

## **A Study of Students' Engagement and Students' Speaking Skill: A Correlational Research**

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### **Abstract**

Students' active engagement institutes the fundamental of the procedure of learning and teaching in the student-centered classroom. The objective of this research aimed to investigate the correlation between students' engagement and speaking skills in the eighth grade of SMP Negeri 18 Krui in the Academic Year of 2021/2022. The researchers used a quantitative approach as the research design in this study. The eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 18 Krui were the population in this research, consisting of 26 students as a research sample. The researchers employed a purposive sampling technique for determining the research sample. The data on students' engagement was collected using the questionnaire, which was adapted from (Appleton et al., 2006), and the data on speaking skills were collected using the speaking test. In addition, the researchers employed a speaking test and questionnaire to collect the data. After collecting the data of the research, the researchers found that there were 20 students (77%) who had a high engagement in a learning activity with a mean score of 69.61, and there were 24 students (94%) who had fairly good in speaking skill with mean score 64.04. The findings also showed that the coefficient correlation was 0.680. Therefore, the correlation was quite high, and the researchers concluded that there was a correlation between Students' Engagement and Speaking Skills at the Eight Grade of SMPN 18 Krui in the Academic Year of 2021/2022".

**Keywords:** Correlational Research, Speaking Ability, Students' Engagement

### **Introduction**

The students can comprehend the learning material when they want to learn something new about language learning, such as a foreign language. They decided to learn a new language because there are many benefits of learning English as a foreign language (Brown, 2004). Learning a new or foreign language follows the same steps as learning our mother tongue. Listening is the first step, followed by speaking, reading, and writing. Language skills are classified into two types: language input and language output skills. Language input is "listening and reading" and language output is "speaking and writing" (Murcia, 2001).

Students acquire four fundamental skills "listening, speaking, reading, and writing" (Tiana & Rahayuningsih, 2022). If students are to master English, they must master these four competencies. Teachers come up with a variety of instructional strategies and tactics to help students enhance their English skills. Speaking is one of the four talents students can utilize in their daily activities to communicate and comprehend one another (Baron & Baron, 2020). Speaking is also vital for communication since it is an interactive process in which data is created, received, and analyzed. For example, the teacher and students can converse to ensure everyone is on the same page (Y. C. Wang, 2020).

Teachers must mentor their students in effective speaking techniques to speak English fluently and foster learning environments. For many students learning a second or foreign language, the ability to communicate effectively in English is a primary major. Moreover,

students commonly assess their language learning progress and the worth of their English course in terms of how much their language talents have improved. The teachers, the students, and the material all play a role in a good lesson (Savignon, 2017). The students can communicate with others worldwide and get information from many sources if they have excellent speaking ability.

Student engagement is an evaluation of a student's level engage with the teacher and friends in class toward activities (Shah & Barkas, 2018). Student engagement in education refers to the level of concern, inquisitive, fervor, encouragement, and hobby that students show in the process of learning or learning, as well as the level of motivation that they must learn and the progress they have made in their education (Northey et al., 2015). Student engagement, in general, is investigated to improve that learning when students are inquisitive, fervor, or encouraged (Moreira et al., 2018). The students are believed to have good learning outcomes if they have a high-level engagement in the learning environment.

According to Delfino (2019), behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement are the three characteristics of student engagement. Scholar participation in academic and extracurricular sports, with a focal point on instructional, social, and extracurricular sports, is known as behavioral engagement. Students' cognitive engagement refers to their attentiveness and motivation to master challenging abilities, focusing on their level of involvement in learning. In contrast, emotional engagement refers to the sentiments they experience and demonstrate in the course. Confusion and fear are common, as are exhilaration, expectation, and apathy.

In addition, there were many reasons why EFL students had difficulty communicating in English. The student, the teaching approach, the curriculum, and the student's history may influence a student's learning performance (Shah & Barkas, 2018). Students' engagement in environmental class in various academic and lecturing activities common to or linked with the school is one of the most important predictors of successful learning. Students also aspire to achieve learning goals. For this reason, students need to increase their participation to achieve academic success (student training) in emotional, behavioral, and cognitive aspects. Attracting students is the time and effort that is being made for learning activities based on the desired results of the school to encourage students to participate in these activities (Chi & Wylie, 2014).

