# THE CORRELATION BETWEEN RELIGIOUS PRACTICE, ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND ENGLISH COMPETENCE OF THE ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS FACULTY STUDENTS OF MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY PALEMBANG

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**Abstract**

English competence is always needed in this globalization era. TOEFL test is always used due to measure students' ability in understanding English spoken and written. Grade Point Average (GPA) and religious performance practice are suspected whether or not influence students English language competence. In this paper, religious practice and Grade Point Average (GPA) correlated to English language competence at the economic and business students' faculty of Muhammadiyah University Palembang. Recent research demonstrated a positive correlation between religious practice and academic performance to English competence. Students' religiosity was measured using Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS) ready-made questionnaire, while academic performance was measured by Grade Point Average (GPA) and TOEFL test was used to determine students' English language competence. The statistical analysis revealed that there was no significant correlation between students' religious performance to English language competence. Meanwhile, Grade Point Average showed positive correlation to English language competence.

**Keywords:** Religious performance, Academic Performance, Grade Point Average (GPA), English Competency

## Introduction

English is an International language in other words English is the first and often only language used of the world. As Nurdiansyah 2016, as cited in Lauder, 2008, p. 10 stated that there are around 1.500 million speakers of English Worldwide, including around 329 million L1 speakers, 430 million L2 speakers, and about 750 million speakers of English as a foreign language. Besides, Otaala and Platner (2013) stated that English is the medium of instruction for higher education, means that students should be able to master English in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Jaya (2016) said that the purpose of education is to create the environment that enables students to enlarge their talents and skills completely, therefore they are able to actualize themselves. In Indonesia English is also as a foreign language. Indonesian students still have limited ability to practice English in spoken or written. Some issues showed that Indonesians students' weaknesses is to practice English with a very limited vocabulary, make frequently grammar errors, disable to elaborate ideas and opinion in speaking English. It is described that most of Indonesian students are not ready yet to face on the globalization era.

PISA (2009) categorized Indonesian students' learning score below the average score set by the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) which ranked 57th out of 65 countries. Indonesian was in the 61st on mathematics and 60th on science. Furthermore, based on the Human Development Index of UNESCO in 2011, Indonesian's rank was on the 124th out of 187 countries which was below other ASEAN countries such as Singapore (26th), Brunei Darusalam

(33th), Malaysia (61st), Thailand (103rd) and Philipines (112nd).

There are many factors which can influence students' English achievement that usually comes from external and internal factor. External factors are also needed, such as parents' support, economic status, and classroom environment. Besides, internal factor is the factor which comes from internally such as self motivation, religion and intelligence quotient. Both factors are suspected the students' understanding of English language. Everyone believes that language is principle. As the Islamic belief system are recorded in a canon of writing, and reading, reciting, studying, and commenting on the authoritative texts part of religious behavior (Dazdarevic, 2012). Last year more biblical and the materials of theological are published in English. Most students are quietly challenging to read theological publications in English written. Generally English language is always used in every perspective aspect.

Tyas (2014) also stated that "education is conscious and deliberate efforts to create a teaching and learning process atmosphere. Therefore, student can actively develop their own potentials used to have spiritual power of religion, self-control, intelligences, a noble character and skills which are necessary for themselves, society, nation and state." The researcher found a study done by Jaya (2016) who did his research by involving students of English study program, faculty of teacher training and education, Sriwiaya University as the sample proved that there is no positive significant correlation between students' religiosity and English competency. Meanwhile, Dazdarevic (2012) stated that English language competence is also improved by the understanding of the religiosity which is tent to be written in English.

Students' ability in understanding English spoken and written is also connected to students' academic performance or it is called grade point average (GPA). It shows the overall students' academic performance where it considers the average of all examinations' grade for all semester during the tenure in university. GPAs can be used by potential employers or educational institutions to assess and compare applicant. Since the number of students who graduated from university has increased in developed country, there is should a competition among the graduates in a white collar market. Therefore, cumulative grade point average (GPA) is used due to measure students' qualification of academic performance. Qualified student who achieve high academic achievement are always recruited as employer mainly.

