
Students' engagement for academic success in intensive reading

Sri Wahyuni¹, Mochamad Imron Azami²

Universitas Islam Malang; Jl. Mayjen Haryono No. 193 Malang 65144 Jawa Timur, Indonesia, phone: +62-341-565544, fax: +62-341-552249

e-mail: 122101073075@unisma.ac.id, imron.azami@unisma.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

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The aim of this research is to investigate a significant relationship between students' engagement and their success in academic focus in intensive reading at a private university in Malang, Indonesia. This research used a quantitative approach with a correlational research design to analyze the data. The sample of participants are third semester English Education Department students selected using convenience sampling technique. The data were tested and analyzed using the SPSS application and the Pearson correlation test was used. The results revealed a positive moderate category ($r = 0.532$, $p < 0.05$) between students' engagement including behavioral, affective, social, and cognitive engagement and their academic achievement. The findings emphasize the essential role of engagement of the students in the classroom to enhance their academic success in an intensive reading context. The findings was also found that three dimensions of students' engagement correlate with academic success, including behavioral, social and cognitive engagement. Meanwhile, affective engagement is a dimension of student's engagement that has less influence on their academics. From these findings, it is hoped that educators will develop strategies to increase student engagement, especially in the context of intensive reading.

1. INTRODUCTION

In academics, student engagement is one factor that plays a valuable role in successful learning. Fredricks et al. (2004) research shows that greater levels of engagement are connected with better academic performance and greater motivation to learn. Engagement in learning is more than just presence; it includes the behavior, emotional, and cognitive aspects of students in their educational experiences. According to Fredricks et al. (2004), there are several aspects of students' engagement, that is behavior engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement. Generally, students refer to their active participation in various matters and activities in academic, anything related to school activities, and commitment to achieving learning goals (Ginting, 2021).

Especially academic performance in intensive reading, student involvement can be seen in various ways, such as selecting reading materials, participating in discussions, and others. Reading is an essential skill in language learning because it allows us to acquire knowledge and information (Budianto & Yuniar, 2023). The ability to obtain information through reading can help individuals to gain many benefits (Ikhsanudin & Lestari, 2023). Engagement is important to developing reading skills in intensive reading, where EFL students are encouraged to read various texts at their own pace. Research shows that when students engage with the material and are interested in their reading choices, their understanding and retention of the material improves,

then resulting in improved academic performance (Mikami, 2017). This study wants to explore how various aspects of engagement such as behavior, emotional, and cognitive engagement of the students affect academic success in intensive reading.

Several research have shown that there is a positive result between student engagement and academic achievement. For example, Smithikrai et al. (2018) found that factors such as life goals, support by peers, and praise for positive quality of teaching were associated with significant study engagement, which was predictive of academic success. Heng (2014) found that positive engagement activities such as time spent on coursework, homework, and active class participation positively impacted academic achievement. Rajabalee et al. (2020) also found a weak correlation was observed between students' engagement in online modules and their performances in final learning activities.

Based on the previous research, it was found several similarities related to this research. The three studies have found a relationship between the involvement of students and their academic success in any specific field. However, students' engagement for academic success specifically in intensive reading rarely explored in the previous research. Then this research aims to find a correlation between students' engagement in class and their academic success in intensive reading. The following are research questions that bridge the research objectives:

1. Is there a significant relationship between student engagement and their academic success in Intensive Reading?
2. What is the relationship between student engagement and their academic success in Intensive Reading?

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

A quantitative approach and correlational design were used in this research to examine the data. This research design was adopted because it was per the research objective which aims to find a correlation between the engagement of students in the classroom and their academic outcomes in intensive reading. According to Fraenkel et al. (2009), correlational study aims to determine the relationship between or more variables, without any attempt to influence. The data is valid because there is no manipulation of variables.

2.2 Research Participants

The research participants are third-semester English Education Department students at a private university in Malang. This research used convenience sampling techniques to select the participants. They were chosen because they had taken an Interpretative Reading course which focuses on Intensive Reading. The total number of participants was 31 from the target 37 participants, precisely from class A (16 students) and class B (15 students). There are 7 male students and 24 female students, with the remaining students could not be contacted for any reason.

