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## Determinative Factors for Achievement of an Optimal TOEFL Score

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### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap pengaruh faktor determinatif: motivasi belajar ( $X_1$ ), metode pembelajaran ( $X_2$ ); dan kompetensi penguasaan pengetahuan dasar Bahasa Inggris ( $X_3$ ) terhadap pencapaian hasil belajar yang optimal pada program pelatihan *TOEFL Preparation* ( $Y$ ), serta menganalisis pengaruh ketiga faktor tersebut. Pendekatan kuantitatif dan metode asosiatif korelasional digunakan dalam penelitian ini dengan teknik pengumpulan data angket, observasi, wawancara dan studi dokumentasi. Sampel penelitian 40 orang dari jumlah populasi 2 kelas program pelatihan. Temuan hasil penelitian menunjukkan ketiga faktor tersebut berpengaruh sangat signifikan terhadap pencapaian hasil belajar yang optimal pada program pelatihan *TOEFL Preparation* dengan angka korelasi 0,964 untuk motivasi belajar; 0,880 untuk metode pembelajaran; dan 0,900 untuk kompetensi penguasaan pengetahuan dasar bahasa Inggris. Temuan juga menunjukkan tinggi rendahnya pencapaian hasil belajar pada program pelatihan *TOEFL Preparation*, akan dipengaruhi 100% oleh ketiga faktor tersebut, hal ini terlihat dari angka koefisiensi determinasi *Adjusted R Square* sebesar 1,000. Dari penelitian dapat disimpulkan bahwa peserta akan bisa berhasil mendapatkan *TOEFL score* optimal pada program pelatihan *TOEFL Preparation* ini bila ketiga faktor penentu tersebut telah dimilikinya. Dari penelitian ini penulis merekomendasikan para peneliti berikutnya untuk bisa melanjutkan penelitian berikutnya yang lebih difokuskan pada faktor determinatif secara lebih mendalam lagi.

Kata Kunci: *Faktor Determinatif, Metode, Motivasi, Skor TOEFL*

## Abstract

The objectives of the study were to reveal the influence of the determinative factors (motivation, method, and English competency) on the achievement of optimal learning outcomes in TOEFL preparation training and to analyze these factors' influence. Quantitative and associative correlation methods were used with the questionnaire techniques for 40 sample people. The result showed that the factors had a very significant impact on the achievement of optimal learning outcomes, with correlation figures of 0.964 (motivation), 0,880 (method), and 0,900 (English competency). The calculation of learning outcomes in this program was 100% influenced by these factors; the adjusted R squared coefficient of determination showed 1,000. The conclusion was to get the optimal TOEFL score if three factors had been considered. This study had a limited sample and a lack of breadth in the research locus, it was recommended to do a more in-depth study with locus and focus on the motivation.

*Keywords: Determinative Factors, Method, Motivation, TOEFL Score*

## INTRODUCTION

In line with the increasingly widespread and rational relations between humans in this modern era, the ability to master science and technology has become a necessity (Linda Sari and Zuliana Lestari, 2019). Several approaches to increasing abilities show a tendency towards three things, namely: a) the need for insight and mastery of new or additional skills to adapt to the demands of society's needs in work, career advancement, or self-actualization; b) in increasingly tough and competitive business climate conditions, it is necessary to immediately have human resources who are ready to develop operational strategies; and c) the government has an interest in advancing the social welfare of its people through developing individual potential at the micro and macro levels of society.

Talking about the things mentioned above, an individual's ability to communicate in a foreign language is very necessary, and one of them is the ability to speak English well. To be able to find out and measure English language skills, there are many types of international standard test models that can be used for this, such as TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication), IELTS (International English Language Testing System), or TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) (Dwi Indra Aprilliandari and Prasetyawan Aji Sugiharto, 2023)—which is the main topic of this research. All forms and models of these tests are international test standards, and the organizing institutions are also independent international institutions domiciled abroad. One thing that will be focused on in this research is the TOEFL test model organized by the Educational Testing Service (ETS).

