

**THE CORRELATION BETWEEN ACADEMIC STRESS AND  
READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS OF ENGLISH  
DEPARTMENT UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF  
TRIDINANTI UNIVERSITY**

**A Thesis by**

**NADHIA PUTRI RAMADHANI  
NPM 1904410003.P  
English Education Study Program**



**FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF TRIDINANTI  
PALEMBANG  
2023**

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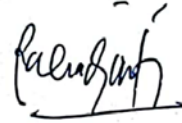
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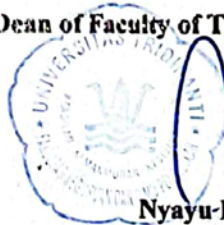
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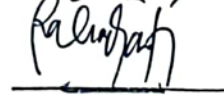
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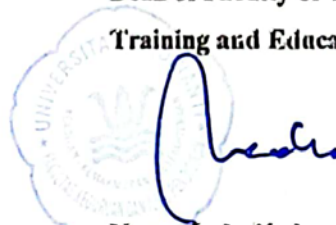
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## **DEDICATION**

*This thesis is dedicated to:*

1. *Firstly, thanks to Allah SWT. for always blessing me*
2. *Prophet Muhammad SAW. who had led of Muslims from darkness to brighter life*
3. *My beloved parents for their supports and love*
4. *Thank you for my friends for their help and support*
5. *Thank you for my advisors for their guidance and patience throughout the process of writing this thesis*
6. *Thank you to English Education Study Program's Head and to English Education Study Program's Secretary*
7. *Thank you to all of my English Education lecturers as well as my alma-maters*

### **Motto**

*Writing is its own Reward*

(Henry Miller)

## PERNYATAAN

Saya menyatakan dengan sebenar-benarnya bahwa seluruh data, informasi, interpretasi serta pernyataan dalam pembahasan dan kesimpulan yang disajikan dalam karya ilmiah ini, kecuali yang disebutkan sumbernya adalah merupakan hasil pengamatan, penelitian, pengolahan, serta pemikiran saya dengan penggambaran dan pembimbing yang ditetapkan.

Apabila pernyataan di dalam naskah skripsi ini dapat dibuktikan terdapat unsur-unsur jiplakan. Saya bersedia skripsi ini digugurkan dan gelar akademik yang telah saya peroleh (S-1) dibatalkan, serta diproses sesuai dengan peraturan perundang-undangan yang berlaku UU No. 20 Tahun 2003, Pasal 25 ayat 2 dan Pasal 70.

Palembang,      Maret 2023

Mahasiswa



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## **ABSTRACT**

This study is aimed to find out the correlation between academic stress and reading comprehension skills, the contribution of academic stress toward reading comprehension skills, and which factors of academic stress that contributed the most toward reading comprehension skills. The sample and population of 59 students University of Tridinanti are participated in this study. This data were collected by distributing academic stress questionnaire which adopted from Tibus & Ledesma. 2021 and reading comprehension skills in multiple choice test. The data were analyzed by using Pearson product moment, regression analysis, and multiple regression analysis. The result of this study indicated that there was a significant correlation between academic stress and reading comprehension skills. Then academic stress contributed as much 84.2% towards reading comprehension skills. Moreover, perceived personal stress was the most influence factor of academic stress among others toward reading comprehension skills.

***Keywords: academic stress, reading comprehension.***

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# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses about: (1) background, (2) problem of the study, (3) limitation of the problem, (4) formulations of the problems, (5) objectives of the study, and (6) significances of the study.

### **1.1. Background**

Stress is something that everyone experience in various situations. Stress is caused by things that are experienced so frequently that they become depressing. According to Busari (2014), stress occurs when an individual is confronted by situation that they perceive as overwhelming and cannot cope up with. This can be experienced by everyone, including students, who experience changes from childhood to adulthood. In this case, students' experience discomfort with academic pressure, need to adapt to a new environment, fear failure in academics, inferiority, and attaining social familiarity (Yikealo, Yemane, & Karvinen, 2018). A student can be stressed due to several factors like finances, family, friends, emotions, and procrastination (Munir, Anita, & Sefnimal, 2020). Due to factors and situations like those mental changes lead to academic stress.

