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Learners' Affection and Cognition: Their Interrelationship in Learning English

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Abstract: *Cognition is often used to find out how far someone has mastered the material that has been taught by educational goals. In addition to mastery of teaching materials, cognition is also influenced by affection. Students' affection in learning English varies, there are students who show good affection, namely students feel happy and are active in taking part in the learning process. There are also those who show an affection that is not happy with the learning process, has an indifferent affection (apathy), is not active, talks to themselves and does not pay attention to the teacher's explanation. This study aims to determine how the correlation between the learners' affection and cognition in learning English. This type of research is correlational research. The population of this study were all eighth-grade students at Makale Christian Junior High School, which amounted to 168 students. The sampling technique used was cluster random sampling. Based on the cluster random sampling technique, the class used as a sample is class VIII A as many as 32 students. The instrument used in this research is to use a questionnaire and a test. Pearson Product Moment correlation test is used to determine the correlation between affection and cognition. Based on the correlation test, the correlation coefficient value is 0.144. Because the value of r count is lower than the value of r table (0.140 < 0.286) then there is a negative correlation between learners' affection and cognition which are in the exceptionally low category. This means that the lower the student's affection the lower the result of learning English.*

Keywords: *Interrelationship, Learner's Affection and Cognition, Learning English*

INTRODUCTION

English learning outcomes hold a crucial role in the teaching and learning process because they reflect the extent to which students achieve or master the three main domains of learning: affective/attitude, behavioral/psychomotor, and cognitive/knowledge—commonly abbreviated as the A, B, and C aspects (Kemdikbud, 2017). These outcomes serve as measurable indicators of change, growth, and mastery after students have participated in classroom activities. Among

these domains, cognition has traditionally been considered a central variable in the learning process, as it relates directly to the acquisition, processing, and application of knowledge. Consequently, in many educational settings, teachers have placed a heavy emphasis on the cognitive domain, viewing it as the primary measure of academic achievement.

However, such an emphasis on cognition often comes at the expense of another equally important dimension of learning—affection. The affective domain involves the feelings, attitudes, values, and emotional engagement of learners in the learning process. Affection reflects a teacher's ability to demonstrate care, provide guidance, and protect students in ways that foster a positive classroom environment. When affection is present, students tend to feel more comfortable, happy, and motivated to engage in the subject matter. Moreover, positive teacher–student relationships are strengthened, leading to a more holistic and meaningful learning experience.

In the current era of post-pandemic or "normal" learning, students are spending more structured time in academic settings, both through face-to-face sessions and, in some cases, hybrid learning formats. Learning sessions may vary in duration—from one-hour periods for individual subjects to longer blocks of time in traditional learning schedules. These changes in learning structure have the potential to influence students' cognitive engagement and performance in English. At the same time, the way students emotionally connect with their learning environment and their teachers—their affection—also plays a vital role in shaping their cognitive outcomes.

Previous studies in the past five years have reinforced the importance of balancing affective and cognitive domains in language learning. Putri et al. (2021) demonstrated that teacher immediacy—both verbal and non-verbal—has a significant positive impact on students' affective engagement, which in turn enhances cognitive achievement in EFL classrooms. Similarly, Cai and Demmans Epp (2024) showed that affective signals such as heart rate and electrodermal activity could be used to better predict cognitive load in English literacy games, highlighting the deep connection between affect and cognition. Hayashida (2025) found that affective-oriented prompts in AI-mediated language learning significantly increased motivation and learner perceptions, which positively influenced cognitive engagement. A longitudinal study in Frontiers in Psychology (2022) revealed that changes in emotional factors over time can shape learners' cognitive beliefs and performance, especially in pre-service English teacher education. Moreover, Astuti et al. (2024) reported that teacher cognition—beliefs and attitudes—has a profound influence on students' affective involvement and cognitive performance, emphasizing the need for teachers to be aware of the affective climate they create in classrooms.

