

## Investigating EFL Learners' Engagement in Online Language Learning Platforms : Case Study

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### Abstrak

Melibatkan siswa dengan menggunakan platform pembelajaran bahasa online dalam proses pembelajaran dapat memberikan pengalaman belajar yang bermakna. Akibatnya, jika peserta didik yang termotivasi positif dalam kegiatan belajar, prestasi yang baik juga akan terlihat. Namun, dalam konteks EFL Indonesia, ada guru yang melakukan pelajaran bahasa Inggris dengan dukungan e-learning di sekolah tanpa memperhatikan sejauh mana keterlibatan siswa mempengaruhi prestasi mereka. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkapkan hasil statistik keterlibatan siswa EFL dalam platform pembelajaran bahasa online serta tiga tingkat keterlibatan yang diklasifikasikan (tinggi, sedang, rendah) di seluruh pencapaian siswa. Desain penelitian ini adalah studi kasus deskriptif. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui angket. Partisipannya adalah 70 mahasiswa EFL di IAIN Ponorogo. Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan statistik deskriptif.

**Kata kunci:** Platform Pembelajaran Bahasa Online, Pembelajaran EFL

### Abstract

Engaging students by using online language learning platforms in the learning process can give them meaningful learning experiences. In result, if learners who positively motivated in the learning activity, a good achievement will also be seen. However, in the Indonesian EFL context, there are teachers who conduct English lessons by e-learning supports in the school without noticing to what extent students' engagement affecting their achievement. Therefore, this study aims to reveal the statistical results of EFL students' engagement in online language learning platforms as well as three classified engagement levels (high, moderate, low) across students' achievement. The design of this study was a descriptive case study. The data were collected through questionnaire. The participants were 70 EFL students at IAIN Ponorogo. The data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics.

**Keywords:** Online Language Learning Platforms, EFL Learning

### INTRODUCTION

Digital technology can have a negative impact on the realm of education in the industrial era 4.0 if it is not used properly. As a result, an educator's awareness of the principles and factors that influence the usefulness of digital technology in learning is critical (Fatwa, 2020). Furthermore, Firman, (2020). stated that an educator must possess four skills in order to be effective. first, an educator must understand and be able to use digital technology and its applications. Second, having leadership skills that can guide students toward a technological understanding. Third, the ability to accurately predict the direction of change's turmoil and to take strategic steps to deal with it. Fourth, being capable of controlling oneself in the face of change's turbulence and dealing with it through the generation of ideas, innovation, and creativity.

The entire world, including Indonesia, has been exposed to a dangerous virus known as COVID-19. One of the steps taken by the government is to reduce physical and social distances so that people can carry out all of their activities from the comfort of their own homes, a practice known as Work from Home (Fatwa, 2020). As a result of this policy, all daily

activities, be they economic, social, or political, are disrupted. In the world of education, in order to keep going even in the face of a pandemic, the government issued a policy regulating that learning take place through online learning (on the network), also known as online learning (Nahdi and Jatisunda, 2020). Distance learning has become more common during the current period of social distancing caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, educational institutions, teachers, and other industry entities have been working hard to transition classes online.

There are several previous studies that discuss the involvement of students in online learning, one of which shows that the implementation of online learning is not going well, because it does not deny the fact that online learning is very helpful in the learning process during a pandemic like now. Nejad, B., & Mahmoodi-Shahrehabaki, M. (2017) stated that the response from students has been unsatisfactory due to a number of factors, including a lack of signal in each student's area and the high cost of the data package used for online learning. Nambiar, D. (2020). stated that students will always try to participate in online learning even if the circumstances are extremely difficult, so it can be stated that students have full involvement in online learning. However, it is no secret that it is more difficult to pay attention to a computer screen than it is to in-person lectures. There are numerous distractions that can cause students to lose focus. Educators require innovative approaches that can keep students engaged until the end of the day.

Presentations that consist solely of text blocks are monotonous. Music, polls, and other forms of media are used by lecturers at IAIN Ponorogo in East Java to keep students' attention on the screen. It implies that educators must be able to create meaningful online engagement in order for students to pay attention and remain engaged in their online class. Learner engagement is an important factor to consider when developing an effective course, especially when aiming to improve learning outcomes (Dixson, 2010; Nguyen et al., 2018). According to Handelsman et al., identifying the level of learner engagement is beneficial for teachers when working with individual students or designing the classroom environment.

Throughout the literature, the term "engagement" has been addressed in various ways. This variation is due to how engagement is perceived in different contexts, as well as how it is affected by and relates to the educational environment. For instance, The above study's questionnaire was adapted from Diemer et al. (2017)'s student engagement questionnaire.

## **METHOD**

A descriptive case study and a qualitative approach were used in this study. According to Cresswell (2015), descriptive research is preliminary research that aims to portray the specific phenomena. In theory, this method were used to collect data on the impact of learning-at-home policies on students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Participants and Setting**

Purposive sampling is used to select samples. This study's sample consists of students from the IAIN Ponorogo English study program in Ponorogo Regency. The total number of samples in this study was 70 reading class students.

