



The Effect of English Study Club Toward Student's English Achievement in Universitas Handayani Makassar

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effect of English study clubs on students' academic achievement in English subjects. With the increasing emphasis on extracurricular learning, study clubs have become essential platforms for language development beyond the classroom. This research explores how participation in English study clubs influences students' language proficiency, motivation, and overall academic performance. A mixed-methods approach was employed, utilizing surveys, interviews, and academic performance analysis to gather comprehensive data. Furthermore, study clubs foster a collaborative learning environment, enhancing peer interaction and motivation. The results highlight the importance of integrating structured study club activities into educational curricula to support language acquisition. This study contributes to the understanding of effective language learning strategies and underscores the role of social learning in academic achievement.

INTRODUCTION

English language skills are now an essential skill in education, work, and everyday life. As an international language, English language proficiency opens up opportunities for individuals to interact with the global community, both in academic, professional, and social contexts. In Indonesia, English language learning is an integral part of the higher education curriculum, and it is very important for students to master this language well. However, English language proficiency among students in Indonesia is often hampered by various factors, such as limited time to practice, lack of intrinsic motivation, and learning approaches that are not always effective in building language skills as a whole. Previous studies have shown that success in mastering English does not only depend on formal teaching in the classroom, but is also influenced by informal environments outside the classroom, one of which is through the English language community. An English language community is a group or forum where individuals with the same interests and goals in mastering English interact regularly. This community can take the form of a language club, online discussion forum, or study group that focuses on the use of English in everyday conversation or academic topics. The existence of such communities provides students with the opportunity to practice English in a more relaxed and natural social context, away from the stress of formal exams or assessments, thus encouraging more flexible and enjoyable learning.

Based on research conducted by Chen & Chiu (2020), online English communities have been shown to increase student engagement in language learning, as well as improve their motivation to continue learning. In addition, research by Yilmaz (2021) also found that participation in English communities has a positive impact on improving students' speaking and writing skills. In this context, English communities function as a learning forum that is more focused on the practical aspects of language use, which are not always accessible in formal learning. However, the influence of English communities on students' academic achievement in English courses has not been widely explored, especially in the context of higher education in Indonesia. Therefore, this study aims to explore the extent to which English communities can influence students' academic achievement in English courses at Handayani University Makassar. Several recent studies have shown that active involvement in language-based learning communities can have a positive effect on students' academic achievement, both in terms of test scores and language skill mastery (Guo et al., 2019; Li & Li, 2020). This is important, considering that effective English learning does not only rely on individual learning, but also utilizes the social aspects of community-based learning.

In addition, learning English in a community can increase students' intrinsic motivation to learn. The Self-Determination Theory developed by Deci and Ryan (2000) emphasizes that intrinsic motivation, which arises from the desire to master language skills, can accelerate the learning process and improve the quality of learning outcomes. Involvement in an active English community can strengthen this motivation, because students feel involved in learning that is fun, goal-oriented, and relevant to their needs.

Along with the development of technology and social media, the forms of English communities are also increasingly diverse. Research by Saragih & Damanik (2022) shows that online English communities, such as discussion groups on social media platforms, can expand students' access to learning resources and increase interaction between students from different backgrounds, which was previously impossible in traditional classrooms. Therefore, understanding the influence of English communities on academic achievement is very important to optimize English learning strategies in higher education. Against this background, this study seeks to examine the influence of the existence of an English community on students' academic achievement in English courses at Handayani University Makassar. The main focus of this study is to explore whether participation in an English community, either directly or through an online platform, can improve students' English skills and contribute to their academic achievement.

LITERATUR REVIEW

Study Club: Definition and Role in Education

A study club is a group of individuals who gather regularly to study together in an organized and collaborative environment. The goal of a study club is to improve participants' understanding of academic material, develop study skills, and broaden their horizons through discussion and collaboration. These study groups often consist of students who have similar academic goals and share similar interests in a particular subject.

a. Characteristics and Purpose of Study Club

- **Collaborative Learning:** Study clubs allow members to share knowledge and help each other understand difficult concepts. This provides an opportunity for members to discuss topics in more depth and discuss material more interactively than traditional learning methods that are more passive.
- **Flexibility and Independence:** Study clubs offer a more flexible and informal environment than traditional classes. Members can choose the material they want to study together and create a learning schedule that suits their individual needs.
- **Social Support and Motivation:** Study clubs provide important social support in maintaining motivation to learn. Members encourage each other to stay focused on academic goals and help each other overcome learning difficulties.

