

# **A Correlational Study on Teacher-Student Relationships and Students' Engagement in EFL Classes**

**SKRIPSI**



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**ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND HUMANITIES  
UNIVERSITAS KRISTEN DUTA WACANA YOGYAKARTA  
2024**

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presented as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of Sarjana Pendidikan (S.Pd)  
in English Language Education Department

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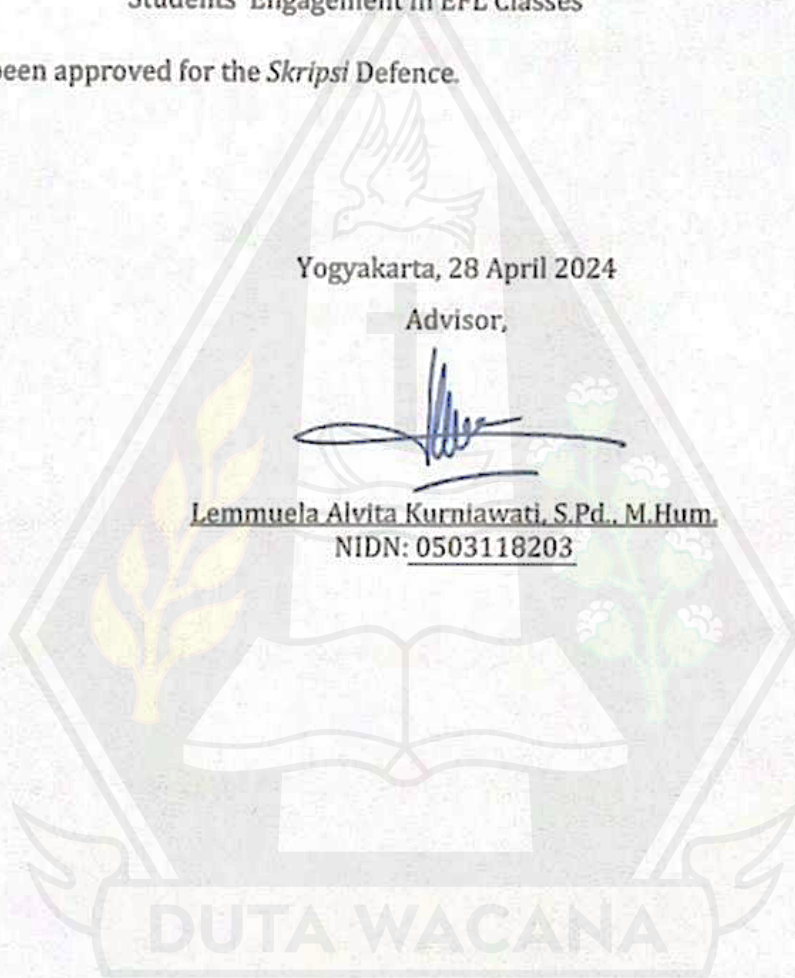
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**STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY**

I honestly declare that this *Skripsi* does not contain the work or parts of the work of other people, except those cited in the quotations and the references.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of four parts. Those are the research background, research questions, research objectives, and research benefits.

#### **A. Research Background**

In the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, the significance of Teacher-Student Relationships (TSR) and Student Engagement (SE) has garnered increasing attention. A crucial aspect of an excellent education is generally acknowledged to be good teacher-student relationships (Jederlund et al., 2023). TSR, characterized by mutual trust, guidance, and support between educators and learners, plays a pivotal role in shaping the teaching and learning experience (Syahabuddin et al., 2020). A positive TSR gives impact on various aspects of student learning, including motivation, academic performance, and self-efficacy (Wanders et al., 2020). Students who formed a deep emotional connection with their teachers tended to show higher levels of motivation, engagement in their studies, and better academic performance (Mahfud., 2023). On the other hand, when there is a negative relationship, the classroom procedure may act as a moderator in resolving the behavioral issues of the students. Put differently, kids who engage in inappropriate relationships with teachers and have issues in the classroom face challenges like dropping out, experiencing rejection, feeling unaccepted by their peers, and exhibiting more unsuitable behaviors (Gan, 2021).

Student engagement is one of the finest indicators of academic achievement and personal development (Abubakar et al., 2017). In general, the term "student engagement" refers to both a dedication to meeting learning objectives and active involvement in a range of academic activities (Ginting, 2021). Kourieos et al., (2013) found that an effective language teacher now considers his or her students' individual peculiarities, language anxiety, talents, and interests while creating learning environments, rather than using a dictatorial and authoritarian approach to teaching. Engaged students demonstrate effective collaboration and innovative application of knowledge, leading to enhanced language proficiency (Saeed et al., 2012). On the

other hands, disengagement occurs when students fail to recognize the importance of learning when education is not given priority, and when studying is seen merely as a means to attain a degree (Li, 2022). According to Xue (2023) Students who are disengaged act passively, merely following instructions without actively participating in discussions, interacting with English language materials, or responding to attempts to customize lessons to their interests, goals, and preferences. In conclusion, researching student engagement is crucial to enhancing awareness among both students and teachers regarding their level of involvement in the classroom.

