

# The Correlation between Task Commitment and Students' EFL Learning Achievement

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**Abstract:** This research aims to prove whether there is a correlation between task commitment and students' EFL Learning achievement on reading comprehension of the second-semester students of the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Study Program. This study used eleven questionnaire items of task commitment and learning achievement tests on giving and responding opinions. The sample of this research was 30 out of 165 students. Based on the calculation results using  $r_{ser}$  correlation, the correlation value of this study was 0.129. The correlation value was very low (almost uncorrelated) according to the interpretation table of the  $r$  value. A conclusion can be drawn that the task commitment, as one of the students' internal factors, did not affect the students' learning achievement.

## INTRODUCTION

It is a challenge for every educator to increase students' achievement. First of all, it is essential that students know what to do after the class, course, or program – what students need to know could make them enhance their knowledge and skills. The achievements or learning outcomes are the knowledge that students must acquire at the end of class to help them understand why that knowledge and those skills are useful to them. Amongst the factors contributing to students' achievements, the quantity and the quality of instruction play an important role (Wedel, 2021). One of which is given through tests.

A test is given to students to measure students' achievements. According to (Djaali et al., 2008), "test functions as a tool to measure students' achievement or the level of development or progress that students have achieved after taking the teaching-learning process within a certain period of time". The learning achievement test has an important role for both the teacher and the students. For teachers, learning achievement tests can reflect the extent to which students understand the subject matter in the learning process. It turns out that the learning achievement test is useful for students to find out self-weaknesses in following the lesson.

Many factors affect a student's learning achievement, both internal and external. It is in line with Slameto's (2015) statement that the factors that influence learning achievement are classified into two categories: internal factors originating from students themselves and external factors developing from students' surroundings. Internal factors include intelligence, attention, talent, interest, motivation, maturity, readiness, and fatigue. On the other hand, external factors consist of the family environment, which becomes the primary agent of socialization. Specifically for English learners, their achievements are also influenced by prior education, English proficiency, number of semesters, and number of courses (Muttaqin & Chuang, 2022). The second factor is the campus environment in which students can make interaction and build social connections. Weed (2017) mentioned that campuses or colleges have very strong social cultures where students meet, talk with, learn from, and have fun with others who will be invaluable connections. The third factor is the social environment, where students interact with their physical surroundings and socio-cultural relationships (Barnett & Casper, 2001). Furthermore, positive social support and a sense of belonging have been reported to affect students' academic self-efficacy and learning engagement (Vayre & Vonthron, 2019).

Based on the interviews with the lecturer of *Bahasa Inggris Profesi*, who teaches in the second semester of the PBSI Study Program, Sarah (pseudonym), namely, at one of the public universities in Sumenep, Madura, East Java, Indonesia, the students' achievement was still relatively below the expectation. One of the efforts to improve the problem is that there must be a new strategy or method to increase the students' achievement in EFL learning, especially reading comprehension. Therefore, it can be said that student achievement is very more influenced by intrinsic motivation than anything else. Intrinsic motivation influences students to master their skills (task orientation), and by mastering these skills, it will be easier for them to get their behavioral targets. In other words, intrinsic motivation has the biggest influence on students' achievement to be better.

According to the lecturer of *Bahasa Inggris Profesi*, the students' responsibility toward the assignments given during and after the teaching and learning process is still dissatisfying. Every time the students were given English assignments both during class and at home, only a few students did and submitted the assignments. Apparently, the students have low motivation and commitment to the task in EFL learning.

According to (Renzulli, 2005), commitment to the task is a subtle form of motivation. While motivation is usually defined as a generalized energy process that is a triggering factor

in organisms, the responsibility for that energy is assigned to a specific task. On the other hand, Fakhruddin, as cited in (Syarifita et al., 2011), states that the characteristics of students who have a high task commitment are (a) tough and tenacious (not easy to give up), (b) independent and responsible, (c) setting realistic aspirational goals with moderate risk, (d) loving to learn and possessing a high task orientation, (e) possessing good concentration, (f) possessing desire to improve themselves, (g) possessing desire to work as well as possible, and (h) possessing desire to be successful in academics. The low commitment to the task can create a gap between its potential and achievements.

Based on the characteristics above, the researchers can conclude that task commitment is more likely to be an enthusiastic attitude, craft, and perseverance that students have. Therefore, task commitment plays an important role in determining student achievement. Studies concerning the correlation between task commitment and learner's achievement have been conducted. In research conducted by Twehues (2013), it was revealed that students who possess increased awareness of their time commitments prefer staying at school to complete all tasks given before the deadlines. Students who have a greater awareness of commitment may also possess an increased perceived control over their time management. Furthermore, it is stated that the lack of commitment also increases stress among students. The connection among these three influences is the need for improved time management behavior. It is commonly assumed that students who spend more time studying or have good commitment will receive better grades than students who have limited time to study. In addition, it is interesting to know that the student's level of stress also causes student motivation or commitment. Therefore, it is suggested that educators find effective strategies to reduce students' stress so that the teaching and learning process runs well. Students suffer from an increased level of stress because they want good academic grades.

