

EXPLORING LEARNING STRATEGIES USED BY ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNERS TO SUSTAIN ENGLISH ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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Abstract: This study investigates how organizational learners sustain their English academic achievement while actively participating in campus organizations. The research aims to explore the strategies used by well-managed organizational learners and to identify the challenges and coping strategies they employ in balancing academic and organizational responsibilities. A qualitative approach with a narrative inquiry design was applied. The participants were three students from the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Universitas Islam Malang who were actively involved in campus organizations and had maintained a minimum GPA of 3.25. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and supported by academic transcripts to verify sustained achievement. The findings reveal that organizational learners utilize meta-cognitive and resource management strategies including practicing English through organizational roles such as being masters of ceremonies, participating in English discussion programs, and joining competitions. Meta-cognitive strategy involves time management and goal clarity, resource management including self-regulation and managing external distractions. Although participants faced challenges such as fatigue and limited study time, they successfully coped through prioritization, scheduling, and clear academic goals. The study concludes that well-managed organizational involvement can positively support English academic achievement when accompanied by effective learning strategies.

Keywords: Organizational Learners, English Learning Strategies, Academic Achievement, Time Management, EFL

INTRODUCTION

The mastery of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has become a crucial competence for university students in non-English-speaking countries, including Indonesia. Language Learning Strategies (LLSs) are trusted to be an influential factor affecting the students' success in English learning (Ismiatun, F, et al., 2019). English functions not only as a compulsory academic subject but also as a gateway to global knowledge, academic

resources, and future career opportunities. However, many EFL learners still experience difficulties in achieving satisfactory proficiency due to limited exposure and insufficient opportunities to practice English authentically. Zuhairi et al. (2020) note that learners need learning strategies to reach the target language

At the same time, student participation in campus organizations is widely recognized as a means of developing soft skills such as leadership, communication, and teamwork. Organizational activities may also provide informal contexts for English use, such as discussions, presentations, and event coordination. Misra et al., (2000) discovered that using an organizational approach in the work place reduced academic stressors. Despite common assumptions that organizational involvement may hinder academic performance, several studies have shown that students who actively join organizations can maintain or even improve their academic achievement when supported by effective learning strategies. Patunru et al., 2020 found that students who are active in an organization are able to increase their grade point average (GPA) which can be used by students to get scholarships.

A study conducted by Making et al., 2023 revealed that the most important thing that all students do is to set a schedule for each of their activities, so that the time used becomes effective. Organizational activities are widely regarded as a platform for students to hone their soft skills, such as leadership, communication, teamwork, and problem-solving.

Balancing academic responsibilities and organizational commitments requires strong self-regulation, time management, and goal clarity. Therefore, understanding how organizational learners manage their English academic achievement is important to provide insights into sustainable learning practices in higher education. This study aims to explore how organizational learners handle their English academic achievement and to identify the challenges and coping strategies they use in balancing academic and organizational activities.

METHOD

This research employed a qualitative narrative inquiry design to capture participants' lived experiences in sustaining English academic achievement while being active in campus organizations. As Connelly and Clandinin (2006) explain, narrative inquiry values participants' voices and the meanings they attach to their experiences, making it especially appropriate for studies that seek to understand personal strategies, motivations, and challenges in sustaining academic achievement. The study was conducted at the Faculty of

Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Islam Malang. Three participants were purposively selected based on the criteria of active organizational involvement and sustained academic achievement with a minimum GPA of 3.25.

Data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted both face-to-face and online. To support the credibility of the findings, academic transcripts were used as documentary evidence. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), using multiple data sources allows researchers to cross-check and corroborate information, providing a more comprehensive and credible understanding of the phenomenon under study. The data were analyzed using narrative analysis, involving transcription, familiarization, thematic identification, cross-case analysis, and interpretation. Member checking was applied to ensure trustworthiness. According to Gunawan et al. (2020) highlight that this practice respects the participants' perspectives and empowers them to contribute actively to the research process. Member checking is not merely a final step but an ongoing collaborative process between the researcher and participants

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that organizational learners employ a combination of meta-cognitive and resource management strategies to sustain their academic achievement. This combination aligns with the idea that learning strategies are dynamic and should be adjusted according to the learners' contexts and challenges (Zhou & Wang, 2021). These strategies were reflected in participants' active use of English during organizational activities. This finding supports Oxford (2020), who argues that language learning strategies involve meaningful engagement with the target language in authentic contexts, enabling learners to strengthen fluency and confidence. Roles such as acting as masters of ceremonies, participating in English discussion programs, and joining competitions provided authentic opportunities to practice speaking, expand vocabulary, and build confidence. This supports Oxford's view that strategies enhance language proficiency through real-life language use.

Meta-cognitive strategies involved time management, goal clarity, and self-regulation. This result aligns with Dignath and Veenman (2021), who emphasize that self-regulation and metacognitive control play a crucial role in helping learners manage multiple academic demands effectively. Participants reported challenges such as fatigue, limited study time, and

disruptions from team members. To cope with these challenges, they set clear priorities, created structured schedules, and maintained firm academic goals. These findings align with Richardson et al. (2022), who emphasize the importance of non-cognitive factors such as goal clarity and self-regulation in sustaining academic performance.

Furthermore, organizational involvement contributed to increased self-confidence and classroom participation. In line with Lintner et al. (2024), public speaking plays an important role in higher education and significantly contributes to students' academic achievement as well as their future professional success. Participants became more active in discussions and more confident in expressing their ideas in English, which positively influenced their academic performance. This finding is consistent with previous studies highlighting the role of organizational activities in developing communication skills and academic engagement.

Overall, the results show that organizational learners do not rely solely on classroom instruction but integrate organizational experiences into their English learning process. This reflects the principles of 21st-century learning, where collaboration, communication, and real-world application are central to academic success (Trilling & Fadel, 2021). When managed effectively, organizational involvement becomes a supportive learning environment rather than a distraction.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study concludes that organizational learners at Universitas Islam Malang are able to sustain their English academic achievement by applying effective learning strategies. Organizational activities provide meaningful contexts for English practice, while indirect strategies such as time management, goal clarity, and self-regulation help learners cope with challenges.

It is suggested that students actively involved in organizations develop clear academic goals and effective time management strategies. Student organizations and institutions are encouraged to design programs that support academic development, particularly English learning. Future research may involve larger samples or different contexts to further explore the relationship between organizational involvement and English academic achievement.

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