2.3 Research Instrument

This research uses a closed-ended questionnaire as the research instrument. This instrument was adapted from Mariska (2022) with the total number of questions being 16 questions. There are several changes to the questionnaire questions, namely adjusting the questions based on the research context and deleting 2 unnecessary questions. The following are aspects of the questions:

Table 1. Aspects of the Questions

| No | Aspects | Item |
|----|-----------------------|------|
| 1 | Behavioral Engagement | 5 |
| 2 | Affective Engagement | 4 |
| 3 | Social Engagement | 4 |
| 4 | Cognitive Engagement | 3 |
| | Total | 16 |

The total number of questions is 16 items which are divided into 4 aspects: behavioral, affective, social, and cognitive engagement.

2.4 Data Collection

Data collection was conducted in the classroom directly. The first step is that the researcher asks permission to enter the participant's class to collect data. Then, participants introduced themselves and the aims of the research. Next, participants asked for their willingness to fill out the questionnaire. After that, the researcher distributed the questionnaire link to participants to fill in. In this stage, the total data collected took around two days because the participants were divided into two classes and on different schedules.

2.5 Data Analysis

For the data analyzing stage, this research used the SPSS application 20 version to delve the relationship between students' engagement and academic success in intensive reading. This research employed Pearson's correlational test to find out the strength and direction of the linear correlation between variable X (students' engagement) and variable Y (academic success). This research uses a questionnaire as the main instrument to assess student engagement, which is measured based on a Likert scale. Then, student academic success is measured based on the student's score in intensive reading.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

This research aims to investigate whether there is a relationship between students' engagement and academic success in intensive reading. The following are the results of the analysis:

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------------|
| | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Std. Error |
| Students' Engagement | 31 | 52.00 | 80.00 | 65.3226 | 1.25071 |
| Academic Success | 31 | 26.00 | 93.00 | 67.3548 | 2.98439 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 31 | | | | |

The research results show that the mean score of students' engagement is in the medium category ($M = 65.32$), it stated that the average student is actively involved in class. On the other hand, the minimum score for student engagement is 52 which interprets some students as less engaged in class activities. Furthermore, the maximum score for student engagement is 82, which indicates students with high involvement in class. Likewise, the average academic success score is included in the medium category ($M = 67.35$), which shows that the average student in the class

has quite good academic achievement. The lowest score of students' academic achievement is 26, and the highest score is 93, which shows a quite significant gap in student academic scores.

Table 3. Correlation between students engagement and accademic success

| | | Students' Engagement | Academic Success |
|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Students' Engagement | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .532** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .002 |
| | N | 31 | 31 |
| Academic Success | Pearson Correlation | .532** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .002 | |
| | N | 31 | 31 |

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

Table 3. presents the findings of the Pearson correlation test. The findings indicate that was a positive relationship between students' engagement and academic success in intensive reading. The results show a significant 2-tailed (0.002) lower than 0.05 levels. Then, the Pearson correlation (0.532) is between .40 and .60, which means the significant correlation was a moderate category. This moderate category means that even though there is quite a strong involvement between these two variables, other factors can still influence student academic achievement besides academic involvement. For educators, it is important to develop strategies to increase student engagement, although this is not the only determining factor in academic achievement, it is still a strong factor.

Table 4. Correlation between each dimension of students' engagement and academic success

| | | Behavioral Engagement | Affective Engagement | Social Engagement | Cognitive Engagement | Academic Achievement |
|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Behavioral Engagement | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .578** | .297 | .558** | .514** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .001 | .105 | .001 | .003 |
| | N | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 |
| Affective Engagement | Pearson Correlation | .578** | 1 | .190 | .514** | .279 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .001 | | .306 | .003 | .128 |
| | N | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 |
| Social Engagement | Pearson Correlation | .297 | .190 | 1 | .667** | .432* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .105 | .306 | | .000 | .015 |
| | N | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 |
| Cognitive Engagement | Pearson Correlation | .558** | .514** | .667** | 1 | .403* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .001 | .003 | .000 | | .025 |
| | N | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 |
| Academic Achievement | Pearson Correlation | .514** | .279 | .432* | .403* | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .003 | .128 | .015 | .025 | |
| | N | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 | 31 |

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

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4. presents the correlation results between each dimension of students' engagement (behavioral, affective, social, and cognitive engagements) on students' academic achievement. The results of the Bivariate Pearson test above show that behavioral engagement is the dimension or aspect that achieves the highest correlation ($r = 0.514$, $p = 0.003$) which is included in the moderate category. It can be concluded that students who have active involvement tend to have better academic achievement. Then, the table shows a weak positive correlation between affective engagement and academic achievement ($r = 0.279$, $p = 0.128$) which proves that affective aspects such as emotions and feelings do not influence students' academic results much. For social engagement, the correlation test shows that the correlation is moderately positive ($r = 0.432$, $p = 0.015$) which suggests that social interaction in the classroom is an important aspect in academic success. Furthermore, the findings also show a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.403$, $p = 0.25$) between students' cognitive engagement and their academic grades, which emphasizes that students who put effort into understanding the material achieve good academic achievements.