Academic stress is perceived as distress that will lead to negative behavior and potentially harmful health outcomes such as depression (Skipworth, 2011). In academic context, academic stress is a condition in which students are unable to deal with academic demands and perceive academic demands as a distraction and it

comes from the learning process, such as: pressure to attend the class, study time, cheating, multiple assignments, low achievement, major and career decisions, and exam anxiety (Octasya & Munawaroh, 2021). Academic environment is very likely to be stressful affecting students' social relationship inside or outside university; this affects the lives of individuals in terms of commitment to achieving goals (Busari, 2014). College students are easily to get stress arise from the subject or environment in which related to academic, socio-economic, and personal successes (Yikealo, Yemane, & Karvinen, 2018). Moreover, it is a complicated for university students face academic assignments along with mental changes. During the change of semester, students experience academic stress due to take study for exams, grade competition, and large amount of content to master in a short time (Nandamuri & Gowthami, 2011). Moreover, the amount and quality of prior knowledge are also considered important influencing learning achievement (Hailikari, Katajavuori, & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2008). The demand of having prior or prerequisite knowledge is needed in the learning process in academics life.

However, for academic, the absence of prior or prerequisite knowledge causes most of the college students face knowledge gap. According to Omaish, et al., (2022), the factors for substantial knowledge gaps among students are overcrowding in classrooms, outdated curriculum, adequate quality of teaching, and lack of prior knowledge materials; this knowledge gap persists when students enter university. The transition of students from a high school to a college environment is very stressful, especially when the academic demands that they find at the college level threaten them (Yikealo, Yemane, & Karvinen, 2018). When students view their

education as a challenge and as a threat, then it can lead to feelings of helplessness and a sense of loss (Basavarajappa & Khanekhesi, 2011). Most of the academic stress studies were carried out mainly among first-year students resulting in academic stress related to lack of knowledge and their perception of heavy studying during semesters and long exam sessions being the main sources of stress along anxiety related to the university environment (Babakova, 2019). According to Barbayannis, et al. (2022), there was academic stress that occurred to students caused by academic expectations, grading, and students' academic self-perceptions so that their psychological well-being was disrupted. In other words, academic stress occurs as a result of students' lack of prior knowledge, so that when students face a university environment that demands them in terms of academic expectations, grading, and students' academic self-perceptions in which caused students to considered those demands as treats.

University students majoring in English Department experienced academic stress (Pongsapan & Pasorong, 2017). Kurniasih, Putro, & Sudiyono (2020) found that academic stress that happen to English Departement students occured by academic load. In Indonesia, majority of Indonesian see English as a compulsory foreign language that needs to be mastered. National Education System Rule 20 Article 33 of 2003 (UU No. 20 Tahun 2003 Pasal 33 Sistem Pendidikan Nasional) framed that Foreign languages can be used as the language of instruction in certain educational units to support students' foreign language skills. In addition, Higher Education Rule 12 Article 37 on 2012 (UU No. 12 Tahun 2012 Pasal 37 Pendidikan Tinggi) states that foreign languages can be used as the language of instruction in

universities. However, learning a foreign language for Indonesian could be difficult due to cultural difference, the differences either sentences or grammar between foreign language and native language, even giving anxiety to learning foreign language. The demand to learn foreign language is difficult if it is not what student interest in. Aisyah (2017) explained English considered as a difficult subject for Indonesia students, because it may be different from Indonesian when viewed from system structure, pronunciation and vocabulary.

Reading is one of the four basic skills that must be learnt and mastered by English Department students. One of English language skills is reading. Kusumawanti and Bharati (2018) explained that among English proficiencies, reading skills has the most important role for students' learning success since overall activities started and developed by reading activity. Reading can help students to get new information by understanding of new knowledge, idea, and writer's thought. Rintaningrum (2019) stated that understanding what being read is important. Qarqez & Ab Rashid (2017) stated that comprehension does not only involve of understanding each word but also engagement with the content to create representation. There is greater awareness of the problems associated with reading and the education system has created students who stress themselves for exams and seeking knowledge (Nagaratnam, Kaur, & Ratneswary, 2012). Therefore, in reading students are required to understand the contents of the new information and knowledge given. Unfortunately, students experience problems understanding reading because of the stress they get from an education system that is not suitable, so that when dealing with exams, students experience difficulties.