According to Dwivedi et al. (2019), student engagement behavior is necessary for students because this behavior can make students pay attention to the teacher. Another researcher also stated that students with high student engagement always try to be active and diligent in teaching and learning activities both inside and outside the classroom (Soffer & Cohen, 2019). Therefore, the students can develop their English ability if they actively participate in the teaching-learning activity. The teacher can promote students' engagement by creating an appropriate learning activity.

Moreover, there was some previous research that investigated students' engagement and students' learning outcomes. For example, there was a correlation between students' cognitive engagement and learning outcomes (Chi & Wylie, 2014). Another research illustrated that student engagement is one of the critical factors for the succession of blended learning (Dwivedi et al., 2019). Nkomo et al. (2021) investigated a relationship between students' engagement and the use of digital technologies in the learning environment. In contrast, the previous research above did not investigate the correlation between students' engagement and speaking ability. Therefore, this research was conducted to identify the correlation between students' engagement and speaking skills in the eighth grade of SMP Negeri 18 Krui in the academic year of 2021/2022.

### Method

In this study, the researcher used a quantitative research method. This study aimed to investigate the correlation of two variables in this research. Two variables above consisted of student engagement as the dependent variable (X) and speaking skill as the independent variable (Y).



(X) = Students' engagement (Dependent variable)

(Y) = Speaking skill (Independent variable)

There were 103 students in the eighth grade at SMP Negeri 18 Krui. A purposive sampling technique chose the 26 students as the research sample. Student engagement data was collected using a questionnaire adapted from Appleton et al. (2006). Furthermore, the researchers employed a speaking test to collect students' speaking ability data. Researchers used Pearson's bivariate correlation equation and SPSS version 25 programming tools to calculate the validity and reliability of the means of student engagement. The speaking test was validated at the preference of the experts. The researcher received 35 useful items. Items were valid and reliable if the  $r$  count  $>$   $r$  table is valid at a significance value of 5%. According to the results, all items  $>$   $r$  table = 0.632. Therefore, it was reliable because the  $\alpha$  value was higher than the  $r$  table (0.632). After calculation, the researchers found the value of questionnaire number 1-35  $r_{xy} = 0.980$  and  $r$  table 5% = 0.632.

### Findings and Discussion

This study investigated how students' engagement (The x variable) and speaking skills (Y dependent variable) were connected. Data analysis was conducted to investigate the frequency, percentage, mean, and classification of correlation levels. The descriptive calculating data of the correlation between students' engagement (X) and speaking skill (Y) was obtained:

Table 1. The Correlation Data of Students' Engagement (X) and Speaking Skill (Y)

Students	X (Student Engagement)	Y (Speaking Skill)	$X^2$	$Y^2$	X.Y
$\Sigma$ N:26	1810	1619	130.346	108.025	116.245

Based on table 1 above, the total number of student engagement scores was 1.810, and the total number of speaking test scores was 1619. Therefore, the results of  $X^2$  were the square of the student engagement score (130.346) and the results of  $Y^2$  the square of the speaking test score (108.025). Moreover, the result of the X.Y was the multiplication between the student engagement scores and the speaking test (116.245).

Table 2. The Distribution of the Frequency and Percentage of Students' Speaking Ability

Score	Classification	Frequencies	Percentage
90-100	Very good	0	0%
80-89	Good	1	3%
60-79	Fairly Good	24	94%
≤59	Very poor	1	3%
Total		26	100%

Table 2 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of students' speaking scores of SMP Negeri 18 Krui. The findings show a classification score of 90-100 (Very Good), 80-89 (Good), 60-79 (Fairly good), and 59 (Very Poor). The results illustrate the percentage of the students speaking skill scores from 26 students (100%). Therefore, there were 1 (3%) students who obtained Good criteria, 1 (3%) students had Very Poor criteria, but most of the students obtained Fairly Good (94%).

Table 3. The Mean Score of The Students' Engagement and Speaking skill

Statistic	Students' engagement	Speaking skill
Mean	69.61	64.04

The mean score of students' speaking skills could be identified based on table 3 above that the students' engagement was high and the students' speaking skill of SMP Negeri 18 Krui was high.

