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**THE CORRELATIONS AMONG LEARNING STYLES, ECONOMIC  
STATUS, PARENTS' EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AND ENGLISH  
PROFICIENCY OF STUDENTS OF PGRI UNIVERSITY PALEMBANG**

**A THESIS**

**by**

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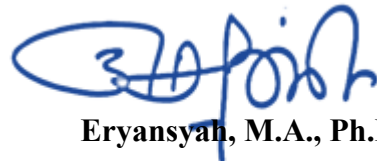
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## DECLARATION

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Certify that thesis entitled "*The Correlations among Learning Styles, Economic Status, Parents' Educational Background and English Proficiency of Students of PGRI University Palembang*" is my own work and I did not do any plagiarism or inappropriate quotation against the ethic and rules commended by the Ministry of Education of Republic Indonesia Number 17, 2010 regarding plagiarism in higher education. Therefore, I deserve to face the court if I am found to have plagiarized this work. Palembang,

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By the gracious of God, the writer could finish writing this thesis. This thesis was written to fulfill one of requirements for the Magister's Degree at English Language Education at the Graduate Program of Sriwijaya University Palembang.

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**The Correlations among Learning Styles, Economic Status, Parents’  
Educational Background and English Proficiency of Students of PGRI  
University Palembang**

**Abstract:** The objectives of the study, were to find out (1) whether or not there was a significant correlation learning styles (visual, audio, kinesthetic) and English proficiency, (2) the significant correlation between economic status and English proficiency, (3) the significant correlation between parents’ educational background and English proficiency, (4) the significant correlation between predictor variables (learning styles, economic status, and parents’ educational background) to a criterion variable (English proficiency). In this correlational study, the data were collected through Likert scale questionnaires and the documentation of TOEFL prediction results. The population of the study was 489 Students of English department in PGRI. by using purposive sampling which is part of non-random sampling technique. The research sample was 114 students. From the results of filling out the learning styles questionnaire, it was found that there were 46 students who had visual learning styles, 38 students who had audio learning styles, and 30 students who had kinesthetic learning styles. The results show that There was no a significant correlation between Learning styles (Visual) and English proficiency, There was no a significant correlation between Learning styles (Audio) and English proficiency, There was a significant correlation between Learning styles (Kinesthetic) and English proficiency, There was no significant correlation between Economic status and English proficiency, There was significant correlation between Parents’ educational background and English proficiency, There was significant correlation predictor variables (learning styles, economic status, and parents’ educational background) and a criterion variable (English proficiency).

**Keywords:** *economic status; English proficiency; learning styles; parents’ educational background*

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents: (1) background, (2) problems of the study, (3) objectives of the study, and (4) significance of the study.

### 1.1 Background

It is undeniable that the ability to speak English is fundamental in facing the era of globalization as it is today. English is used as a 'lingua franca' - a 'contact language' between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication (Firth, 1996). English has been used in almost all everyday life sectors such as business, science, technology, politics, cultural exchange, and even communication on social media. Especially with the increasingly sophisticated technology and the development of industry 4.0, open-world communication is inevitable. Therefore, it will be a little difficult to establish a broad communication relationship if we cannot communicate in English properly. Nowadays, adequate English proficiency has become the main prerequisite for demonstrating the quality of good human resources.

However, based on the 2018 English Proficiency Index (EPI) ranking issued by Education First (2018), Indonesia ranks 51 out of 88 countries in the world to be assessed. With this ranking, Indonesia bears the Low Proficiency level. In the Southeast Asian region, Indonesia's ranking is below Singapore, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Vietnam. Indonesia's ranking in Southeast Asia is only superior to Thailand and Cambodia. Also, Indonesia's rank for EPI since 2013 has always been declining. It was at a Moderate level from 2013 to 2016 but declined to a Low level in 2017 and 2018. These facts would certainly be a bad indication for this nation, considering that the rating is one proxy that measures how well Indonesia's human resources.