Recognizing the vital role of TSR in promoting SE, this study aims to investigate the correlation between TSR and SE among General English (GE) level students in an English course in Indonesia. The importance of this study lies in addressing a gap in the existing literature, particularly within the Indonesian context. While studies abroad have explored the relationship between TSR and SE (Li et al., 2024; Mallik, 2023; Martin et al., 2019; Pérez-Salas et al., 2021; Zhang, 2023), these kinds of studies are still limited in Indonesia that focus on senior high school students as the participants (Mahfud & Ode Riniati, 2023b; Suryani, 2018; Yusriyah et al., 2021). By delving into this topic, the researcher aim to provide valuable insights into how TSR can catalyse SE and subsequently enhance language proficiency among EFL learners in Indonesia. However, the specific dynamics of TSR within the Indonesian EFL context warrant further investigation. By focusing on GE-level students in an English course, the researcher aim to shed light on the TSR in a setting where students interact with multiple teachers, potentially influencing their engagement levels differently (Martin et al., 2019). Research on TSR and SE primarily occurs in school settings. However, studies conducted within English courses involving students with diverse abilities remained inadequate.

Furthermore, the choice of quantitative method, specifically a survey-based approach, is grounded in the need for systematic data collection and analysis. A quantitative approach is employed to ascertain the presence and extent of a relationship among two or more variables among a specific group of people (Apuke, 2017). This aligns with the objectives of our study, which seeks to establish a correlation between TSR and SE among GE-level students in an English course. The rationale for selecting

survey method stems from its efficiency in gathering large-scale data from a diverse pool of participants. With those considerations, the use of questionnaires is considered appropriate because it is in accordance with the principle of the quantitative method that structured format facilitates standardized data collection, organization, and analysis (Kuphanga, 2024). By administering surveys to GE-level students, the researcher can obtain a comprehensive understanding of their perceptions of TSR and its impact on their engagement in EFL classes.

### **B. Research Questions**

By considering the rationale of the research stated above, the following research questions were addressed in the present study:

1. What is TSR level in EFL classes?
2. What is SE level in EFL classes?
3. What is the correlation between TSR and SE in EFL classes?

### **C. Research Objectives**

This study examines the impact of teacher-students' relationships on students' engagement in EFL. This study intends to:

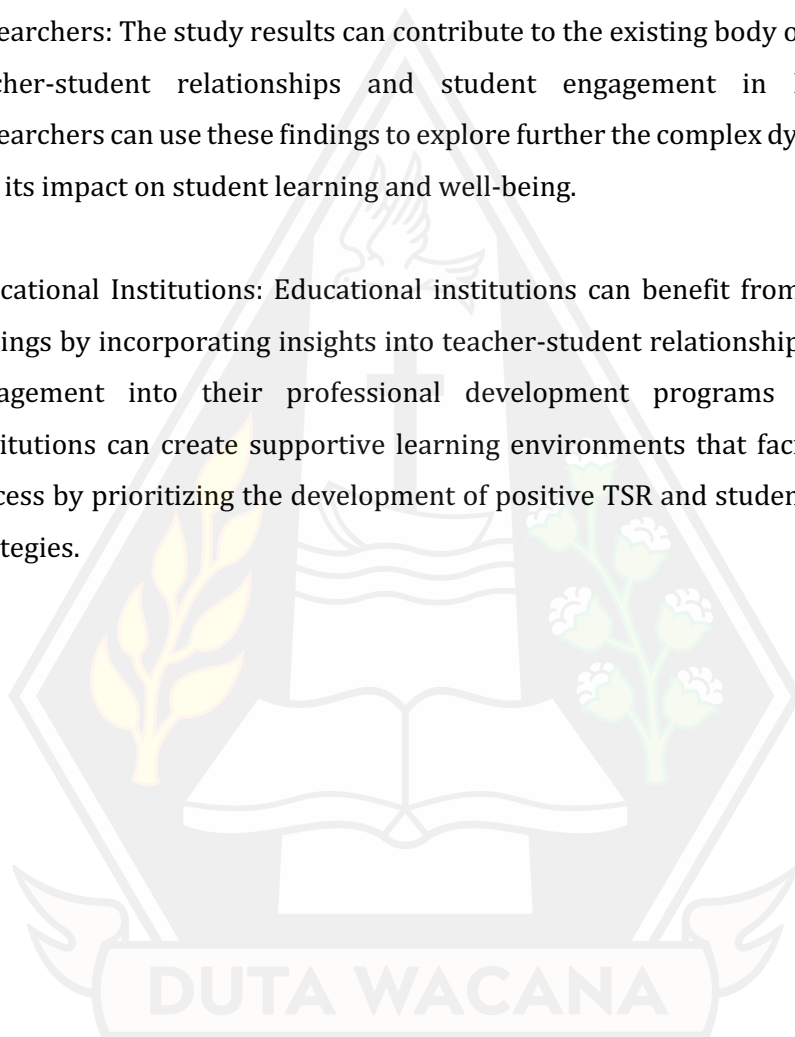
1. To explore what is TSR level in EFL classes.
2. To explore what is SE level in EFL classes.
3. To explore the correlation between TSR and SE in EFL classes.