Some researchers investigated that "the relationship between language proficiency and academic performance among different groups of international students in English speaking institutions by utilizing standardized test scores such as TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) and IELTS (International English Language Testing System)." Yogendra (2017) as cited in Hill, Storch, and Lynch (1999), Huong (2001), Johnson (1988), Kerstijens and Nery (2000), Krausz, A Schiff, and Hise (2005), The-Yuan and Weinstein (1991), light, Xu, and Mossop (1987), staynoff (1997), and Woodrow (2006).

Johnson (1988) studied that there was moderately low correlation between overall TOEFL scores and GPAs. He stated that students with TOEFL score lower than 500 had significantly lower grades compared to those with TOEFL scores of 500 or above. Meanwhile, Light, et al (1987) claimed that that there was a statistically significant correlation between TOEFL scores and grade point

average (GPA) among 376 international graduate students.

Based on the other preview researchers finding, this article that is also researched entitled "the correlation between religiosity, academic performance, and English competence of the economic and business faculty students of Muhammadiyah University Palembang" in order to know whether or not there is significant correlation between students' religiosity to English language competence and students' scores of grade point average (GPA) to English language competence. Besides, the objective of this study was to find out the religiosity level of the economic and business Faculty Students of Muhammadiyah University Palembang which are tested by ready-made questionnaire.

**Methodology**
*Research Approach*
This study used descriptive with the qualitative research. Technique data collection used was ready-made questionnaire due to measure students' personality level of religiosity in economic and business faculty of Muhammadiyah University Palembang. Religiosity questionnaire consists of fifteen statements which are also included five dimensions perspective of intellectual, ideology, public practice, private practice, and religious experience. The Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS) as the frequencies of the item concerning prayer, mediation, and religious service that consist of five score level (Hubes, S., Huber, O, 2012). Likert scales response are very often (5), often (4), occasionally (3), rarely (2), and never (1). Besides, ready-made questionnaire used is TOEFL prediction due to know students' English language competencies. The researcher asked student to complete their last semester TOEFL test score which are divide into

three parts score such as; listening, structure, and reading comprehension. Then, sample students are asked to bring their last semester score f their grade point average (GPA).

*Data Collection*
Applying convenience sampling, the questionnaire of religiosity level is distributed among two classes which the total number of the sample was 60 students of economic and business faculty of Muhammadiyah University. The sample participation was taken of the second semester included male and female students which are Muslim people. Furthermore, students are asked to collect their last score of TOEFL test and grade point average (GPA) in their first semester.

*Measurement*
Through a questionnaire of The Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS), all participants as the sample are asked to complete their religiosity in perspective of personal physiology. Self-rating scale ranging from several times a day means the score is 5, once a day means the score is 4, more than once a week means the score is 3, once a week means the score is 2, and few times a year or less often means the score is 1.

*Statistical Analysis*
Data were analyzed with SPSS (version 22), whereas, descriptive analysis, frequency analysis, correlation analysis and regression analysis are used. A correlation analysis was used to find out the relationship between students' religiosity, grade point average, and English language competence as the sample explained before. Furthermore, regression analysis used in order to know which factors is the closest relationship among variable (Creswell, 2005). Firstly, the data collected from CRS due to know

students' levels of religiosity. The researcher also categorized the level of English competence into five categories such as; advance, high intermediate, intermediate, high elementary, and elementary. After all each category of English competence and scale of religiosity are correlated due to know are there any correlation between religiosity and English competence of the English class of the economic and business faculty of Muhammadiyah University Palembang. Besides, students' grade point average is also correlated in order to know whether or not there is significant correlation.

**Result and Discussion**

This research showed some conclusions are, first the students' English language competence levels are mostly categorized in low intermediate. Second, students' level of religiosity was categorized in a very high. The third, the correlation coefficient stated that there is no significant correlation between students' religious performance and English language competence, and fourth is Grade Point Average significantly had positive correlation to English language competence. It can be concluded that students' level of religiosity did not effectively contribute students' English language competence. On the other hand, Grade Point Average significantly correlated to students' English language competence.