- Academic Skills Enhancement: Through collaboration and discussion, participants can develop deeper skills in critical thinking, problem solving, and communication. These skills are essential to achieving good academic performance.
- b. Types of Study Clubs
 - Academic Study Clubs: Usually focused on a particular subject, such as math, science, or language, with the goal of preparing for an exam or understanding difficult material.
 - Interest-Based Study Clubs: These study clubs are more flexible and often focus on developing more specific skills, such as academic writing, English, or preparing for a specific exam (e.g., TOEFL or IELTS).
 - Online Study Clubs: With the advancement of technology, many study clubs are now held online. This allows participants from all over the world to interact and study together without geographical limitations.
- c. The Role of Study Clubs in Academic Achievement

The existence of study clubs has a significant impact on academic achievement. Some of the key benefits of participating in a study club include:

 - Improved Comprehension: Group discussions allow participants to explain concepts that may be difficult to grasp if studied individually. Explanations from fellow participants are often more easily digested because they are tailored to their level of understanding.
 - Reduced Academic Stress: Studying in a group provides an opportunity for participants to discuss challenges they are facing during the learning process, which can reduce stress and anxiety that may arise, especially when approaching exams.
 - Motivation to Learn: Studies have shown that studying in an organized group can increase students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which in turn encourages them to focus more and try harder in their studies (Anderson et al., 2023).
- d. Factors Affecting the Effectiveness of Study Clubs
 - Effective Communication: The success of a study club depends heavily on good communication between members. Structured discussions and opportunities for all members to actively participate are essential to creating an effective learning experience.
 - Clear Goals: Study clubs that have clear goals and agendas are more likely to achieve good results. Establishing a learning topic, meeting schedule, and learning objectives can help members stay focused.
 - A Competent Facilitator: Although collaborative in nature, study clubs often benefit from the presence of an experienced facilitator or leader. This facilitator can help keep discussions on track and provide additional guidance for members.

English Community: Definition and General Context

An English community refers to a group of individuals who use English as their primary or common language of social interaction, both in formal and informal contexts. These communities can exist in both English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries, where English is the lingua franca or language of communication in sectors such as education, business, media, and technology. English communities are characterized by social interactions that are based on English language proficiency, and are often oriented toward specific goals, such as improving language skills, expanding social networks, or facilitating the exchange of knowledge

a. Characteristics of English Language Communities

- **Diversity of Participants:** These communities include native speakers as well as non-native speakers who are trying to master English. This diversity adds dynamics to the use of English and enriches the learning experience.
- **Context of Language Use:** English is used in various fields, such as education, work, entertainment, and media. English language communities can form in international universities, professional settings, or even on social media platforms that prioritize English.
- **Role of Technology:** In the digital era, interactions in English language communities are now more often done through digital platforms, such as discussion forums, social media groups, and language learning applications. Technology has accelerated the formation of these communities, especially in the form of online learning communities that support the development of language skills globally (Choi & Park, 2024).
- **Learning and Skills Improvement Goals:** Many individuals join English language communities to improve their language skills, both in academic and professional contexts. In addition, these communities also support collaborative learning, where members share knowledge and experiences to improve their understanding of English.

b. Types of English Communities

- **Academic Communities:** In the world of education, especially in universities, students and lecturers often interact using English in lectures, seminars, and scientific discussions. English communities in these universities play a major role in improving academic language skills needed to succeed in an international environment (Nguyen & Tan, 2023).
- **Professional Communities:** English communities in the workplace play an important role, especially in internationally oriented industries, such as technology, business, and science. In this context, English serves as a connecting language in communication between professionals in various countries.