Another study by (Syarifita et al., 2011) found a correlation between parents' social support and commitment to task (task commitment) of acceleration students at the high school level. The effective contribution of parents' social support with a commitment to task (task commitment) was 28.2%. However, 71.8% of other variables were not examined in this study, such as ideals or aspirations of students, students' abilities, condition of students, condition of the physical environment and social environment (friends), the dynamic elements in learning, learning process, and teachers' efforts to teach the students. Although those studies used task commitment variables, they did not show the changes expected to see

in learners' competence, performance, or patient outcomes as a result of classroom activity (the learning objectives).

Based on those reasons, the researchers are interested in investigating whether there is a correlation between task commitment and students' EFL achievement. In this case, the study was carried out on the students' EFL learning achievement in the PBSI Study Program of the second semester in Class B.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Task Commitment**

There has been no theory underlying task commitment. However, several explanations can be interpreted as the meaning of task commitment. Task commitment is an internal motivation that encourages people to be diligent and tenacious in doing tasks, despite experiencing various obstacles, specifically academic assignments. Task commitment is also inner energy that encourages a person to be diligent and tenacious in doing his job despite experiencing various obstacles in completing the tasks he is responsible for because the individual has committed himself to the task. In other words, task commitment is one of the self-motivation or tenacious attitudes every student possesses in completing their academic assignments to achieve good grades. Several aspects can predict students' academic commitment, such as satisfaction and self-regulatory behaviors by setting goals, managing studies effectively, and allocating more time to study (Human-Vogel & Rabe, 2015).

Learning achievement becomes a benchmark for students determining success in the learning process, especially English. Commitment to English assignments is an important part of learning English. For students to get good grades, they need tenacity and self-motivation to carry out the process of achieving satisfactory grades. This self-motivation influences students' academic performance by triggering their critical thinking and organizational skills (Muwonge et al., 2019). Thus, it results in well-managed priority and attention to complete English assignments well on the sidelines of other tasks. Since English is one of the difficult languages in terms of grammar and pronunciation, students need tenacity, persistence, and self-responsibility to complete English assignments well.

### **English as A Foreign Language**

In Indonesia, English is considered a Foreign Language (EFL). This term is used to describe the study of English by non-native speakers in countries where English is not the

dominant language (Nordquist, 2020). It turns out that English is one of the international languages that all students from various majors must learn, and it is a compulsory subject that must be studied. As an international language, English is the most used worldwide. It can be seen that the position of English as a global language with the presence of English speakers spread across five continents. English is used not only by English speakers but also by the world community. Moreover, many scientific books and articles are written in English. Therefore, to broaden knowledge, especially through reading, students must equip themselves with such a skill to understand the reading material written in English.

English is one of the compulsory subjects taught in higher education in Indonesia. At this time, students need to learn English because English is a lingua-franca, and it is one of the most widely used foreign languages in some fields such as academics, politics, business, trades, and diplomatic circles. Thus, learning English is a form of need that the students have to compete to build better knowledge in the international arena. Eventhough English learning nowadays involves technologies, there is still limited evidence of innovation in the methodological approach (Vonkova et al., 2021). Therefore, continuous research should be conducted to seek a better approach to English teaching as well as to improve students' commitment which eventually results in better achievements.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study was correlational with two variables. Correlation is the measurement of the co-relationship between two or more variables using correlation statistics. The correlation is indicated by a correlation coefficient represented by numbers from 0 to 1, showing the degree of the relationship. This study aims to determine the relationship between the students' commitment to the task (task commitment) with students' learning achievement in EFL.

The independent variable is a variable that affects or is the cause of the change or the emergence of the dependent variable (Lusiana et al., 2018). The independent variable in this study is a commitment to the task (task commitment). The dependent variable in this study is the second-semester students' EFL learning achievement on *Bahasa Inggris Profesi* of the PBSI Study Program.

The population in this study was all students of the second semester of the PBSI Study Program, which were 165 students. Not all students were involved in the research. Therefore, the sample representative of the studied population was only 30 students. The reason

underlying the choice of a certain class (B) was that the level of activity of students in this class was the lowest compared to the other classes.

The questionnaire used in this study was trialed on the students in class A. Meanwhile, to collect the students' EFL achievement data, the researchers used a test on English expression questions. The test for trial or tryout was given to the students in class A after the trial was completed. Then the test for the students' EFL achievement was given to class B in the form of a multiple-choice test.

