Looking at the Link between Parents' Educational Backgrounds and Students' English Achievement

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Abstract

This study investigated the link between parents' educational background and students' English achievement at one senior high school in Palembang, South Sumatra, Indonesia. One hundred and eight senior high school students were involved in this study. Data were collected through a parents' educational background questionnaire and an English test. Descriptive statistics, Pearson product moment correlation, and regression analysis were employed to analyze the data. The results of the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient revealed that parents' educational background significantly correlated with the students' English achievement. Additionally, the results of the linear regression analysis indicated that there was a correlation between parents' educational background and students' English achievement. Although the contribution was small and there were other factors that contribute to the students' academic achievement, parents' educational background is important in supporting their children's English achievement.

Keywords

Parents' educational background, students' English achievement

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Introduction

Education is essential for the development of society. The more educated the people of a society are, the more civilized and well-disciplined the society might be. Education is also a primary need in this era of globalization (Haryanto, Mukminin, Murboyono, Muazza, & Ekatina, 2016; Mukminin, Rohayati, Putra, Habibi, & Aina, 2017). Education gives insight, grooms the personality, inculcates moral values, adds knowledge, and provides skills for people who will live in a very competitive society. In every field, highly qualified people are needed (Mukminin, Haryanto, Makmur, Failasofah, Fajaryani, Thabran, & Suyadi, 2013; Mukminin, 2012). However, there are several studies focusing on the problems of education in Indonesia including Mukminin, Lestari, Afifah, Rahmadani, and Hendra (2017) and Musyaddad (2013) who argue that there are some problems of education in Indonesia including curriculum, budget, quality, purpose of the education, national examination, and learning facility. These kinds of problems have influenced the quality of education both in national and in international levels. For example, although since 1995, Indonesia has taken part consistently in every round of Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), the results have not been satisfactory (Luschei, 2017),

> Of the 38 countries participating in 1999, Indonesia ranked the 34th and the 32nd in math and science respectively. In 2003, performance in math increased to 411, while the science score slipped to 420. The reverse occurred in 2007, with math performance decreased to 397 and science improved to 427. Scores in both math and science fell in 2011 to 386 and 406 respectively. In 2015, math performance increased to 397, while science performance decreased to 397. (p. 12)

The results of Indonesian's participation in TIMSS have implied that the quality of education should become the responsibility of all parties including government, school, and family. Family is one of the important factors in supporting the education of their children. As a unit of society, the family is obviously a major socializing agent, so that it is important in determining the child's motivation to achieve success (Muola, 2010). Mainly, family has responsibility for socializing children for making them productive members of society. The more the parents are involved in the process of imparting education to their children, the more the children might excel in their academic career and to become productive and responsible members of society (Arib, 2017; Rafiq, Fatima, Sohail, Saleem, & Khan, 2013). Additionally, parents' personal educational backgrounds and economic backgrounds have a significant effect on their children's education. It means that parents' educational background plays an important part in their children's education. The education received by the children depends very much on the education that their parents have (Arib, 2017; Gratz, Nation, Schools, & Kurth-Schai, 2006).

In relation to education, English is one of the compulsory subjects in Indonesia's educational system. The internal and external factors, for example, tend to influence the learners' English achievement (Yaghoubi & Rasouli, 2015). Furthermore, data from Education First English Proficiency Index also showed that the average score of Indonesian's English proficiency was 52.74 and labeled as a moderate proficiency level. This score has placed Indonesia in the 28th rank out of 63 countries in terms of index that

compares the average English language ability in different countries (OECD, 2012). The data indicate that English proficiency in Indonesia is still lower than the other countries.

However, learning English is not an easy process, there are some problems or difficulties in learning English. In their study, Abrar, Mukminin, Habibi, Asyrafi, Makmur, and Marzulina, (2018) and Mukminin, Muazza, Hustarna, and Sari (2015) found that the problems in learning English such as teacher's competence, students lack of English foundation background, students' lack of confidence, inappropriate curriculum, unmotivated, encouraged and gained learning strategy, not practice speaking English with English native speakers, and class environment. Some researchers have previously explored parents' educational background and students' English achievement. For example, Apriana (2015) found that parents' educational background was significantly correlated to students' English achievement though the correlation was weak. Also, Karnegi (2010) found that there was a strong correlation between parents' educational background and students' English achievement. Schnabel, Alfeld, Eccles, Koller, and Baumert (2002) found that a significant positive correlation existed between parents' education and students' achievement. It can be concluded that the results of those studies are still inconsistent. Additionally, Arib (2017) found that there was no significant relationship between parents' occupation and educational background and students' achievement in learning English.

The findings of the previous studies on the link between parents' educational background and students' English achievement are still mixed. The current study investigated the correlation between parents' educational background and students' English achievement at one senior high school in Palembang, South Sumatra, Indonesia. Two research questions guided this study: (1) Is there any link between parents' educational background and students' English achievement of the twelfth grade students at one senior high school in Palembang, South Sumatra, Indonesia? and (2) Does parents' educational background influence students' English achievement of the twelfth grade students at one senior high school in Palembang?