Table 4. The Distribution of the Frequency and Percentage of Students' Engagement Score

Score	Classification	Frequencies	Percentage
76-100	Very High	5	19%
51-75	High	20	77%
26-50	Low	0	0%
1-25	Very Low	1	4%
Total		26	100%

Table 4 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of students' engagement with SMP Negeri 18 Krui. Based on the data above, the findings show the classification score was 76-100 (Very High), 51-75 (High), 26-50 (Low), and 1-25 (Very Low). The classification was adapted from Ananda (2017). The results of the percentages of the student engagement from a total of 26 students (100%) indicate that there was 1 (4%) students obtained very low engagement, 5 (19%) students obtained very high, and most of the students 20 (77%) got high score in engagement. Based on the Pearson-Product Moment analysis result, the calculating correlation between students' engagement with the speaking skill was 0.680. In conclusion, there was a correlation between students' engagement and speaking skills based on the classification of level correlation.

The act of verbally uttering words is known as speaking. Talking is the act of communicating with others through speech. Making a speech is the same as making a request. The ability to communicate effectively is referred to as speaking ability. Students must learn

various critical skills to learn and teach English properly. Because speaking English is a challenging skill, students should practice it every day. Students must practice speaking in English regularly to develop their skills (Ihsan & Ihsan, 2016)

Students Engagement is typically regarded as a reliable indicator of learning and personal growth. Engagement is generally considered one of the best indicators of learning and personal growth. In their study, the students looked at the sway of weekly personages and assets related to weekly active learning, animated learning behaviors, and execution (Z. Wang et al., 2014). Furthermore, this study looked into whether students with a high level of engagement reacted differently to their speaking assignment than students with a low level of engagement. The high level engagement students have the ability to communicate English properly based on the finding of the result above. They can respond their classmate fluently because they already accustomed to learn and practice English inside and outside the classroom.

According to Tiana and Rahayuningsih (2022), highly engaged students are more likely to adhere to behavioral, cognitive, and emotional norms, such as attendance and engagement. They are less likely to engage in disruptive or negative behavior. In response to learning activities, they engage in pertinent discussions with classmates and teachers, seek to resolve task-related challenges and ask pertinent questions. Students who actively engage in classroom activities pay attention, especially in speaking, because they are used to actively participating in conversations by speaking passionately and confidently. On the other hand, students who do not actively participate and engage tend to be passive, more withdrawn, and insecure, which leads to problems.

Furthermore, teachers are also encouraged to discuss time management and motivational tactics with students and parents, especially during difficult periods of the semester, and to be specific and proactive in addressing problems and obstacles that may endanger students' engagement. This encouragement will make it easier for students to find answers to learning challenges or other problems, enabling them to stay engaged and, ultimately, finish all of their schoolwork (Lee et al., 2019).

High-engagement students are likelier to follow engagement norms, such as involvement and attendance, and are less likely to engage in disruptive or negative behavior. In response to learning activities, they engage in pertinent discussions with classmates and teachers, seek to resolve task-related challenges and ask pertinent questions. Last but not least, students who don't participate in active engagement and involvement tend to be less confident, more withdrawn, and inactive. As a result, they find it difficult to speak because they aren't used to engaging in conversation with their peers and teachers, making them more open to learning, mainly speaking (Lee et al., 2019).

Based on the statement above and the result of the research, there was a correlation between students' engagement and speaking skills in the eighth grade of SMP Negeri 18 Krui. Most of the students had relatively high speaking ability scores, and the students had a high engagement. Therefore, the students can speak well in English with high engagement, and they could develop their speaking ability. The student who had high engagement could have a good speaking ability. It can be concluded that engagement was an essential aspect of speaking. If the student had a good engagement, it could be suitable for his speaking ability.

### **Conclusion**

After analyzing the data, the researcher concluded the students of SMP Negeri 18 Krui had a high engagement of 20 (77%) with a mean score of 69.61, and relatively good speaking skills of 24 (94%), with and mean score of 64.04. Moreover, the coefficient

correlation( $r_{xy}$ ) was 0.680, and this correlation was relatively high. In conclusion, there was a correlation between students' engagement and speaking skills in the eighth grade of SMP negeri 18 Krui in the Academic Year of 2021/2022.

There are some limitations in this research. First, the number of samples is relatively small due to limitations of existing time. Second, samples were taken from one class only and also only using questionnaire. Therefore, the suggestion and recommendation for the future research is the next researchers can use bigger the number of samples so that the results obtained are more than representative of the population.

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