The correlation formula used was *The Widespread Biserial Correlation*:  $r_{ser} = \frac{\sum\{(0r-0t)(M)\}}{SDtot \sqrt{\frac{(0r-0t)^2}{p}}}$ . This correlation formula was used to find the correlation between the variables, task commitment as the independent variable and the students' EFL achievement as the dependent variable.

## FINDINGS

The question items of the questionnaire were eleven. At the same time, the test result was based on a formative test with a number of fifteen test items, and the topic was reading comprehension. The results of the questionnaire and the test are illustrated in Table 1.

### Data description

**Table 1.** Results of questionnaire data and test

No	Name	Questionnaire Result	Test Result
1	Abd. Wafi	114	63
2	Abdul Gani	102	54
3	Abdurrahman Wahid	99	54
4	Alvina Riani Aulia	97	27
5	Aprilia Wulandari	94	36
6	Ifatul Afifah	112	54
7	Layyinah	83	45
8	Maili Sofiyana	102	72
9	Maltup Ansori	93	36
10	Mauzani Haikal	105	45
11	Nindy Dewi Wulandari	84	18
12	Nur Holifah	110	63
13	Nurul Anwar	97	54
14	Rahma Murniati	98	63
15	Ro'fatul Hasanah	99	45

No	Name	Questionnaire Result	Test Result
16	Siti Nor Farida	113	45
17	Sitti Amina Helmia Filah	108	63
18	Abd. Waris Al-Fatoni	101	27
19	Aida	52	54
20	Aisyah Nurul Maulinda	87	18
21	Ana Shohabatil Kahfi	52	18
22	Fadhila Ahata	88	27
23	Febriansyah	122	45
24	Febrianto	133	45
25	Lukmanul Hakim Fasah	109	63
26	Moh. Rifqi	98	36
27	Moh. Shalih	92	72
28	Moh. Subaidi	92	54
29	Mohammad Hasan Basri	52	54
30	Siti Aina Fatus Sunna	87	45

### ***Validity and Reliability of Questionnaire***

The validity of the questionnaire items can be determined by using the Product Moment correlation formula.

$$r_{xy} = \frac{N \sum XY - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{\{N \sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2\} \{N \sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2\}}}$$

Besides the Product Moment formula, the SPSS application can also be applied using Pearson Correlation in calculating the validity.

The results of the calculation of  $r_{count}$  will be adjusted to  $r_{table} = 0.355$  with a significant level of 5%. If  $r_{count} > r_{table}$ , then it is said to be valid. Otherwise, if  $r_{count} < r_{table}$ , it is said to be invalid.

The reliability test was carried out using the Alpha Coefficient formula as proposed.

$$\sigma = \frac{R}{R-1} \left( 1 - \frac{\sum \sigma_i^2}{\sigma_x^2} \right)$$

Three invalid statements were found.

The results of the calculation of the reliability of the questionnaire using SPSS are as follows:

**Table 2. Reliability of the questionnaire**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.940	35

Source: SPSS 16.00

Based on the Reliability Statistics table above, the reliability value of the questionnaire is 0.940. If the value of Cronbach's Alpha > *r*table, then the instrument used is reliable.

**Validity and Reliability of the Test**

To determine the test items' validity, the Point-biserial Correlation formula was used, as shown below:

$$r_{pbis} = \frac{Mp - Mt}{St} \sqrt{\frac{p}{q}}$$

The calculation results of *r*count were adjusted to *r*table = 0.355 with a significant level of 5%. If *r*count > *r*table, then it is said to be valid. Otherwise, if *r*count < *r*table, it is said to be invalid.

The reliability test was carried out using the Alpha Coefficient formula as follows:

$$\sigma = \frac{R}{R-1} \left( 1 - \frac{\sum \sigma_i^2}{\sigma_x^2} \right)$$

The following are the results of testing the validity of the tests used by the researchers in this study.

**Table 3. Validity test results**

Number of Items	Calculation Results	Validity Analises
1	0,02	Invalid
2	0,09	Invalid
3	0,49	Valid
4	0,4	Valid
5	0,42	Valid
6	0,4	Valid
7	0,49	Valid



Number of Items	Calculation Results	Validity Analises
8	0,25	Invalid
9	0,41	Valid
10	0,4	Valid
11	0,66	Valid
12	0,07	Invalid
13	0,45	Valid
14	0,309	Valid
15	0,54	Valid

The results of the calculation of the reliability of the test using SPSS are as follows:

**Table 4. Test reliability**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.599	15

Source: SPSS 16.00

Based on the Reliability Statistics table above, the test reliability value is 0.599. If the value of Cronbach's Alpha  $>$   $r_{table}$ , then the instrument used is reliable.