Literature Review

Parents' educational background refers to "parents' highest education" that means the highest level of education attained by parents. International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) from UNESCO (2011) has grouped nine levels of education. They are early childhood education, primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education, post-secondary non-tertiary education, short-cycle tertiary education, bachelors or equivalent level, master's or equivalent level, doctoral or equivalent level. Parents with higher levels of education are also more likely to believe strongly in their abilities to help their children learn (Selvam, 2013). Highly educated parents have greater success in providing their children with the cognitive and language skills that contribute to early success in school. Selvam (2013) also adds the relationship of parents' education to their children's achievement motivation in academic area is meditated by parents' beliefs and behaviors are likely to be influenced by their educational experiences and how these parental beliefs and behaviors actually influence children's achievement motivation in academic area. Additionally, family characteristics such as parental income, education, and family size seem to be connected to students' achievement (Levin, 1994; Hanushek, 2007).

In terms of student achievement, Algarabel and Dasi (2001) state that achievement is the competence of a person in relation to a domain of knowledge. Additionally, Sukmadinata (2007) stated that achievement of students could be seen from mastering the subject that they have taken up. Achievement refers to the good result from learning. In addition, English achievement has a strong relation with the academic achievement. English achievement means the competency that is achieved by the students in English subject. Being well-educated parents give benefits for their children. Intosh (2008) stated that parents could serve as good role models by being conscientious, ambitious, and methodical, all of which will contribute to make their children more successful at school. Moreover, educated parents can provide their children with guidance to get good information at home. Ghuntla, Mehta, Gokhale, and Berhanun (2012) found that educated parents had more attention to the facility used by their children related to their study, especially in learning English. Students from good socio-economical and high parental educational background have good chances for getting admission in good professional courses. Parental education level also determines the facilities and the cultural level of the home. Udoh and Sanni (2012) claim that educated parents often get a better job. Thus, with their income, they are better prepared to give educational materials for their children. In other words, this suggests that students manage to support their learning with good educational materials because they have parents who can provide them with educational supporting materials that they need including in learning English.

Methodology

Research design and participants

In this study, we used a correlational approach to find out the link between parents' educational background and students' English achievement. The first procedure was we identified the parents' educational background by using educational background questionnaire and the second procedure was we gave the students test of TOEFL. The next step was we analyzed the link between the two variables through SPSS based on the results of the educational background questionnaire and TOEFL test. One hundred and eight senior high school students were involved in this study. Data were collected through a parents' educational background questionnaire and an English test.

Data collection and analysis

In this study, we used questionnaire and a test as the instruments to gather the data concerning the link between parents' educational background and students' English achievement of the twelfth grade students at one senior high school in Palembang, South Sumatra, Indonesia. To obtain the information about parents' educational background, we used the questionnaire from UNESCO (2011) which was adapted by Apriana (2015). The questionnaire consisted of parents' educational background which was related to parents' highest education. The questionnaire asks about the level education of father and mother of the students. In scoring parents' education background, the students ticked one of their parents' educational background levels including early childhood education, primary

education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education, post-secondary non-tertiary education, short-cycle tertiary education, bachelor's or equivalent level, master's or equivalent level, and doctoral or equivalent level. The score was from 0 until 8. The highest level education is, the highest score is. A higher score indicates a higher degree of educational background level. To obtain the students' English achievement, we used TOEFL Junior test. The purpose of the TOEFL junior test is to provide an objective measure of the degree to which students in the target population have attained proficiency in the academic and social English language skills. The designers of the TOEFL junior standard test assert that the TOEFL junior standard test is an English-proficiency test that is not based on or limited to any specific curriculum. There are three sections: listening, structure, and reading. Each section contains 42 four-choice questions with a total testing time of 1 hour 55 minutes. TOEFL junior test scores are determined by the number of questions that a student has answered correctly. There is no penalty for wrong answers. The category of the result of the test is grouped into very good, good, average poor, and very poor.

In terms of correlation and regression, it was necessary to know whether the data were normal for each variable and linear between two variables. In this study, normality test was used to find out whether the data of educational background questionnaire and TOEFL junior test were normal or not. We used I-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov in SPSS. If p-value is higher than .05, then it was normal and vice versa. In this study, linearity test was conducted to know whether the data of educational background questionnaire and TOEFL junior test were linear or not. If the score was higher than 0.05, the two variables were linear. Linearity test in SPSS was used to see if the data were linear or not. After getting the result of educational background questionnaire and TOEFL Junior test of students, we used Pearson – Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to find out whether or not there was a correlation between the variables. The interpretation of coefficient correlation was to find whenever Pearson r is higher than 0.34(>0.34). Regression Analysis was used to find out whether or not parents' educational background influenced students' English achievement. We identified the influenced of variables by using the result of R-Square. Simple regression analysis was used to measure two variables. The score of parents' educational background as independent variable and students' English achievement as dependent variable were calculated by SPSS.

