

## EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENGLISH TEACHER'S ENJOYMENT AND GRIT

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### ABSTRACT

*The role of teachers in the education sector in general is one of the main keys in educating students as the nation's successors. In this research, English language teachers are considered to have an important role in preparing students' foreign language skills in the era of globalization and competition in the future. Teachers tend to feel various kinds of obstacles, demands for competence, skills, qualities, duties and responsibilities. This can affect the teacher's emotions in managing the class and can even be a reason for the teacher to quit their job. This conducted research aims to examine whether there is a relationship between positive emotions, or enjoyment, and persistence, or grit, of English language teachers. The criterion of participant namely being Indonesian citizens, working as English teachers, and working in an educational institution, such as a school, course, or even just private tutoring. The measuring instruments used in this research is The Enjoy Scale to measure enjoyment and Teacher Grit Scale (TGS) to measure grit. The participants who were successfully collected were 111 people. Data was collected using a purposive sampling technique and using quantitative methods in the type of non-experimental correlation research. Data collection was carried out via Google Form, and hard copy or printed questionnaire, using data processing via the SPSS 24.0 for Windows application. Testing the research hypothesis used Spearman correlation and obtained the results  $r(111) = 0.494$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ , which means the data shows a significant positive relationship.*

**Keywords:** Enjoyment, grit, english teacher

### 1. PREFACE

In the world of education, teachers have a big responsibility and role for their students (Dewi, 2017). Act of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20 of 2003 which sets on National Education System stated the obligations for educators, such as planning and implementing learning processes professionally, carry out administration, counseling and training, etc. Teachers also requires special abilities and expertise because they have various competency and skill demands that need to be met. One of the school subjects which require high skills and abilities is English (Novita & Yusuf, 2019). In this era of globalization, learning English has become a necessity (Maduwu, 2016). Even when individuals are able to speak English well, this will bring advantages and added value in competing later (Thariq et al., 2020). Unfortunately, there are still several problems related to English language learning, including (a) teachers do not have a strong English educational background; (b) lack of school support in providing facilities that support learning; (c) classroom facilities are supportive, but lacking of the teachers' initiative to use them; (d) the use of learning methods and models by teachers who tend to be less creative and innovative results in the class seem boring (Maili & Hestningsih, 2017).

Moreover, foreign languages often cause fear and anxiety for not only the students, but also the teachers (Bensalem et al., 2023). In fact, the emotions that arise can then influence the classroom atmosphere and students' social, emotional and cognitive development. Apart from the things that have been mentioned, emotions also have an important role in determining the learning process and class achievement (Liu et al., 2023; Mierzwa, 2019; Rodrigo-Ruiz, 2016). It is because

teachers are also responsible for managing emotions that arise in the classroom, and not only focusing on efforts to increase knowledge and distribute learning materials to students. A study in the form of a systematic review of teachers at various levels by Rodrigo-Ruiz (2016) stated that teachers' positive emotions will have a positive impact on students. On the other hand, if the teacher causes negative emotions, it will have a negative impact on students. Therefore, to achieve an effective teaching, teachers need to strengthen positive emotions in the classroom, such as enjoyment.

Enjoyment is defined as an individual's subjective feelings related to quality of life, positive experiences, and happiness in carrying out certain activities (Davidson et al., 2022). Enjoyment can also be interpreted as the emergence of a good feeling when an individual has overcome or defeated obstacles under pressure (Liu et al., 2023). In context of teaching, teachers who have enjoyment will experience positive emotions despite the obstacles they are encountering when teaching (Noughabi et al., in Liu et al., 2023). In a study conducted by Frenzel et al. to 69 teachers in grades 5 to 10 stated that teacher enjoyment can also have a positive impact on student enjoyment (Russo et al., 2020). Furthermore, a study conducted by Russo et al. (2020) itself on 98 mathematics teachers in Victoria, Australia, stated that teachers who feel enjoyment will make the classroom atmosphere more enjoyable, prepare lessons well and produce positive responses when facing student difficulties ( $r = 0.52$ ).

When teachers consistently experience enjoyment and pleasure when teaching, they will be able to continue maintaining their spirit and enthusiasm in order to achieve their teaching goals. They will ensure the appearing results are as desired, and persistently make effort to teach although difficulties and obstacles lie ahead of them (Zhang et al., 2023). This lead and support other research in the opinion that when teachers feel enjoyment, they will experience grit and vice versa. Grit is the ability to remain persistent and passionate in achieving long-term goals (Baraquia, 2020). Even though teachers face challenges and problems, they can still maintain their interest in teaching for many years (Liu et al., 2023).