As English is a foreign language in Indonesia, more efforts are needed by students to increase the level of English proficiency. An efficient and effective education system is vital so that the goal of improving the quality of Indonesian human resources, especially English proficiency, can be realized. Education is one of important aspects of life. Education is the teaching learning process of knowledge, formation and character building of human resources that are better and useful for others. Thus, it is not only about how the teachers transfer knowledge to students, but it also about how the students receive the knowledge. The easy way to receive knowledge is to know the learning style. According to Gordon (1998) learning styles have effects on educational process. each student has their own way how gain and process information.

In general, learning styles determine all aspects when we learn something new. Recognizing learning styles will help students determine the right learning methods so they can increase academic success. Learning styles differ from learning strategies because the former describes unintentional or automatic individual characteristics, while the latter represents actions chosen by students intended to facilitate learning (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990). There are six learning styles: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile, group, and individual (Reid, 1998). Each student can have one of the ways of learning styles. An illustration of students who prefer to use visual learning styles usually tends to be happier by reading and seeing. In contrast, students who like to use auditory learning usually prefer learning with lots of listening and speaking. Therefore, recognizing or identifying learning styles for students is expected to support the student learning process's success. In Indonesia, research on the correlation between Learning Style and English Proficiency has been conducted several times with different results. According to Marzulina, Pitaloka, & Yolanda (2019), the research entitled "Learning Styles and English Proficiency of Undergraduate EFL Students at One State Islamic University in Sumatera". Found that learning styles had a significant correlation with English proficiency. This study divides learning styles into three aspects, namely, Visual, Audio, and Kinesthetic. From these three aspects, it was found that

Kinesthetic has a significant correlation with English Proficiency. However, according to Rohliah (2015) the research entitled “The Correlation among Foreign Language Anxiety, Learning Styles, Language Learning Attitudes, and English Proficiency of the Economic Faculty Students of Muhammadiyah University Palembang”. Found that learning styles had no significant correlation with English proficiency.

Furthermore, we must remember that the learning process occurs in the school and occurs in the home environment, such as re-learning, homework, or learning to prepare for the exam. Certainly, learning styles in the home environment must be important, and parents, as teachers at home, have a vital role. Parents of higher educational levels have greater success in providing their children with the skills they need to be successful in an academic setting (Pishghadam & Zabini, 2011). It is because ‘educated parents have better communication with their children regarding the school-work, activities, and the information being taught at school. Selvam (2013) assesses the parents' higher education levels are believed to support their children in learning.

Udoh & Sanni (2012) argue that educated parents often get a better job. Thus, with their income, the educated parents are better prepare to give educational material 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 the supporting educational material they need. Based on these problems, support from parents is an important factor that can support academic success. The form of support provided by parents is greatly influenced by the level of education they have. Another factor that affects English proficiency is Socioeconomic status is the blend of economic and sociological measures of an individual work experience and the economic and social position of an individual or family in connection to others on the premise of income, educational level, and occupational status.



Parents' socioeconomic status affects academic performance and makes it possible for children from low backgrounds to compete well with their counterparts from high socio-economic backgrounds under the same academic environment (Rothestein, 2004). Education is a tool for development. It widens minds, recognizes good and bad, makes us segregate well from terrible, and uses our environment to the best of our capacity to improve a person and the group (Sabzwari, 2004). Suleman et al. (2012) found that children with strong socioeconomic status show better academic performance than those with poor socioeconomic status. They showed poor and unsatisfactory academic performance. Saifi & Mehmood (2011) investigated the effect of socioeconomic status on student's performance. Results revealed that parental education and occupation, and facilities at home affect the student's achievement. Moreover, study from Zang, Jiang, Ming, Ren, and Huang (2021), line with study from . Saifi & Mehmood (2011), the research entitled "Impacts of Gender, Parents' Educational Background, Access to ICT, Use of ICT and School Quality on Students' Achievement In International Conference on Educational Assessment and Policy". This study concludes that although the parents' background and schools' quality are a key to student achievement, the indicator of schools' quality is not about simply having access to resources but about how resources are used to improve education outcomes. Eamon (2005) stated that students whose parental socioeconomic status is low do not show effective school performance. Also, Marzulina et al. (2018), with the research entitled "Looking at The Link between Parents' Educational Backgrounds and Students' English Achievement concluded a significant positive correlation between parents' educational backgrounds with English achievement. One of the factors that determine student learning achievement is parents' concern for children's education in school.