TOEFL, as a form of international test model, is widely used to measure a person's English language skills by various institutions or agencies (Dwi Indra Aprilliandari and Prasetyawan Aji Sugiharto, 2023). To take the "official" TOEFL test organized by ETS, a fee is

quite expensive for the community. Indonesia; therefore, the majority of prospective test takers will usually take part in preparation training programs for the TOEFL test model, known as TOEFL preparation or pre-TOEFL. (Philip, 2006) These training programs are usually organized by educational and training institutions. Private and tertiary English-language institutions charge a number of fees and offer a number of program advantages. This training program is one way to demonstrate each process in order to develop participants' English competency knowledge, skills, and abilities in order to solve the questions in the actual TOEFL test.

The high number of interested participants in the TOEFL preparation training program organized by TOEFL education and training institutions (Hafida Ruminar et al., 2023) is the basis for interest in further observation and analysis regarding factors—what determinative factors might significantly influence the achievement of optimal learning outcomes for participants in the TOEFL preparation training program (Ahmed Sardi, Zulkifli Surahmat, and Sahril Nur, 2022). This research was conducted at one of the training institutions that specifically organizes TOEFL preparation training in Bandung City.

Based on the results of the identification that has been carried out, limitations and problem formulations are made in this research. "How do determinative factors influence the achievement of optimal learning outcomes in the TOEFL preparation training program at the TOEFL training program organizing institution?" This is different from previous TOEFL training research that has been conducted, which focused on just one or two factors, such as motivation factors, learning strategies, and learning models (Mimin Aminah Ida Maulida, 2020), but this research focuses on three factors at once, namely motivation factors, learning methods, and basic knowledge of English.

From this research, prospective participants in this training program can better prepare themselves by improving the factors that determine the success of the program. So, the aim of this research is to see what determining factors really influence the optimal results of this training program. In detail, the objectives of this research are explained as follows: a) to reveal the influence of motivation ( $X_1$ ) (Ary Nurmalasari and Rizki Isfahani, 2021) on English learning outcomes in the TOEFL Preparation training program; b) reveal the influence of the method ( $X_2$ ) (Ni Made Merti, 2020) used on English learning outcomes in the TOEFL Preparation training program; c) reveal the influence of participants' English knowledge competency ( $X_3$ ) on English learning outcomes in the TOEFL Preparation training program; d) analyze the influence of motivation ( $X_1$ ), method ( $X_2$ ), and English knowledge competency ( $X_3$ ) (Arifuddin Arifuddin et al., 2019) together on English learning outcomes in the TOEFL Preparation program.

In previous research discussing TOEFL training, such as research conducted by Dwi Aprilliandari and PA Sugiharto in the title TOEFL Preparation Training Program to Enhance Students' TOEFL Scores (Aprilliandari and Sugiharto, 2023).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a quantitative research approach and a correlational associative research method that is based on the aim and principal of the research, namely to analyze the significance of determinative factors in a comprehensive and complete manner that can influence the achievement of optimal learning outcomes in the TOEFL preparation training program.

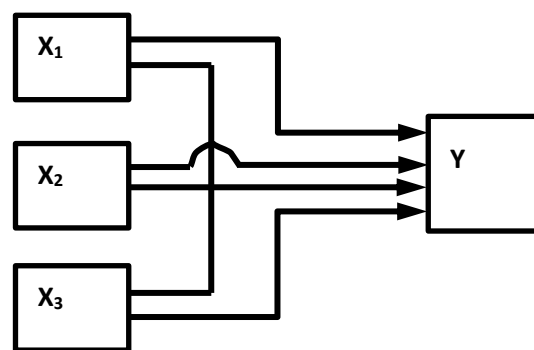


Figure 1: Research Paradigm (Sugiyono, 2011)

### Caption:

- 1) Variable X1 ==> Motivation
- 2) Variable X2 ==> Method
- 3) Variable X3 ==> English Competency
- 4) Variable Y ==> Optimal Learning Results

The research sample was 40 from a population of 2 TOEFL preparation training program classes. Meanwhile, the data collection techniques used included distributing questionnaires asking about motivation (23 questions), learning methods (22 questions), and basic English competency (giving a basic English competency test).

Variable X1: Motivation is a process that explains the intensity, direction, and persistence of an individual in learning to achieve their goals. Based on Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, Douglas McGregor's X and Y theory, and contemporary motivation theory, the meaning of motivation is a reason underlying an action carried out by an individual. Someone who is said to have high motivation means that the person has a very strong reason to achieve what they want by doing their current job.