The relationship between academic stress and reading comprehension can be seen from the students' ability which is disrupted during the learning process. Bedewy & Gabriel (2015) highlighted that stress experienced by students frequently happen around examination periods were extensive course loads. This happen because stress and anxiety affect reading and cognitive process, but under certain conditions, such as individual performance on multiple tasks, or experience personal, social, and environment mental stress can result in disrupted reading processes (Rai, Loschky, & Harris, 2014). Some studies found that reading comprehension test can also cause stress to non-native speakers because the contents of reading passages and reading questions are not common to their real-world (Rai, Loschky, & Harris, 2014). In other words, reading comprehension tests sometimes have unfamiliar contexts among non-native speakers while the ultimate goal of reading is to understand the content of the reading which causes reading comprehension fail due to stress which causes the reading process to be disrupted.

Some studies provide that academic stress has association with students' language proficiency or performance. First, Mardianti, Wijayati, & Murtadho (2021) found that anxiety as part of academic stress. It result that most non-English students have anxiety at a medium level, where the researchers put student's stress level of reading into three categories as low, medium, and high level due to most the students do not understand or unclear with vocabulary of the contents of the reading. It also shows that in regarding reading comprehension, students ESP failed to answers the reading test correctly. There is negative relationship between stress levels and reading comprehension meaning that the higher anxiety that students have, the lower



the reading comprehension score that obtained. Second, Sathish K & Dr. A. Subramanian (2021) investigated that relation between academic stress and academic achievement among higher secondary schools students and the influence of academic stress on academic achievement. The result shows that there is a significant relationship between academic stress and academic achievement. It results that academic stress can become barrier to have successful career which suggest for students to have educated academic stress as ways to manage stress effectively. Third, Rai, Loschky, & Harris (2014) found that there are inconsistent result about the effects of stress or anxiety because it only implies when someone given a difficult high test, yet when compare L1 students (native students) with intermediate L2 students (non-fluent), L1 students likely got social-evaluative stress as a result suffer in reading comprehension.

Reading comprehension that is learned by university-level students must have a prior knowledge of English from previous schools. However, the curriculum and atmosphere of high schools and universities are not the same as previously described. When students are faced with high academic demands, this causes stress, which in this context is called academic stress. This academic stress is experienced by university students and interferes with their learning and study at the university. The writer has conducted an interview with one of the Tridinanti University student's regarding academic stress where the student experienced difficulties in adapting to a university environment that was different from high school, difficulties in understanding material due to short learning time in class, and stress due to a lack of confidence in their abilities so that they had difficulty participating in English

learning. The writer is fully aware in order to save time and location, as well as the results of the interview; this made the writer choose students from Tridinanti University in the field of English department as research objects.

Based on the reasons stated above, the writer was intrigued by the findings of studies related to academic stress and associated with narrowing the scope of study; the writer was interested in conducting research entitled “The Correlation between Academic Stress and Reading Comprehension Skills of English Department Undergraduate Students of Tridinanti University”.

## **1.2. Problem of the Study**

### **1.2.1. Limitation of the Problem**

This study was limited to find out the correlation between academic stress and reading comprehension skills of English Department undergraduate students of Tridinanti University.

### **1.2.2. Formulations of the Problem**

On the basis of limitation above, the problems of this study were formulated:

1. Was there any significant correlation between academic stress and reading comprehension skills of English Department undergraduate students of Tridinanti University?
2. How much academic stress did contribute to students’ reading comprehension skills of English Department undergraduate students of Tridinanti University?

3. Which factors of academic stress did influence to students' reading comprehension skills of English Department undergraduate students of Tridinanti University?

### **1.3. Objectives of the Research**

Based on the problems above, the objectives of the study were:

1. To find out whether or not there was a significant correlation between academic stress and reading comprehension skills of English Department undergraduate students of Tridinanti University.
2. To find out how much academic stress contributed to students' reading comprehension skills of English Department undergraduate students of Tridinanti University.
3. To find out which of factors of academic stress influenced to students' reading comprehension skills of English Department undergraduate students of Tridinanti University.

### **1.4. Significances of the Study**

The writer expects that this study would be able to give contribution and benefits to students, teachers, and other writers. Hopefully, the process of this study would help students improving their reading skill.

#### **a. Students**

This study could help the students improving their reading skills. Moreover, the process of this research can help students, who experience academic stress to be

able to understand what causes and then later the learning process of reading skill can be improved.

b. Teachers

Hopefully, the result of this study could help teachers to understand the academic stress that can occur to students in learning reading comprehension.

c. The Writer

The result of this study could give positive results to the writer in understanding the correlation between academic stress experienced by students and learning English, particularly, reading skill.

d. Other Researchers

This research could help other writers in getting references for further research in discussing the correlation between academic stress and reading skills.

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