Despite these valuable contributions, most studies either examine the affective or cognitive domain in isolation or focus on higher education contexts, with limited attention to the correlation between the two in junior high school settings. Furthermore, there is a lack of research exploring this correlation during the post-pandemic transition to normal classroom learning, when changes in emotional climate and learning structure could influence students' English learning outcomes.

During preliminary observations in Internship Program, conducted from January to March at SMP Kristen Makale, the researcher identified a gap in how affection and cognition interact during the learning process. The return to regular classroom learning highlighted variations in how students responded emotionally and cognitively to the new learning rhythm. While cognitive activities were prioritized, the affective connections between teachers and students sometimes appeared less emphasized, potentially influencing overall learning outcomes.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on investigating the correlation between learners' affection and cognition in the context of English language learning during the transition back to normal, face-to-face learning after pandemic-related disruptions. Unlike previous research that often focused on one domain or examined both domains separately, this study seeks to analyze their relationship holistically within the same population and under specific post-pandemic classroom conditions. The findings are expected to contribute new perspectives for English teachers, enabling them to design instructional approaches that balance both emotional engagement and cognitive development to maximize learning outcomes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Teaching - Learning in Normal Era

Given that the COVID-19 pandemic epidemic continues to have an impact on practically every aspect of life, including the work world itself, the normal learning era has recently been a hot issue of discussion. The success of students in the learning process in the new normal age cannot be determined solely by the learning outcomes attained in the form of assignments; rather, it must also consider how well students can learn on their own (Rahman&Bhakti,2020).

The implementation of limited face-to-face learning has been carried out by schools during the pandemic by implementing two learning sessions a day. These study sessions are divided into morning study sessions and afternoon study sessions. But after the introduction of the Return to normal learning sessions were no longer used by schools after the easing of covid-19. School is back to normal where each subject is full two to three hours (Indrawan, 2020). For this reason, what is the attitude of students and student learning outcomes where they used to be with only 1 hour of carrying out each subject and returning to normal learning. This is what can affect students' English learning outcomes.

2. Attitude Dimensions

a. The Concept of Affection

According to Meirno and Sarwano (2009) affection is mental readiness, that is, a process that takes place in a person, together with the individual experiences of each one, leading and determining the response to different objects and situations. A person will behave or behave a certain way if he faces certain stimuli that come from within him.

Affection is the belief that a person knows a relatively fixed object or situation, which is accompanied by the presence of certain feelings, and provides a basis for the person to make a response or behave in a certain way that he chooses (Walgito, 2000).

Table 1. *Affection Aspect*

No	Affection Aspect Positive	Affection Aspect Negative
1.	Listen to the teacher when explaining	Not listening to the teacher when explaining or playing with my desk mates
2.	participate in a class discussion about the lesson	Often ask for out-of-class permission
3.	Passion and enjoyment in following a lesson	Bored in following a lesson
4.	Propose group activities for a subject matter	lazy in participating in group activities

According to Jihat (2008) and Walgito (2000), affection consists of three components, namely affective, cognitive, and conative. The affective component is the feeling that a person or its appraiser has towards something object (happy and unhappy). Affection determines the type or character of behavior in relation to relevant stimulants, people, or events. The characteristics of the attitude are as follows:

1) Attitude is learned (learnability), affection is a learning result that needs to be distinguished from other psychological motives.
2) Having stability, affection starts from being learned, and then becomes stronger, fixed, and stable, through experience.
3) Personal-Societal Significance, affection involves the relationship between a person and another person and between people and goods or situations.
4) Contains Cognates and Affects, the cognition component of the attitude is to contain information.
5) Approach-Avoidance Directionality, when someone has a favorable attitude towards an object, they will approach and help it, on the other hand if someone has an unfavorable attitude, they will avoid it.

b. The Concept of Behavior

Behavior is defined as an individual's attempt to create or maintain a particular situation, whether it be to change from one to another or to keep one that already exists (Osorio, 2006).

