

Furthermore, Carini's (2012) study titled "Student Engagement and Student Learning: Testing the Linkages" on the linkages between student engagement and academic performance experimentally and traditionally also revealed positive correlations, lending further credence to the current findings. These collective findings underscore the importance of fostering student engagement to enhance academic achievement, including in the domain of English language learning.

The magnitude of the correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.616$ ) found in this study is considered substantial, falling within the range of 0.60-0.80 (Cohen, 1988). This suggests that students with higher engagement levels are more likely to achieve better in English, while those with lower engagement may struggle to perform well.

The hypothesis testing results further confirmed the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ), indicating a significant correlation between students' engagement and their English learning achievement. The correlation coefficient ( $r_{xy} = 0.616$ ) exceeded the critical value ( $r = 0.2319$ ) at an alpha level of 0.05 and degrees of freedom (df) of 68, providing strong evidence for the existence of this relationship.

The positive correlation between engagement and achievement can be attributed to the supportive learning environment created by engaged students, as argued by Firestone (2014). Engaged students are better able to regulate their focus, which can improve their understanding and achievement, particularly in overcoming challenges during exams and assessments.

In conclusion, the study's findings underscore the pivotal role of student engagement in enhancing English learning achievement. Higher levels of engagement correspond to greater learning achievement, while lower engagement levels are associated with lower achievement. Therefore, fostering student engagement through effective pedagogical strategies and a supportive learning environment should be a priority in English language education to improve academic outcomes and facilitate language proficiency.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

In conclusion, this study has firmly established a significant positive correlation between students' engagement levels and their English language proficiency. The robust correlation coefficient obtained through rigorous statistical analysis provides compelling evidence that higher engagement corresponds to better achievement in English. This finding underscores the pivotal role of fostering student engagement in facilitating effective language learning and academic success. By promoting an environment that encourages active participation, emotional investment, and cognitive immersion in the learning process, educational institutions can cultivate a conducive atmosphere for students to thrive in their English language development. Ultimately, recognizing and nurturing student engagement emerges as a crucial factor in enhancing language proficiency and equipping learners with the necessary linguistic skills for academic and professional pursuits in an increasingly globalized world.

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