According to Aulia, Vianty, and Ihsan (2015), the research entitled "The Correlations among Reading Motivation, Parent's Economic Status, and Reading Achievement of Students Madrasah Aliyah Qodratullah, Langkan, Banyuasin." Found that there is a significant correlation between parent's economic status and

reading achievement. Besides, according to Darmadi (2006), parents who care about children's education will strive to always "motivate and supervise" the children learning, both in school and at home. Parents do the motivation for learning in children by providing positive and negative reinforcement. Positive reinforcement can be in the form of fulfilling children's learning needs, both physical and psychological. According to Bandura (1973) is a general theory of behavior which concluded that children and teens will learn by observation on others behavior, especially those who are significant like their parents.

Marzulina, Pitaloka, Herizal, Holandyah, Erlina, and Lestari (2018) the research entitled "looking at the link between parents' educational Backgrounds and students' English achievement". Found that that there is a correlation between parents' educational background and students' English achievement. According to Shaverand and walls (1998) Parental involvement is not only limited in school but including children education at home. In the other words parents are the first teachers and people who are very close to children. thus, this indicates their important influence in their children's academic achievement. Therefore, good or bad academic achievement or English Proficiency of these students will greatly affect the role of parents in educating. A child's academic achievement or English ability cannot be separated from learning or understanding this knowledge.

Furthermore, based on informal interviews with several research samples, they said that it was difficult to achieve the targeted TOEFL score because they didn't know their learning styles and current conditions based on the results of my preliminary interview with one of the lecturers of English Department at PGRI University of Palembang, there was a phenomenon where students with low family economic status and low parents' education but had good academic achievement. And conversely, there was also a phenomenon where students with good economic status and with a good parent's educational background had a poor academic performance. Concerning the explanation above, the writer was interested in investigating the correlation among Learning Styles, Economic Status, Parents' Education Background, and English Proficiency of students of PGRI University

Palembang. This study also investigated the correlation between predictor variables (learning styles, economic status, and parents' educational background) to a criterion variable (English proficiency).

### **1.2 Problems of the Study**

The problems of this study were formulated in the following questions:

- (1) Was there a significant correlation between learning styles and English proficiency of English Education Study Program students of PGRI University Palembang?
- (2) Was there a significant correlation between economic status and English proficiency of English Education Study Program students of PGRI University Palembang?
- (3) Was there a significant correlation between parents' educational background and English proficiency of English Education Study Program students of PGRI University Palembang?
- (4) Was there any significant correlation between predictor variables (learning styles, economic status, and parents' educational background) and a criterion variable (English proficiency)?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study were to find out whether or not:

- (1) there was a significant correlation between Learning styles ( Visual, Audio, and Kinesthetic) and English proficiency of students of PGRI University Palembang,
- (2) there was a significant correlation between Economic status and English proficiency of students of PGRI University Palembang,

- (3) there was a significant correlation between Parents' educational background and English proficiency of students of PGRI University Palembang, and
- (4) there was any significant correlation between predictor variables (learning styles, economic status, and parents' educational background) and a criterion variable (English proficiency).

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

This research provides information for policymakers that student learning styles are essential in the success of the learning process, especially English learning. Therefore, learning styles need to be considered in developing learning methods in schools, which will later be determined in the education curriculum. Besides, this research provides the parents with the information that their economic status and educational background play significant roles in English Proficiency. Therefore, in the future, they can give more attention and get involved in learning styles. Furthermore, the teachers obtained information about the importance of the economic status and educational background of parents. This study helps students who are involved to be motivated to learn and have good academic achievement, because of the fairly good involvement of parents and teachers, especially in English.

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