In previous studies, researchers rarely found research that focused only on the relationship between enjoyment and grit in English language teachers. In fact, researchers have never found this research conducted in Indonesia's education. This certainly encourages researchers to determine whether there is a relationship between enjoyment and grit in English language teachers. Because, if teachers realize that these two things are important to have, it is likely that a good atmosphere and teaching and learning process will be created in the classroom.

## **2. RESEARCH METHOD**

This research used a quantitative non-experimental method. The criteria of participants were (a) Indonesian citizens, (b) working as an English teacher, (c) working in an educational institution, such as school, course place, or home tuition. This study involved in total 111 participants (Table 1) with the majority of participant were female (75.6%), graduated in bachelor of English education (49%), and working as an English teacher for about 1-5 years (51%).

**Table 1**  
*Descriptive of Participant*

Variable	Information	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	19.8
	Female	80.2
Age average	21-30	46.8
Educational status	High school graduate	3.6
	Diploma	3.6
	Bachelor of English Education	51.4
	Bachelor of English Literature	10.8
	Other bachelor degree	18
	Master degree	12.6
Working as English teacher	<1 year	8.1
	1-5 years	38.7
	6-10 years	15.3
	>10 years	37.8

The questionnaire was categorized into several sections. On the first section, there are opening words, explanation of the questionnaire and informed consent for the participants. When the participants have agreed, it will lead the participants to continue in filling up the Enjoy Scale (Davidson, 2018). The Enjoy Scale consisted of 25 positive items divided into five dimensions with five items in each dimension, such as pleasure (2, 5, 9, 17, 25); relatedness (4, 8, 16, 19, 21), competence (6, 11, 22, 23, 24), challenge or improvement (1, 7, 10, 15, 18), and engagement (3, 12, 13, 14, 20). Some of the examples of adapted statements are “Teaching was pleasurable to me” (pleasure), “I felt connected with others during teaching” (relatedness), “I felt very capable during teaching” (competence), “Teaching allowed me to develop new skills” (challenge/improvement), and “I lost track of what was going on outside of teaching” (engagement). The answer is using a Likert scale of (1) Strongly disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat disagree, (4) Neutral, (5) Somewhat agree, (6) Agree, (7) Strongly agree. This means, the higher score participants choose on the scale, the higher enjoyment they feel.

Once the participants finish answering the Enjoy Scale, they will continue to Teacher Grit Scale (TGS, Baraquia, 2020) which developed and adapted from Duckworth’s Grit Scale. The questionnaire consists of two dimensions with total 14 positive items, namely perseverance in teaching (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8) with an example statement “I deal with teaching challenges by looking for different solutions”, and passion and purpose in teaching (9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14), “I want to be of service to the learners for a lifetime” as an example statement. Using the Likert scale, participants are asked to choose the answer from (1) Strongly disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly agree.

After participants completed the TGS, they will be asked more specifically about their identities: (a) years of teaching, (b) institutions they are working in, (c) curriculums, (d) education background, (e) reason or motivation for teaching, and (f) obstacles and solutions when teaching. Following that, participants were thanked at the end of the section.

Before further analysis on the data, researchers were testing the reliability of each variable and dimensions. First, with all 25 items in enjoyment, the Cronbach Alpha was 0.835. However, when the researchers were testing the reliability for each dimension, there were 2 items should be deleted

from a dimension of “challenge/improvement”. Second, the grit has a really high consistency with  $\alpha = 0.928$  with all 14 items included.

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Researchers continue the data analysis with One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test method for normality test. It enabled researchers to determine which correlation technique should be used. According to the result of enjoyment data, the variable shows a value  $p = .200$  ( $p > 0.05$ ). It means the enjoyment data is normally distributed. Meanwhile on the other side, as the grit data was tested, the variable result was  $p = .001$  ( $p < 0.05$ ), which means the data is not normally distributed.

Researchers then proceed to analyze the data with descriptive test to know the mean of enjoyment and grit. Referring to table 2, enjoyment (5.59) and grit (4.32) have higher empirical mean than the midpoint value of enjoyment's (4) and grit (3) hypothetical mean. This indicate that English teachers who has participated tends to have high, but not the highest, average score of enjoyment and grit.