Meanwhile, variable  $X_2$  is the method, which is the operational or implemented steps of the chosen learning strategy in achieving learning objectives. The accuracy of a method will show the functioning of a learning strategy. Learning strategies are still conceptual, and to implement them, various specific learning methods are used. In other words, strategy is "a plan of operation for achieving something," while method is "a way of achieving something" (Sanjaya, 2010), and for variable  $X_3$ , English knowledge ability is the basic capital for participating in the TOEFL preparation training program.

In this research, four research variables have been determined, which are the research objects, which are grouped into three independent variables ( $X_1$ ,  $X_2$ ,  $X_3$ ) and one dependent variable ( $Y$ ). Because the researcher intends to analyze the condition or influence (rise and fall) of the dependent variable  $Y$ , if the 3 independent variables  $X_1$ ,  $X_2$ , and  $X_3$  as predictor factors are manipulated, the value of which is increased and decreased, in this research, it is known that there are three predictor factors, so multiple regression analysis of three predictors is used. This was done to determine the regression equation for the relationship between variable ( $X_1$ ) learning motivation, variable ( $X_2$ ) learning method, and variable ( $X_3$ ) English language knowledge competency, which together affect variable ( $Y$ ) achieving optimal learning outcomes in the TOEFL training program.

Multiple regression analysis using these three predictors is used to predict how the value of the dependent variable will change if the independent value is increased or decreased. Because this research analyzes three independent variables ( $X_1$ ,  $X_2$ , and  $X_3$ ) that are considered predictor variables, the regression equation formula for these three predictors is as follows: (Sugiyono, 2011)

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3$$

The following is also shown in the form of an image illustration of the multiple correlation analysis to test the relationship between the three independent variables ( $X_1$ ,  $X_2$ , and  $X_3$ ) together with the dependent variable ( $Y$ ), which was carried out in this research.

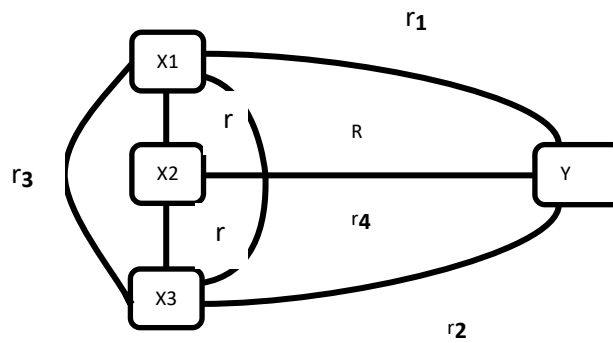


Figure-2: Multiple regression of three predictors (Sugiyono, 2011)

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After testing the validity and reliability of the instrument for variable  $X_1$  (motivation) and variable  $X_2$  (method) using the IBM SPSS Statistics Version 22 software application, the output results obtained were that from the 23 questions on variable  $X_1$  (motivation), it showed that item 05 and item 20 are invalid, that is, if the Pearson correlation value is 0.208 for item 05 and 0.308 for item 20, then the data for item 05 and item 20 is ignored (dropped). Meanwhile, for variable  $X_2$  (method), the output results show that of the 22 questions in the questionnaire, it turns out that item 01 is invalid, namely at a Pearson correlation value of 0.430, so the data for item 01 is ignored (dropped).

Next, test the reliability of the instrument for variables  $X_1$  and  $X_2$ . The reliability test method used here is the Cronbach's alpha method because the research data is in the form of a score on a scale of 1–5. To determine whether an instrument is reliable or not, certain limits are usually used, such as 0.6. According to Sekaran (1992), if the reliability is less than 0.6, then the instrument is not good, whereas 0.7 is acceptable and above 0.8 is good. From the output results in Table 1, it showed that the reliability value (Cronbach's alpha) for variable  $X_1$  (motivation) is 0.909, so it can be concluded that the variable  $X_1$  instrument in this study was reliable and "good". Meanwhile, the variable instrument  $X_2$  (method) showed that its reliability value (Cronbach's alpha) is 0.949, and it could be concluded that this instrument  $X_2$  was reliable and "good".