Table 2. *Behavior Aspect*

No	Behavior Aspect Positive	Behavior Aspect Negative
1.	There is readiness to follow a lesson	Absence of readiness to follow a lesson
2.	Respond to questions given by the teacher	not responding to the teacher asking

c. The Concept of Cognition

The outcome of learning, in the words of Hamalik (2003), is the occurrence of behavioral changes in a person that can be seen and assessed in the form of knowledge, attitudes, and abilities. The occurrence of improvement and

development that is better than before, and the ignorant becoming aware, can be understood as the shift.

Table 3. *Cognition Aspect*

No.	Cognition Aspect Positive	Cognition Aspect Negative
1.	Remembering the material that has been studied	Not remembering the material that has been provided
2.	Understanding the material studied	Not understanding the material provided
3.	Applying / working on the material and tasks studied	Not working on assignments and not applying materials

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted at SMP Kristen Makale, located at Jl. Nusantara No. 6/102 Makale, Kelurahan Bombongan, Kecamatan Makale, Kabupaten Tana Toraja, South Sulawesi. The target population was all students of class VIII in the school. A sample refers to a subset of the population that shares similar characteristics with the whole and serves as the source of research data (Creswell, 2014).

The research sample was determined using the cluster random sampling technique. Cluster random sampling is a method of selecting samples based on naturally occurring groups or clusters, particularly when the study population is geographically dispersed or divided into administrative units (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). This approach was chosen to ensure representativeness while maintaining practicality in data collection. Based on this method, one cluster was selected: class VIII A of SMP Kristen Makale, consisting of 32 students.

The research instruments used were a test and a questionnaire. The test was designed to measure students' cognitive achievement in English, while the questionnaire aimed to collect data on students' affective aspects, such as motivation and attitudes toward learning English. A research instrument is defined as any tool used by researchers to collect data systematically and reliably (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010). The questionnaire employed closed-ended questions to obtain quantifiable responses, which were easier to analyze statistically (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This research is correlational research that aims to determine the correlation between the learners' affection and cognition in learning English. This study used 32 students, namely class VIII A as a randomly selected sample using cluster random sampling students. In the researcher teaches and recalls the lessons of odd semesters and even semesters. After that, the researcher gave a test after giving instructions to class VIII A students to find out the cognition of students in learning English. Below is the description of the students' score in affection and cognition aspects:

Table 4. *Students' score in affection and cognition aspects*

No	Affection Scor	Cognition Scor
1	57	76
2	58	68
3	56	80
4	52	76
5	59	60
6	58	80
7	58	64
8	53	68
9	58	64
10	57	56
11	55	60
12	54	80
13	52	60
14	56	64
15	66	64
16	60	56
17	60	52
18	54	56
19	54	84
20	55	60
21	55	60
22	62	64
23	60	76
24	61	68
25	61	52
26	53	60
27	63	64
28	46	52
29	51	84
30	65	68
31	54	52
32	64	48

Descriptive Statistical Results of Measuring Research Variables

Descriptive analysis of the variables of affection and cognition in English learning is used to determine the average value, maximum value, minimum value, and standard deviation on both variables. The results can be clearly seen in Table 5 below.

Table 5. *Description of Both Variables*

Statistics	Affection	Cognition
Sample Size	32	32
Average Value	57,09	64.87
Standard Deviation	4,43	10,09
Highest Value	66	84
Lowest Value	46	48

The results in Table 5 indicate that the average affection score (M = 57.09, SD = 4.43) falls within a relatively narrow range, with scores ranging from 46 to 66. This small standard deviation suggests that students' affective responses toward learning English tend to be quite homogeneous, indicating a generally similar level of motivation, interest, and emotional engagement. However, the relatively moderate mean score implies that there is still room for improvement in fostering more positive attitudes and stronger emotional connections to English learning.