**Table 2**

*Mean of Enjoyment and Grit Data Overview*

Variable	Hypothetical mean	Empirical mean	SD
Enjoyment	4	5.59	0.54
Grit	3	4.32	0.53

Since knowing the normality of the data is not for one of the variables, researchers conducted the correlation test technique with Spearman correlation. Referring to table 3, the results of data analysis using Spearman correlation technique, both data show  $p = .000$  ( $p < 0.05$ ) with correlation coefficient  $r = 1$  and  $.494$ . This indicate the enjoyment is positively related to grit, and vice versa. This leads to accepting the hypothesis because the data states there is a relationship between enjoyment and grit. In line with the results of several previous studies, grit is the strongest predictor of enjoyment and has an association or correlation between the two. So, when enjoyment increases, grit will also increase (Derakhshan et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2023; Shirvan et al., 2021; Zhang, Fathi, & Naderi, 2023).

**Table 3**

*Variable Correlation*

Correlation	Correlation coefficient (r)	Sig. (2 tailed) (p)
Enjoyment – grit	1.000	.000
Grit – enjoyment	0.494	.000

Lastly, researchers continued to test the differences of enjoyment and grit using Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal Wallis test with the participant backgrounds, such as gender, age, length of year and main reason/motivation working as an English teacher. First off, the results of enjoyment in gender between male and female ( $p=0.257>0.05$ ) and grit ( $p=0.306>0.05$ ), which means there aren't any differences. Next, enjoyment according to age has the score  $p=0.516>0.05$ , which also means there are no enjoyment differences between age. However, grit according to age shows a result  $p=0.002<0.05$ , which means there are difference. Just like what Duckworth et al. (2007) and Sunbul (2019) mentioned in their research, as you get older, grit can also get higher although it's not significant. Researchers also tested enjoyment based on their length of work year which shows  $p=0.638>0.05$  and resulted with no difference. Meanwhile, grit shows a difference based on their

length of work year with  $p=0.05=0.05$ . Unfortunately, none of single research can support the results of this data. However, if it is related to the meaning of grit itself, namely fighting power, ambition and being able to be consistent in achieving long-term goals, this means that the longer the teacher teaches, the higher the grit within them. Lastly, continue testing enjoyment and grit with the main reason or motivation working as an English teacher, the results were  $p=0.170>0.50$  for enjoyment and  $p=0.029<0.050$  for grit. It means, enjoyment appears to have no difference, while on the other hand, grit has a difference. In this research, the main reason or motivation researchers have created, have been based on both types of motivation, namely intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and then adapted to the teacher's work situation. The result was accordance with several studies found, motivation can be one of the influences on individual grit (Chuented et al., 2023; Wu et al., 2022). Most participants in this research chose teaching English as their job because the teachers felt interested and happy, which is one of the intrinsic reasons or motivations. Chuented et al. (2023) also mentioned that grit has a strong association with internal/intrinsic motivation.

Based on all the results mentioned above, researchers interpreted that the higher enjoyment individual has, the higher grit will be. The finding in this study is also in line with the research conducted by Zhang et al., (2023) which stated there were reciprocal relations between language ( $\beta = .15, p < .01$ ) and grit ( $\beta = .34, p < .001$ ). The higher level of grit on an English teacher may surely indicate greater perseverance of pursuing their passion and purpose, ability to efficaciously handle and face setbacks or challenges. Therefore, enjoyment in teaching is gradually increased (Derakhshan et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2023).

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

According from the result's analysis that has been done, it can be inferred that there is a positive reciprocal correlation between enjoyment and grit because it produces values of  $r(111) = 0.494$  and  $p = 0.000$ . This study also has found out when an English teacher has higher enjoyment, it may enhance their grit to reach the long-term goals of teaching and vice versa. Based on the results of the data processing carried out in this research, the description of the enjoyment variable has an empirical mean of 5.5899 which is greater than the hypothetical mean of 4, and the description of the grit variable has an empirical mean of 4.316 which is greater than the hypothetical mean, namely 3. If the empirical mean is greater than the hypothetical mean, it concluded those English teachers who have participated have relatively high enjoyment and grit.

Another finding in this study is there are difference level of grit between English teachers according to age, length of work year, and the main reason or motivation as an English teacher.

After conducting research on enjoyment and grit of English teachers, researchers suggest for future research to find more participants all around Indonesia and considering lecturers as participants. Another suggestion is about on how to increase these two necessary variables in our daily working life using a qualitative method, add or pair enjoyment and grit with another positive variables.

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