Based on the  $r_{ser}$  correlation calculation results, the correlation value of this study is 0.129. By referring to table  $r$  with a significant level of 5%, the  $r_{table}$  is 0.3061. Therefore, there is no relationship between task commitment with students' EFL learning achievement because  $r_{count} \leq r_{table}$ . The value of the correlation ( $r_{count}$ ) is very low (uncorrelated), according to the interpretation table of the  $r$  value.

## Hypothesis

The formulation of the hypothesis of this study is Hypothesis null ( $H_0$ ) means that there is no correlation between task commitment with the students' EFL learning achievement of the second-semester students of the PBSI Study Program. Working hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) means a correlation between Task Commitment and the students' EFL learning achievement of the second-semester students of the PBSI Study Program.

The significant level used is  $= 0.05$ . The results of the calculation of the correlation between Task Commitment and Student Learning Achievement obtained  $r_{table} = 0.129$ . By referring to table  $r$  with a significant level of  $= 0.05$ , the  $r_{table}$  is 0.3061. According to the decision norm by Walpole (1995), reject  $H_0$  if  $r_s > r_{table}$ , and accept  $H_0$  if  $r_s \leq r_{table}$ ,  $r_s = 0.129$   $r_{table} = 0.3061$ . As  $r_s \leq r_{table}$ , then  $H_0$  is accepted. Thus, there is no correlation between Task Commitment with the students' EFL learning achievement. However, referring to the interpretation table  $r$ , the absence of this relationship is still very low, namely 0.129. It

means that there is almost a correlation between Task Commitment and the students' EFL learning achievement.

## DISCUSSION

This study deals with variables that have occurred and thus does not need to treat the variables studied, a so-called *ex post facto* study. The main purpose of this study is to find out whether there is a correlation between the facts that occurred when studied and the causal factors or events of the past. There are two main types of data in this research. The first is the students' learning results derived from the summative test and other regular tasks, such as weekly tasks at the end of the meeting. And the second is students' task commitment data derived from the questionnaire. The questionnaire was composed by referring to the characteristics of task commitment based on the dimensions of task commitment as stated by Kiran & Murthy (2017), including endurance, strong ego fascination and perseverance, self-confidence, interest and enthusiasm, self-determination, hard work, and dedicated practice.

As explained previously, students' learning achievement is influenced by internal and external factors. Internal factors are related to the causes or impulses that arise from within the student, especially the abilities they have, including psychological motivation factors where there is a commitment to the task (task commitment), which is one of the factors that affect students' learning achievement, in this case, the students' EFL learning achievement. To come to the point, this study focuses only on the internal factors stimulating the students' task commitment correlated with the students' EFL learning achievement.

In accordance with the learning achievement test data obtained, the highest test score was 72 from a maximum score of 99. The lowest test score was 18 from a minimum test score of 0. Based on the available data from 30 students, the students who got high scores were 6.67%, those who got average test scores were 73.33%, and the students who got low test scores were 20%. Therefore, the second-semester students of the PBSI Study Program tend to get average test scores.

From the data obtained, the questionnaire data and test data (achievement) were not positively or directly proportional. According to the classification above, eight students who scored high on the Task Commitment questionnaire did not get high scores, but 100% had average scores on the test. Of nineteen students classified as average in the Task Commitment questionnaire, not all had average scores, but 10.52% had high scores, and 26.31% were low on the test. Of three students who scored low on the Task Commitment questionnaire, not all

had low scores, but 66.67% had average scores, and 0% had high scores on the test. And vice versa, two students who were classified as high scores on the test did not have high scores in the Task Commitment questionnaire, which occurred, according to the data obtained; 100% of students had average scores in the questionnaire. Of twenty-two students classified as having average scores on the test, not all got average scores in the questionnaire, but 36.36% had high scores, and 9.09% had low scores. And from six students belonging to low scores on the test, not all of them had low scores on the questionnaire, but 83.33% had average scores, and 0% had high scores in the questionnaire.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and discussion, it can be concluded that there is no relationship between Task Commitment and the students' EFL learning achievement in the second-semester students of the PBSI Study Program. However, referring to the interpretation table  $r$ , the absence of this relationship is still very low, namely 0.129. It can be said that there is almost a correlation between Task Commitment and the students' EFL learning achievement.

It is advised that the students maintain and increase their commitment to the tasks given by the teacher (Task Commitment). At the same time, the lecturer of *Bahasa Inggris Profesi* of the second-semester students of the PBSI Study Program is supposed to use the students' task commitment as a tool to find out the students' learning activities at home. Researchers interested in conducting similar research should be able to make better preparations, namely those related to factors that can affect research results, as stated in the discussion of research results that have not been anticipated in this study.

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