In contrast, the average cognition score (M = 64.87, SD = 10.09) is higher than the affection means, but with a much larger standard deviation. This wider variability, with scores ranging from 48 to 84, suggests a greater disparity in students' cognitive achievement levels. Such variation may be influenced by differences in prior knowledge, learning strategies, or individual aptitude. The fact that cognitive performance is higher on average than affection could imply that some students are able to achieve good academic results despite having moderate affective engagement.

These findings highlight the importance of addressing both affective and cognitive domains in English language instruction. While cognitive skills are essential for language mastery, nurturing positive attitudes and emotional engagement could lead to more consistent and equitable cognitive outcomes across the student population.

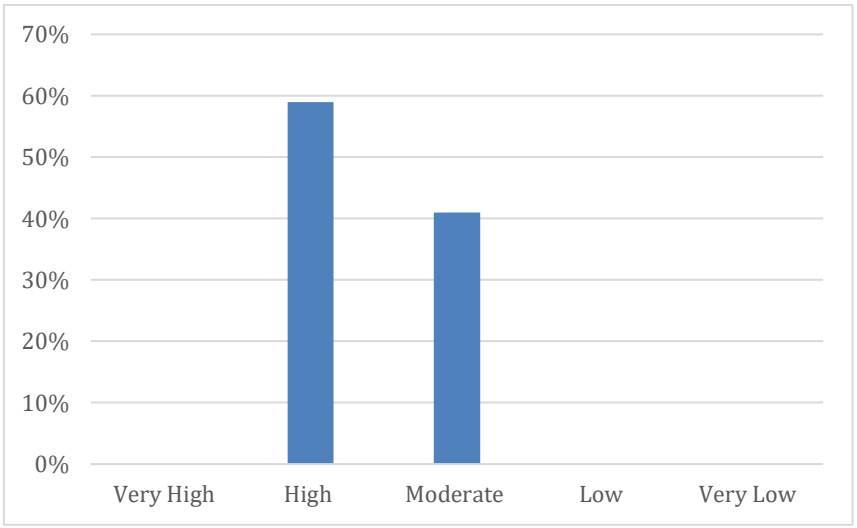
Student Affection in English Language Learning

Many options on each item there are 4, then the maximum score obtained is 4 × 20 = 80 and the minimum score is 1 × 20 = 20, thus obtained the following interval:

$$\text{Interval} = \frac{\text{highest score} - \text{lowest score}}{\textit{the number of categories}} = \frac{8 - 20}{5} = 12$$

Based on five predetermined categories, an interval value of 12 was obtained. The minimum score obtained by students is 20 and the maximum score is 80. The following presentation of the percentage diagram of the frequency of measuring student affection in English learning can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1. *Affection Measurement Frequency Diagram*



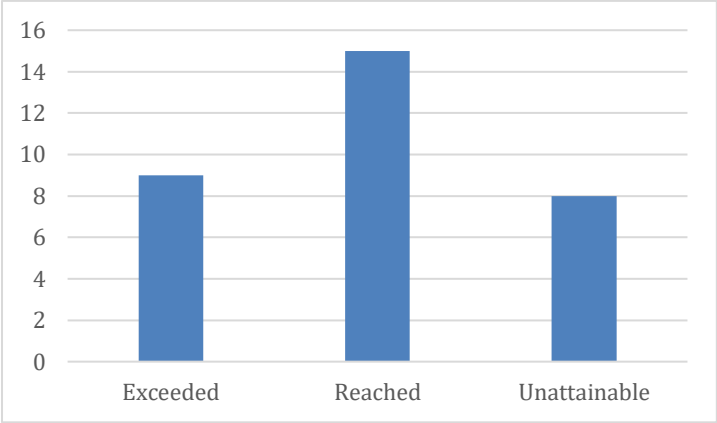
Based on Figure 1, the data show that the majority of students' affection toward learning English falls into the high category (59%), with the remaining 41% in the moderate category. Notably, there are no students in the low or very low categories, indicating that all participants possess at least a moderate level of positive emotional engagement, interest, and motivation in learning English.This distribution suggests that the affective domain among students is generally strong, which is an encouraging indicator for the learning process. The absence of low-affection scores also indicates that there are no major motivational or attitudinal barriers that could significantly hinder learning outcomes.