Findings and Discussion

Parents' educational background and students' English achievement

One hundred and eight students participated in this study. The descriptive statistical analysis of parents' educational background for the participants indicated that the maximum score was 8, and the lowest score was 1. The mean score of parents' educational background for the participants was 5.05 and the standard deviation was 1.588. This mean score indicates that the level of parents' educational background of participants is Short-cycle Tertiary Education (D2/D3). It was revealed that from the questionnaire, the 9 levels of parents' educational background were all perceived by the students with different numbers. Primary education (SD) was as the least perceived level and bachelor's or equivalent level was as the most perceived for both father and mother educational background categories. The

descriptive statistical analysis of English achievement for the participants indicated that the maximum score was 79, and the minimum score was 10. The mean score of English achievement for the participants was 47.02 and the standard deviation was 17.739. This mean score indicates that the level of students' English achievement of participants is very poor. For each category, 13 students had a good English achievement. 19 students obtained an average English achievement. 5 students had a poor English achievement. 71 students had a very poor English achievement.

The results of normality test and linearity test

The data were interpreted as a normal one if p> 0.05. If p< 0.05, it means the data were not normal. Kolmogorov-smirnov was used to see the normality. The results of normality test indicated that the data from each variable were all normal and appropriate for data analysis with coefficients .290 for parents' educational background and .605 for English achievement. For linearity test, deviation of linearity was obtained. If probability is more than .05, the two variables are linear. The results showed that, the deviation from linearity betweenparents' educational background and students' English achievement was .769.

Correlation between parents' educational background and students' English achievement

Based on the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient, the result indicated that the pattern of correlation between parents' educational background and students' English achievement was positive. The correlation coefficient or the r-obtained (.420) was higher than r-table (.176). Then, the level of probability (p) significance (sig.2-tailed) was .000. It means that p (.000) was lower than .05. Thus, there was a significant correlation between parents' educational background and students' English achievement. The details are following:

Table 1. *Correlation between parents' educational background and students' English achievement*

		Parents' Educational Background	English Achievement
Parents' Educational Background	Pearson Correlation	1	.420[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	108	108
English Achievement	Pearson Correlation	.420[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	108	108

Influence of parents' educational background on students' English achievement

The results indicated that parents' educational background influenced students' English achievement significantly with t_{value} (4.763) was higher than t_{table}(1.982) with sig. value (.000) was lower than probability (.05). Therefore, there was a significant influence between parents' educational background toward students' English achievement. The details are following:

Table 2. *The regression analysis of parents' educational background and students' English achievement*

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	23.348	5.208		4.483	.000
	parents' educational background	4.691	.985	.420	4.763	.000
a. Dependent Variable: English Achievement						

In addition, to know the percentage of parents' educational background influence on the students' English achievement, R-Square was obtained. The result of the analysis revealed that the R Square (R^2) was .176. It means that parents' educational background led a significant effect in the level of 17.6% toward students' English achievement, and 82.4% was an unexplained factor value. The details are following:

Table 3. *Model summary*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.420[a]	.176	.169	16.175
a. Predictors: (Constant), parents' educational background				

Based on the result of Pearson product moment correlations, it was found that there was a positive and a significant correlation between parents' educational background and students' English achievement of the twelfth grade students (*r-* .420).This means that parents' educational background had a relation to students' English achievement. The level of correlation between parents' educational background and students' English achievement was fair. Parents with a higher level of education can stimulate their children in a good learning environment. They can transfer what they have in their children's cognitive development. For example, by having more discussion about the lesson, using rich vocabulary in the interaction of parents and children, and reading more books with the

children. This result is in agreement with Gratz's (2006) arguments that parents' educational background has a relationship with students' English achievement.

Furthermore, the more educated the parents are, the more they are able to pass along the education and help their children excel in school. Parents with little or no education may find it very difficult to understand or help their children in the area of education. For example, Selvam (2013) states that parents with a higher level of education are also more likely to believe strongly in their abilities to help their children learn. Highly educated parents have greater success in providing their children with the cognitive and language skills that contribute to early success in school. Also, Ghuntla, Mehta, Gokhale, and Berhanun (2012) argue that educated parents have more attention to the facility used by their children related to their study. Moreover, Karnegi (2010) argues that parents who have a high educational background and a good English competence generally prepare their children to face globalization with good English preparation. They will help learning English by doing many ways such as providing their children with facilities, or paying private tutors. Furthermore, the result of this present study is also in agreement with the findings of Apriana's (2015) study who found that parents' educational background was correlated to students' English achievement even though the correlation was not strong. In addition, Ardila, Rosselli, Matute, and Guajardo (2005) indicated that there was a significant correlation between the parents' educational level and the students' test performance.

Conclusion

The current study investigated the correlation between parents' educational background and students' English achievement at one senior high school in Palembang, South Sumatra, Indonesia. Based on the results of the present study, we found that parents' educational backgrounds were significantly correlated with students' English achievement with r- .420. The category of correlation was fair. Additionally, the linear regression analysis showed that parents' educational background (17.6%) significantly influenced the dependent variable, students' English achievement. In short, the total contribution of parents' educational background and students' English achievement showed a significant link although the contribution was small, suggesting that there were other factors that could contribute to their student's English achievement such as schools, teachers, friends, and environment.

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