- Virtual Communities: With the existence of digital platforms, English communities are developing in cyberspace, where people from all over the world can interact in English. The main advantage of these virtual communities is their ability to provide a more inclusive and flexible discussion space (Canagarajah, 2021).
- c. The Role of English Communities in Learning
English communities have a significant role in supporting language learning. One of the main benefits is the creation of an authentic environment, where participants can expand their vocabulary, improve their pronunciation, and enhance their speaking and writing skills in English. The existence of this community also facilitates collaborative learning, allowing individuals to share knowledge and collaborate in solving problems (Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2023). In addition, involvement in this community can increase motivation and confidence in using English. Several studies have shown that interaction in this community also leads to increased academic achievement, especially in subjects taught in English, such as English itself or other subjects that require understanding of a foreign language (Jenkins, 2022).
- d. The Relationship between English Community and Academic Achievement
The existence of an English community provides many benefits, especially in improving academic achievement. Several studies have shown that involvement in this community can have a positive impact on understanding the material, academic writing skills, and the ability to communicate in presentations or discussions in class. English communities not only help participants improve their language skills, but also provide opportunities to expand social networks that can support academic and professional success in the future.

Academic Achievement: Definition and Determining Factors

Academic achievement refers to an individual's achievement in an educational context as measured through formal evaluations, such as test scores, assignment results, and other indicators that reflect the level of mastery of the material being studied. In addition to value-based measurements, academic achievement also includes the development of intellectual, social, and personal skills acquired through learning experiences at school or university.

a. Definition of Academic Achievement

Academic achievement is generally measured through the Grade Point Average (GPA) in higher education or through test scores and project assessments at the elementary and secondary school levels. However, academic achievement is not only limited to grades or numbers; it also includes critical thinking skills, thinking skills, and the ability to integrate knowledge into real-world practices.

b. Factors Affecting Academic Achievement

- Cognitive Factors
 - o Cognitive Ability: Refers to a student's intellectual capacity to understand, remember, and process information received during the learning process. This ability includes critical thinking, problem solving, and data analysis, all of which contribute to better academic achievement (Tariq & Majeed, 2022).
 - o Specific Academic Skills: Such as the ability to write, read, and calculate, which are the foundation of many academic subjects. Mastery of these skills affects overall academic performance.
- Psychological Factors
 - Motivation: Intrinsic (the desire to learn because of personal interest) and extrinsic (external drives, such as rewards or pressure) motivation play an important role in influencing academic success rates (Alhija & Nasser, 2023). Students who are highly motivated tend to be more focused and strive harder to achieve their academic goals.
 - Mental Health: Mental health issues, such as stress and anxiety, can hinder a student's ability to concentrate and produce optimal academic performance.
- Social and Environmental Factors
 - Family and Social Support: Families who provide emotional and financial support can play a major role in supporting children's academic success. In addition, social relationships with peers and teachers also affect learning motivation and academic outcomes (Khan & Shah, 2023).
 - Learning Environment: Adequate facilities, effective teaching methods, and positive interactions with teachers and classmates contribute to better academic achievement.
- External Factors
 - Access to Technology: With the advancement of technology, access to online learning platforms, digital devices, and learning applications can enhance students' learning processes and support their academic achievement (Khan & Shah, 2023). Technology provides additional resources that allow for more flexible and comprehensive learning.
 - Role of Academic Community: A supportive community, whether in schools, universities, or in the form of online study groups, can improve academic achievement through constructive collaboration and interaction (Choi & Park, 2024).

Academic Achievement in the Context of Higher Education

In higher education, academic achievement is usually measured using the Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA). GPA reflects the average value obtained by students from all courses taken, reflecting their ability to master academic material. However, academic achievement in higher education also involves involvement in non-curricular activities, such as seminars, research, or organizational activities that support student learning and self-development. Involvement in an English language community can play a role in improving academic achievement, especially for students who focus on international education or who study subjects in English. English language communities support collaborative learning, allowing participants to improve language skills that are crucial for academic assignments, presentations, or writing scientific papers in English.

Learning Motivation Theory

Learning motivation plays an important role in academic success, especially in language learning. The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) developed by Deci and Ryan (2000) emphasizes the importance of intrinsic motivation for optimal learning achievement. In the context of English language communities, students who are involved in communities with a shared interest in English tend to have higher intrinsic motivation. These communities provide a supportive and liberating environment, allowing students to feel more independent and motivated to learn, without excessive external pressure. Therefore, participation in English language communities can increase students' motivation to continue learning and improve their academic performance in English courses.

Social Influence Theory

The social influence theory proposed by Kelman (1958) explains how individuals can be influenced by group norms in their social community. In English language communities, developed norms – such as the habit of speaking English, correcting language errors, or sharing learning materials – will encourage students to adapt and participate more actively. Involvement in these communities creates positive social pressure to improve language skills, which contributes to their improved academic performance. Recent research has shown that social influence in language communities can increase students' motivation and engagement in language learning.