However, the presence of 41% of students in the moderate category implies that nearly half of the class still has room for improvement in terms of emotional engagement. Targeted strategies—such as interactive learning activities, personalized feedback, and culturally relevant materials—could be implemented to elevate their affection to the high category, further maximizing the potential for academic success.

Cognition in Learning English

Thus, the following categories can be determined: exceeded with a value above 75, achieved with a value equal to 70 and not yet reached with a value of less than 70. The following presentation of the diagram of the frequency of measurement of cognition can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2. *Diagram of the Frequency of Measurement Cognition*



Based on Figure 4.2, student cognition as measured by the test results shows a varied distribution of achievement relative to the school's Minimum Mastery Criteria of 75. Nine students (28.1%) scored above the KKM, placing them in the exceeded category, indicating strong mastery of the learning material. Fifteen students (46.9%) scored exactly at the Minimum Mastery Criteria, categorized as reached, meaning they met the minimum competency standard but may still benefit from further enrichment to deepen their understanding. The remaining eight students (25%) scored below the Minimum Mastery Criteria, falling into the unattainable category, which signals a need for remedial support and targeted instructional interventions.

This distribution suggests that while a majority of students (75%) have met or surpassed the school's cognitive competency standards, a significant proportion (25%) are struggling to reach the minimum benchmark. Furthermore, the relatively small percentage of students in the exceeded category points to potential areas for improving higher-order thinking skills so more learners can progress beyond the basic competency threshold.

These results highlight the importance of balanced instructional strategies that not only ensure all students meet the Minimum Mastery Criteria but also encourage more learners to excel beyond the minimum standard.

Prerequisite Test

Before processing data using the *Product Moment* correlation technique, a prerequisite test is first carried out. Such prerequisite tests include normality tests and linearity tests calculated using the help of the *SPSS25.0 for windows* program.

Normality testing in this study was carried out to find out whether all research variables were normally distributed or not.

Table 6. *Normality Test Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]*

	Statistic	df	Sig.
Affection	.088	32	.200*
Cogntion	.160	32	.037

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

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Based on Table 6 it is said that the significant value for the affection variable is 0.200, the significance value for the affection variable is greater than 0.05. The significant value for the cognition variable is 0.037, the significance value for the cognition variable is greater than 0.05. Normality results show that all research variables have a significance value greater than 0.05 at (sig>0.05), so it can be concluded that the research data are normally distributed.

Correlation Analysis Results

Because the research data is normally and linearly distributed, Pearson product moment correlation analysis is used. Table 6 shows the results of Pearson product moment correlation analysis between affection and cognition.

Table 7. *SPSS Calculation Results Product Moment Correlation*

Correlations

		Affection	Cognition
Affection	Pearson Correlation	1	.140
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.444
	N	32	32
Cogntion	Pearson Correlation	-.140	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.444	
	N	32	32

Based on Table 7 is shown the sig value. (2-tailed) less than 0.01 i.e. 0.444. This means that there is a correlation between affection and cognition in learning English. To determine the magnitude of the level of correlation between variables, an assessment criterion is used for the correlation coefficient. Based on the table above, the value of the Person Correlation coefficient is 0.140. This means that between affection and cognition in learning English there is negative and has very low correlation. A negative sign indicates a negative correlation, meaning that the lower the student's affection, the lower the cognition learning English.

DISCUSSION

This study examined the correlation between learners' affection and cognition in English learning among class VIII A students at SMP Kristen Makale. The descriptive analysis of the affection variable showed that 59% of students (19 students) were in the high category and 41% (13 students) were in the moderate category, with no students in the low or very low categories. This indicates that the class as a whole possesses a strong emotional engagement, motivation, and positive attitude toward learning English. The absence of low-category scores suggests that there are no major motivational barriers to learning. However, the proportion of students in the moderate category also indicates room to further enhance affective engagement through interactive learning approaches and materials that connect with students' interests.