Tabel-1 Output of Reliability Testing Results for Variable Instruments  $X_1$  and  $X_2$  with the IBM SPSS Version 22 software application

Reliability

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary			
		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure

X <sub>1</sub> : motivation	
Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.909	21

X <sub>2</sub> : method	
Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.949	21

Next, test the normality of the data; the results obtained are as shown in Table 2 below.

Tabel-2 SPSS Version 22 output, normality test results for variable data  $X_1$ ,  $X_2$ ,  $X_3$ , and Y

	Tests of Normality					
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Motivation (X1)	.111	40	.200*	.949	40	.068
Method (X2)	.103	40	.200*	.948	40	.067
English Competency (X3)	.177	40	.003	.950	40	.076
Optimal Score (Y)	.105	40	.200*	.953	40	.093

\*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

From the output figures above, it shows that the significant value for variable  $X_1$  is 0.068;  $X_2$  is 0.067;  $X_3$  is 0.076; and Y is 0.093. The four variables, namely  $X_1$ ,  $X_2$ ,  $X_3$ , and Y, show significant figures  $> 0.05$ . The interpretation of these results means that the four variables

have a normal data distribution. Therefore, for further data processing, the author will process the data using parametric methods.

Next, a correlation test was carried out to see how significant the relationship between these variables was, namely for variable  $X_1$ : motivation, variable  $X_2$ : method, and variable  $X_3$ : English competency. After the test was carried out, the results were obtained as shown in Table 3 below.

Tabel-3 Output Data Processing Results with SPSS Version 22 for the Correlation Test

Variable data $X_1$ , $X_2$ , $X_3$ , and Y				
Descriptive Statistics				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	
Variable_ $X_1$	90.23	7.850	40	
Variable_ $X_2$	91.00	8.118	40	
Variable_ $X_3$	86.00	8.336	40	
Variable	267.23	22.217	40	

Correlations					
		Variable $X_1$	Variable $X_2$	Variable $X_3$	Variable Y
Variable $X_1$	Pearson Correlation	1	.802**	.847**	.964**
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	40	40	40	40
Variable $X_2$	Pearson Correlation	.802**	1	.618**	.880**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	40	40	40	40
Variable $X_3$	Pearson Correlation	.847**	.618**	1	.900**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	40	40	40	40
Variable Y	Pearson Correlation	.964**	.880**	.900**	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	40	40	40	40

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the data above, it can be interpreted as follows: first, the learning motivation of TOEFL preparation training program participants have a big influence on achieving TOEFL score results. This could be seen from the research findings which showed a significant correlation number, namely 0.964; secondly, the learning method used in the TOEFL preparation training program has a significant effect on the participants' achievement of learning outcomes, this was shown by a correlation figure of 0.880; then third, the competence in English knowledge of the TOEFL preparation training program of participants had a significant effect on the correlation number of 0.900 on the achievement of learning outcomes in the form of optimal TOEFL scores, and finally fourth, the high and low levels of achievement of learning outcomes in the TOEFL preparation training program were influenced by 100% by three determinative factors, namely learning motivation, learning methods, and competency in mastering basic English knowledge of the participants. This was found from the research results, which showed that the adjusted R square coefficient of determination was 1,000. These figures showed that the percentage contribution of the influence of these three factors (independent variables  $X_1$ ,  $X_2$ ,  $X_3$ ), then the learning outcomes in the TOEFL preparation training program will increase by 1 unit assuming other factors remain constant.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this research was that the three factors that are independent variables are:  $X_1$ : motivation;  $X_2$ : methods; and  $X_3$ : competency in mastering basic English knowledge. These factors have shown a very significant influence on the dependent variable Y: achieving optimal learning outcomes in the TOEFL preparation training program, with a significant correlation value of 0.964, 0.880, and 0.900. The findings of this research show that learning motivation factors and competency in mastering basic English knowledge are recommended to be further improved before participating in the TOEFL preparation training program so that the maximum expected results, in this case the desired TOEFL score, can be achieved more quickly.

Make sure prospective TOEFL preparation training participants have sufficient and good knowledge of English. The TOEFL preparation training program is not about learning basic English like in courses, but more about learning tricks and strategies for model questions in the TOEFL test. If you haven't mastered basic English well, it's best to study it first before joining the training program, because this can help save time, and when you join the TOEFL preparation training class, you won't have any difficulties.

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