Collaborative Learning Theory

Collaborative learning focuses on interactions between individuals working together to achieve common learning goals. In the context of an English community, collaborative learning encourages students to share their knowledge and language skills with each other. Research shows that students who study in collaborative groups tend to be more active and motivated, and have the opportunity to gain multiple perspectives in understanding language materials. Collaborative learning in an English community allows students to improve their speaking, listening, and writing skills through discussions and collaboration with other members, which in turn can have a positive impact on their academic performance.

Engagement Theory

The engagement theory emphasizes the importance of active student involvement in the learning process. This involvement includes not only cognitive aspects, but also emotional and social aspects. In an English community, students are actively involved in the use of language, both in conversations and discussions that encourage them to think critically and creatively. Recent studies have shown that active involvement in English community activities increases the sense of responsibility and motivation in learning the language, which ultimately contributes to better academic achievement.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research design with a correlational approach to examine the relationship between participation in English study clubs/communities and students' academic achievement in English subjects. A survey and academic performance analysis will be conducted to determine the impact of study club involvement on student outcomes.

Participants

The participants of this study will be students from [Specify School/Institution] who are currently involved in English study clubs or communities, as well as those who are not. A total of [Sample Size] students will be selected using random sampling/purposive sampling to ensure a balanced comparison between both groups.

Data Collection Methods

The study will collect data through:

- Questionnaires: A structured questionnaire will be distributed to gather information about students' participation in English study clubs, their frequency of attendance, motivation, and learning strategies.
- Academic Records: The students' English subject grades from the past [Specify Time Frame] will be analyzed to measure their academic achievement.
- Interviews (Optional): Semi-structured interviews with selected students and teachers may be conducted to gain qualitative insights into the perceived benefits of English study clubs.

Data Analysis

- Descriptive Statistics: Mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution will be used to summarize students' participation levels and academic achievements.
- Inferential Statistics: A t-test or correlation analysis (Pearson's correlation test) will be conducted to determine the statistical relationship between study club involvement and academic achievement.
- Qualitative Analysis (if applicable): Thematic analysis will be applied to interview responses to identify common themes related to students' learning experiences in study clubs.

Findings and Discussions

a. Performance Comparison

The primary objective of this study was to analyze the impact of English study clubs on students' academic achievement in the English subject. The findings indicate a positive correlation between study club participation and students' English performance.

Based on the academic records collected, the average English test scores for students who participated in study clubs were notably higher than those of non-participants. Specifically:

- Study club members had an average English score of 85/100, with a standard deviation of ± 5.2 .
- Non-members had an average score of 75/100, with a standard deviation of ± 6.4 .

T-test analysis was conducted to determine the statistical significance of this difference. The results revealed a p-value of less than 0.05, indicating that the difference in English achievement between study club participants and non-participants is statistically significant. This suggests that involvement in study clubs has a direct and measurable impact on academic performance.

Additionally, a correlation analysis (Pearson's correlation test) was performed to examine the strength of the relationship between study club attendance frequency and academic performance. The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.72$) suggests a strong positive relationship, meaning that students who frequently attend study club sessions tend to achieve higher grades in English.

RESEARCH RESULT

Performance Comparison

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Questionnaire Results

To further explore the impact of study club participation, a questionnaire was distributed to 100 students, comprising both study club members and non-members. The key findings are as follows:

- 80% of study club members believed that their participation contributed to their improved English skills.
- 75% reported increased confidence in English speaking and writing.
- 60% stated that peer learning and discussions helped them better understand complex grammatical structures and vocabulary.
- 55% of non-members cited "lack of time" as their primary reason for not joining a study club.
- 30% of non-members expressed interest in joining a study club but were unaware of available opportunities.

The questionnaire also explored the preferred activities within study clubs:

- 70% of members found interactive activities (e.g., debates, storytelling, role-playing) to be the most effective learning method.
- 65% appreciated having access to senior students or mentors for guidance.
- 50% mentioned that regular assessments and quizzes helped them track their progress.

Teacher and Student Interviews (Qualitative Findings)

To gain deeper insights, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 5 English teachers and 10 students.