In terms of cognition, measured through a 25-item test based on the school's Minimum Mastery Criteria of 75, the results revealed that nine students (28.1%) scored above the Minimum Mastery Criteria (exceeded category), fifteen students (46.9%) met the KKM (reached category), and eight students (25%) scored below the KKM (unattainable category). This distribution shows that while three-quarters of students reached or exceeded the expected standard, one-quarter of the class requires targeted academic support to meet the minimum competency. Furthermore, the relatively small number of students exceeding the Minimum Mastery Criteria suggests the need to develop higher-order thinking skills and mastery beyond the basic standard.

When the relationship between the two variables was tested using the Pearson Product Moment correlation, and after confirming the normality and linearity assumptions, the analysis showed a correlation coefficient of –0.140, which is lower than the r-table value of 0.286, with a significance level of 0.444 (> 0.01). This indicates a very low, negative, and statistically non-significant relationship between affection and cognition. In practical terms, higher affective engagement did not necessarily correspond with higher cognitive achievement in this sample.

These findings are consistent with those of Sengkey and Galag (2017), who found no significant correlation between motivation, attitude, and English achievement among high school students in Manado, as well as Denarti and Damayanti (2023), who reported a weak or non-existent relationship between motivation types and English achievement. Similarly, Manalu (2017) observed no meaningful correlation between attitudes, motivation, and achievement among tertiary-level learners. In contrast, Agustrianti, Cahyono, and Laksmi (2016) found a strong positive correlation between motivation and literacy skills in university students, suggesting that the affection–cognition relationship may vary depending on the language skill measured and learning context.

A possible explanation for the negative direction in this study is that some students with high affection toward English may not yet possess effective study strategies, metacognitive skills, or sufficient linguistic foundations to turn enthusiasm into strong test results. Conversely, students with moderate affection might employ disciplined study habits, enabling them to meet or maintain the Minimum Mastery Criteria. This interpretation is supported by the expectancy–value theory, which asserts that achievement is shaped not only by the value

learners place on a task but also by their expectations of success and the strategies they apply (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002).

Therefore, while the students in this study generally showed positive affect toward learning English, this did not necessarily lead to higher cognitive performance. The very low and negative correlation found suggests that emotional engagement alone is insufficient to guarantee academic success. Therefore, instructional approaches should integrate motivational enhancement with explicit skills instruction, targeted feedback, and strategic learning support. By combining affective and cognitive development strategies, educators can help ensure that students' enthusiasm for learning English is effectively transformed into measurable improvements in academic performance.

CONCLUSION

This research investigated the correlation between learners' affection and cognition in English learning among grade VIII A students at SMP Kristen Makale. The results revealed that the majority of students demonstrated high to moderate affection toward learning English, with no participants in the low or very low categories. This indicates a generally positive emotional attitude and motivation toward the subject. In terms of cognition, most students achieved or exceeded the school's Minimum Mastery Criteria, although a quarter of the class did not meet the standard, highlighting the need for academic support for some learners.

The Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis showed a very low, negative, and non-significant relationship between affection and cognition ($r = -0.140$, $p = 0.444$). This finding suggests that higher affective engagement did not necessarily correspond with higher cognitive achievement in this context. While positive attitudes and motivation are important, they alone are insufficient to ensure academic success without the support of effective learning strategies, metacognitive skills, and targeted instructional practices.

In light of these results, it is recommended that English language instruction at SMP Kristen Makale integrate motivational strategies with explicit skill development, targeted feedback, and cognitive training. Such an approach may strengthen the link between students' emotional engagement and their academic performance, ensuring that enthusiasm for English learning is matched by measurable achievement gains.

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