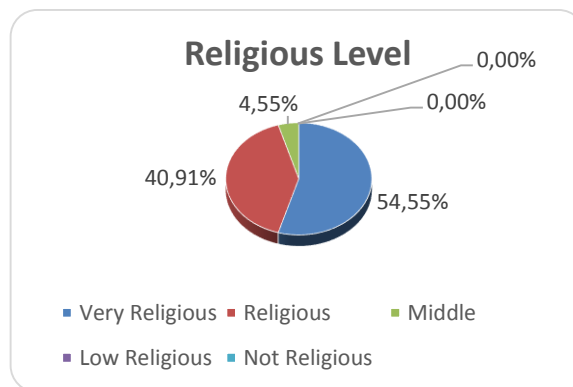1. Category of Religious Performance Practice



**Figure 1**

According to this pie chart (figure 1) there were 54.55% of students that was belonging to high level of very religious practice. The percentage also obtained that religious category students were in the second level in a number of 40.91%. Middle category students were in the percentage 4.55%. Fortunately most of students in the economic and business faculty of Muhammadiyah University Palembang were not in the category of low religious and not religious. From the percentage obtained that more than a half students were in the level of very religious, and the category of not religious was not dominant.

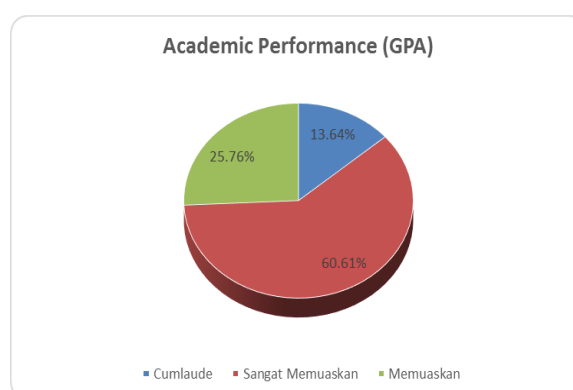2. Category of Academic Performance



**Figure 2**

There are three categories of academic performance which measured by Grade Point Average (GPA), the categories are cumlaude, very satisfied, and satisfied. The score of cumulative Grade Point Average called satisfied

category is from 2.00-2.75, very satisfied is from 2.76-3.50, and 3.51-4.00 is called cumulaude (University of Muhammadiyah). According to this figure, 60.61% students obtained category of very satisfied, 25.76% students obtained category of satisfied, and cumlaude category was in the percentage of 13.64%. This figure concluded that most of students' Grade Point Average (GPA) was in the category level of very satisfied. Besides, the sample measured also showed that there were only few students in the satisfied level and in other side; students that obtained cumulaude category were in the lowest percentage.

3. English Language Performance (TOEFL score)

From this figure concluded that the dominant TOEFL score obtained in the scale average between 350=>x>400 with the percentage 63.64%. Students that obtained score in the scale average between 400=>x>450 was in the percentage 30.30%. There was only few students with the percentage 3.03% that achieved score between 450=>x>500. In other words those students' of economic and business faculty of Muhammadiyah Palembang categorized as low intermediate English language competence.
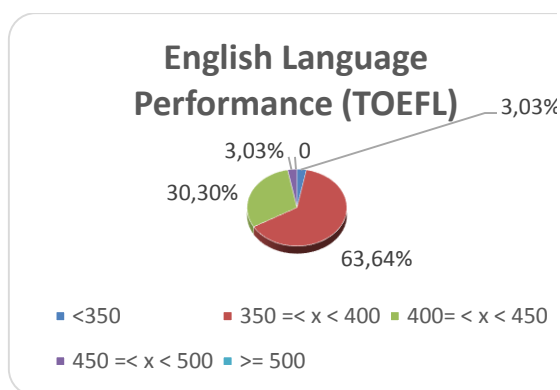
**Figure 3**

4. Correlation Analysis Finding

Correlation analysis was made to find out the relationship between religious practice performance and Grade Point Average (GPA) to English language competence has been shown in the table 1.