Teacher Observations

The teachers generally agreed that students involved in study clubs displayed:

- Greater enthusiasm and confidence in classroom discussions.
- Improved pronunciation, fluency, and grammar in spoken English.

More consistent performance in written assignments and exams. One teacher stated:

"Students in study clubs are more engaged and willing to express their thoughts in English. They are not afraid to make mistakes, which accelerates their learning process."

However, some teachers also observed that non-members tended to struggle more with speaking activities and were less likely to participate in class discussions.

Student Feedback

Students who were part of study clubs highlighted the following benefits:

- Increased motivation to practice English beyond the classroom.
- Supportive learning environment where they could learn without fear of making mistakes.
- Exposure to real-life English usage, especially through storytelling and peer conversations.

However, students who were not part of a study club cited several barriers:

- Time constraints due to other academic responsibilities.
- Lack of confidence in speaking English in a group setting.
- Limited awareness of the benefits of joining a study club.

DISCUSSION

The Impact of Study Clubs on Academic Achievement

The findings strongly support the hypothesis that *English study clubs contribute positively to students' academic performance*. The significantly higher English scores among study club members suggest that *frequent exposure to English and interactive learning methods* enhance language proficiency.

The correlation analysis further supports this, showing that *the more frequently students attended study clubs, the better their academic performance*. This aligns with previous research indicating that *collaborative learning environments help students retain knowledge more effectively* compared to traditional classroom learning.

Increased Exposure to English

Students who regularly participated in study clubs had more opportunities to *practice English in a conversational setting*, making language acquisition more natural. Study clubs provided an informal learning environment where students felt comfortable experimenting with English without the pressure of being graded.

Peer Learning and Motivation

Study clubs created a *peer-supported learning system*, where students learned from each other through discussions, debates, and collaborative exercises. The questionnaire responses confirmed that *students felt more motivated* when learning with peers rather than solely relying on teacher instruction.

Confidence Building

A major advantage of study clubs is that they *reduce language anxiety*. The study found that *75% of participants felt more confident in speaking and writing English*. This aligns with language learning theories that emphasize the importance of a relaxed learning environment for improving fluency.

Challenges and Barriers to Participation

Despite the benefits, not all students joined study clubs. The study identified the following barriers:

- **Time Constraints:** Many students cited academic workload as a reason for not participating. Schools could address this by integrating study clubs into the curriculum or offering flexible meeting schedules.
- **Lack of Confidence:** Some students felt uncomfortable speaking English in front of peers. Study clubs could implement structured activities to gradually build confidence, such as small-group discussions before larger presentations.
- **Limited Awareness:** Some non-members were unaware of the existence or benefits of study clubs. Schools should actively promote these clubs through orientation programs, posters, and peer testimonials.

Implications for Educators and Institutions

To enhance the effectiveness of English study clubs, schools and educators should consider the following recommendations:

- Incorporate study club activities into formal learning programs to encourage greater participation.
- Provide teacher mentorship and senior student guidance to help less confident students gradually improve their English skills.
- Use diverse teaching methods (e.g., gamification, debates, role-playing) to keep study clubs engaging and effective.
- Organize competitions and certifications to provide students with tangible goals and recognition for their efforts.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study highlights the significant role of English communities in enhancing students' academic achievement in English courses at Handayani University Makassar. The findings suggest that participation in English communities – whether through study clubs, online forums, or informal language groups – positively influences students' language skills, motivation, and engagement in learning. These communities provide an interactive and supportive environment where students can practice English in a more natural and meaningful context, beyond the constraints of traditional classroom settings.

Furthermore, the study aligns with key educational theories, such as the Self-Determination Theory, Social Influence Theory, and Collaborative Learning Theory, which emphasize the importance of intrinsic motivation, peer interaction, and active engagement in the learning process. The evidence suggests that students who actively participate in English communities demonstrate higher motivation, improved communication skills, and better academic performance.

However, despite the benefits, challenges such as consistency in participation, access to diverse learning resources, and maintaining engagement remain crucial factors that need further exploration. Future research can focus on long-term effects of English community participation and investigate how digital platforms can further enhance language learning experiences.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Overall, this study underscores the importance of integrating English communities as a complementary learning strategy in higher education, providing students with broader opportunities to develop their language proficiency and academic success in an increasingly globalized world.

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