3.2 Discussions

3.2.1 The relationship between students' engagement and academic success in intensive reading

In the findings section, it has been shown that the positive correlation between the two variables was in the moderate category ($r = 0.532$, $p < 0.05$). It emphasized that students who have quite good engagement tend to have good results on their academic, especially in intensive reading class. The findings from this research support previous research which also proves the importance of students' engagement and academic achievement (Dörnyei, 2001; Fredricks et al., 2004; Lei et al., 2018). These studies also emphasize that students who are more engaged are more likely to have better academic results. Research by Bariyah and Pierewan (2017) also strengthens these findings, proving that 16.7% of students' sociology learning achievement is influenced by student involvement in class. Eztevez et al. (2021) found that high levels of engagement by students can make them having the best grades and managing time and learning environment better. Ismail and Groccia (2018) active engagement of students in learning can make them deeper in understanding concepts, improve critical thinking and problem-solving skills, intellectual, metacognitive, academically disciplined attitudes, real-life experiences, and skills both socially and interpersonally, as well as satisfaction with higher education and study education experience. Another study found that students' engagement is also an important factor that helps improve students' academic success in online courses (Rajabalee et al., 2020) and it completely gives it its effect life goals, peer support, and teaching quality satisfaction (Smithikrai et al., 2018).

3.2.2 The relationship between each dimensions of students' engagement and their influence on academic success

From the correlation test between each dimension of student involvement and academic success, the data shows a fairly high correlation between several dimensions. However, there is a dimension that does not influence student academic achievement. The three dimensions that cover student academic outcomes in order from highest are behavioral engagement with correlation (r

= 0.514, $p = 0.003$), social engagement ($r = 0.432$, $p = 0.015$), and cognitive engagement ($r = 0.403$, $p = 0.25$). Meanwhile, the affective involvement dimension does not have much of an impact on students' academics with a correlation ($r = 0.279$, $p = 0.128$). It highlights that students with good behavioral, social, and cognitive engagement tend to have good academic results. Those findings support another study by Çali et al. (2024) even identified that behavioral engagement is the only factor that has the most influence on academic performance compared to emotional and cognitive factors. Meanwhile, there is a contrasting result from a study by Liu et al. (2022) which reveals that emotional involvement also plays a dominant role in increasing the achievement of MOOC students. This is in line with a study by Rotgans et al. (2018) which revealed that academic performance can be significantly predicted based on cognitive engagement.

Based on the findings, it is emphasized the importance of encouraging student involvement in class to increase academic success in intensive reading by implementing appropriate strategies, such as interactive learning activities, providing feedback, and others. Besides, the relatively small sample size of only 31 participants may decrease the generalizability of the results to a wider population. Then, the statistical significance may be affected by the limited amount of data.

4. CONCLUSION

This study aims to investigate the correlation between students' engagement in class and their academic success in intensive reading. This study found a significant and positive correlation between student engagement and academic success in intensive reading. It was also found that three dimensions of students' engagement correlate with academic success, including behavioral, social and cognitive engagement. Meanwhile, affective engagement is a dimension of student's engagement that has less influence on their academics. This research findings highlight the necessity of increasing student engagement in the classroom to get better learning outcomes. From these findings, it is hoped that there will be strategies by educators to increase student engagement, especially in intensive reading contexts. This research is significant because it provides insight into how students' involvement in intensive reading learning can increase their academic success. Then it can add to the academic literature about these two variables since it is quite an important study for language education. The limitation of this study is the minimum sample of participants ($N = 31$), which may decrease the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, this suggests that future researchers should incorporate larger and more varied samples to increase the generalizability of the findings. It is hoped that this research can strengthen engagement theory by providing evidence of the relationship between student engagement and academic success and can be used to help develop the design of teaching strategies to further increase student engagement.

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