Table. 1

|  |  | Religious | TOEFL | GPA |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Religious | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .178 | .061 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .153 | .627 |
|  | N | 66 | 66 | 66 |
| TOEFL | Pearson Correlation | .178 | 1 | .412** |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .153 |  | .001 |
|  | N | 66 | 66 | 66 |
| GPA | Pearson Correlation | .061 | .412** | 1 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .627 | .001 |  |
|  | N | 66 | 66 | 66 |

The statistical analysis from table 1 explained that there was no positive correlation between students' religious practice performance to English language competence since sig. (2-tailed) score more than .005. Oppositely, Grade Point Average (GPA) showed positive significant correlation to English language competence. The percentage showed that sig. (2-taled) was lower than .005. As the graphic below showed that the higher score students' of Grade Point Average (GPA) achieved the higher TOEFL score that they achieved.
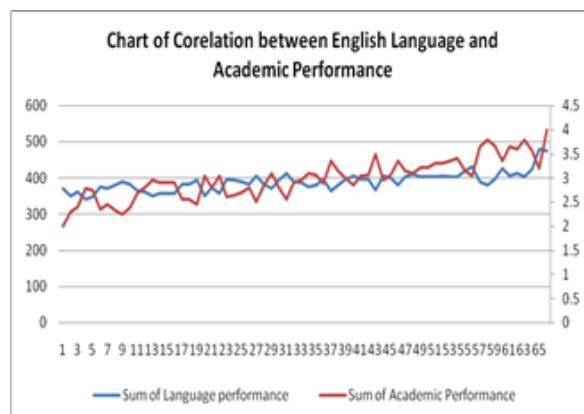
**Figure 4**

**Conclusions**

Based on the calculation presented that religious practice divided into five levels such as; very religious, religious, middle religious, low religious and not religious. The data obtained that most of students in economic and business were 54.55% in the level of very religious level category. Meanwhile, 40.91% students in the category of religious, and the rest 4.55% was in the category of middle. Religious practice did not contribute to the success of students' English language competence. It can be seen that the probability value between those variables measured were higher than .005. In other words, the finding reflected that the more religious students practice cannot be jugged the more ability of their English competence would be. It also may be determined that there still wide factors that can influence students' English language competence.

Another finding also showed that students cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) contributed to the students' English language competence. It can be seen that the probability value between those variables measured were lower than .005. Besides, the percentage also showed that most of students achieved very satisfied category with the percentage 60.61%. There were only 25.76% students in the category of satisfied and 13.64% students in the lowest category of cumulaude. \

The interpretation of this finding concluded that religiosity students cannot be predicted to have high or good English language competence. In other words, perspective of religious comes from heart of feeling from someone in practicing everything of goodness and English language competence is related to thinking, therefore there was no correlation of two both variables. Besides, this research was divided the

five levels of religiosity such as; very religious, religious, middle, low religious and not religious. The analysis data obtained that most of students were in the level of very religious because the sample data measured was a students from University of Muhammadiyah or student tent to have background of Islamic character, and the result of students' English language competence was in the category of very satisfied. Therefore there was no positive correlation between those variables. The analysis could be said correlated if students level of religious in the high category or very religious as founded before, the students' English language competence should be in the category of excellent or the score is more that 500 up. Furthermore, another researcher can correlate the sample from general university or the background is as state university. The assumption can be correlated if the sample data students' religious practice is in the category of usual. The data obtain can be correlate if the students are in the category of middle religious and their English competence is also in the satisfied level. Besides, further researcher can analyze the correlation between English language competences to others.

There are many factors that can influence students' English language competence such as; internal and external factors. The internal factors can be self motivation, self awareness, intelligent quotation, learning styles, learning motivation and many others. Beside the external factors are also can influence the success of students' English language competence such as; English environment, family background, school, and many others. Furthermore, both teachers and students are expected to increase the English language competence by creating the success of learning activity in

perspective of internal and external factors which are belongs to the students.

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