### **D. Research Benefits**

Through this study, researchers expect the results will be helpful for several parties, such as students, teachers, researchers, and the institution:

1. Students: Students can benefit from understanding the correlation between their relationship with teachers and their engagement in the learning process. This knowledge can empower students to actively seek supportive relationships with their teachers, leading to increased motivation, participation, and ultimately, better learning outcomes.

2. Teachers: The research outcomes can offer valuable guidance to teachers on the significance of fostering positive relationships with their students in EFL classrooms. Teachers can gain a deeper understanding of how their interactions with students influence students' engagement levels, allowing them to adopt strategies to enhance TSR and promote student engagement.
3. Researchers: The study results can contribute to the existing body of literature on teacher-student relationships and student engagement in EFL settings. Researchers can use these findings to explore further the complex dynamics of TSR and its impact on student learning and well-being.
4. Educational Institutions: Educational institutions can benefit from the research findings by incorporating insights into teacher-student relationships and student engagement into their professional development programs for teachers. Institutions can create supportive learning environments that facilitate student success by prioritizing the development of positive TSR and student engagement strategies.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

This chapter consists of summary, implication and limitations, and further studies.

#### **A. Summary**

This study was conducted to investigate the three research questions: The TSR level in EFL classes, SE level in EFL classes, and the correlation between TSR and SE in EFL classes. First, related to TS R level, this study found that the GE students' TSR level was high, with 3.48 as the mean score. This study also found the level of SE was high, with 3.26 as the mean score. Moreover, this study found a high correlation between TSR and SE, suggesting a strong positive relationship between TSR and SE. This implies that when the TSR is positive and supportive, students are more likely to be engaged in their learning activities. Additionally, further analysis revealed that specific aspects of TSR, such as teacher supportiveness, communication, and rapport, were particularly influential in fostering student engagement. These findings emphasize the importance of fostering positive teacher-student relationships as a means to enhance SE and ultimately improve learning outcomes in EFL classrooms.

#### **B. Implication and Contribution**

There are some implications based on the findings of this study. First, EFL teachers need to be aware of the significant role of teacher support and student engagement in the language learning process. Understanding that a supportive classroom environment and actively engaged students contribute positively to learning outcomes can guide instructors in designing more effective instructional strategies. Recognizing the correlation between teacher support and student engagement underscores the importance of fostering positive teacher-student relationships. Teachers should strive to create an environment where students feel valued, respected, and supported, as this can enhance both their engagement and overall learning experience.

Furthermore, the findings suggest educational policymakers and curriculum developers can use the insights from this study to inform decisions related to EFL



curriculum design and implementation. Emphasizing the importance of incorporating elements that promote TSR and SE can lead to more engaging and effective language learning experiences for students. In terms of contribution, this study adds to the existing literature on TSR and SE in the context of EFL classes. By investigating the relationship between these two variables, this research provides valuable insights into factors that influence language learning outcomes. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics within the EFL classroom and can inform practices aimed at enhancing teaching and learning in this context.

### **C. Limitations and Further Studies**

While this study provides valuable insights, it is not without limitations. One limitation is the use of self-report measures to assess TSR and SE, which may be subject to bias. Future research could employ a combination of self-report measures and observational methods to provide a more comprehensive understanding of these constructs. This study focused on involving specific groups of EFL students in a particular context and population, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future studies could explore TSR and SE across different EFL settings and student populations to determine the extent to which the results hold in diverse contexts.

Furthermore, this study examined the correlation between teacher support and student engagement but did not explore potential mediating or moderating variables that may influence this relationship. Future research could investigate factors such as student motivation, classroom environment, and teaching strategies to gain a deeper understanding of the mechanisms underlying the link between TSR and SE. In conclusion, while this study sheds light on the relationship between TSR and SE in EFL classes, further research is needed to address the limitations and explore additional factors that may impact language learning outcomes. By continuing to investigate these important variables, researchers can contribute to the ongoing effort to enhance teaching and learning in the field of EFL education.

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