### **Data Collection**

Data were gathered using an online questionnaire filled out by students, which was supplemented by the results of student interviews. During online lectures using Google Classroom, two questionnaires are used: a student engagement questionnaire and a student response questionnaire. In this study, the data were gathered through questionnaires filled out online by respondents using the Google Forms application. The Likert scale has four levels of choice: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. During the pandemic, the questionnaire was used to collect information about teachers' perceptions of online learning. The student engagement questionnaire consists of 17 questions adapted from , a set of questionnaire that was developed by Dixson (2015) student engagement questionnaire. There are four types of engagement indicators used: involvement in skills such as giving your best

effort, emotional involvement such as an interesting learning process, and awareness that the knowledge gained is achievable. The questionnaire was in the form of a likert scale, with five-point scales questioning how well respondents described the following behavior, emotional participation, and cognitive engagement in online language learning platforms.

**Table 1. Question items across students' engagement aspects**

NO	Aspect and Indicators	SD	D	A	SA
<b>Behavioral</b>					
1	Making sure to study on a regular basis				
2	Doing all the homework problems				
3	Staying up on the readings				
4	Looking over class notes between classes to make sure I understand the material				
5	Taking good notes in online class from lecturer's explanation or material from PPT or video				
6	Listening carefully in online class via Zooming or Google Meet				
<b>Emotional</b>					
7	Putting forth effort in learning English				
8	Finding ways to make the course material relevant to my life				
9	Finding ways to make the course interesting to me				
10	Really desiring to learn the material				
11	Being confident that I can learn and do well in online class				
<b>Participating</b>					
12	Having fun in online discussion through zooming / Google meet , Chats from WhatsApp or Google classroom				
13	Participating actively in small group discussions in online forum discussion				
14	Engaging in online English conversation				
15	Getting to know other students' discussion				
<b>Cognitive</b>					
16	Doing well on the English test				
17	Getting good scores in English lesson				

### Data Analysis

The researchers analyzed the data obtained using statistical procedures such as descriptive statistics and the Kruskal-Wallis Test. Furthermore, the data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) program. To answer the first research question, the researcher used descriptive statistics to examine the results of a questionnaire filled out by participants.

### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

To obtain a basic picture of online student engagement among EFL students of English department of IAIN Ponorogo , a descriptive statistical analysis was used. The instrument contained a total of seventeen questions. The researchers divided the questionnaire into four sections: behavioral, emotional, participation, and cognitive.

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Students Behavioral Engagement**

Behavioral Engagement Deviation	Mean	Standard
Q1: Making sure to study on a regular basis	3.21	0.817
Q2: Doing all the homework problems	3.11	0.901
Q3: Staying up on the readings	3.22	0.98
Q4: Looking over class notes between classes to make sure I understand the material.	3.17	0.95
Q5: Taking good notes in online class from lecturer's explanation or material from PPT or video	3.32	0.939
Q6: Listening carefully in online class via Zooming or Google Meet	3.67	0.877
Total behavioral engagement	20.05	3,680

**Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Students Emotional Engagement**

Emotional Engagement Standard Deviation	Mean
Q7: Putting forth effort in learning English	3.62 0.18
Q8: Finding ways to make the course material relevant to my life	3.46 0.98
Q9: Finding ways to make the course interesting to me	3.24 0.87
Q10: Really desiring to learn the material	3.98 0.812
Q11: Being confident that I can learn and do well in online class	4.12 0.785
Total Emotional engagement 3.767	17.68

Table 3 displayed a mean score of students emotional is 17.68 and standard deviation of 3.767 which were collected by using the instrument contains five questions (Q2, Q8, Q9, Q10, Q11). These questions related to the students feel about the course that was particularly in online classroom.

**Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Students Participation Engagement**

Participation Engagement Deviation	Mean	Standard
Q12: Having fun in online discussion through zooming / Google meet , Chats from WhatsApp or Google classroom	3.88	0.957
Q13: Participating actively in small group discussions in online forum discussion	3.76	1.022
Q14: Engaging in online English conversation	3.44	0.972
Q15: Getting to know other students' discussion	4.12	0.917
Total Participation Engagement	18.47	3.976

Another aspect of online students' engagement, in the table 4, there was the interaction or participation aspect with 18.47 average score and the standard deviation of 3.976 with the instrument contains six questions (Q12, Q13, Q14, Q15). Those were talking about interacting with others and enjoying the online course

**Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Students Cognitive Engagement**

<b>Cognitive Engagement Deviation</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard</b>
Q16: Doing well on the English test	3.17	0.892
Q13: Getting good scores in English lesson	3.29	0.791
Total Cognitive Engagement	644	1452

Table 5 showed the students' cognitive engagement with 6.55 average score and the standard deviation of 1.552. It is collected by using the instrument contains two questions (Q15 and Q16) which relate to students' desire to succeed in the course.

Furthermore, the findings of previous studies have been subjected to various factor analyses. In a previous study, Azrin et al. (2020) found that cognitive engagement is the most important of the four engagement aspects, while behavioral engagement is the least important. The factor is due to the fact that the majority of their participants are graduate students who are involved in the discussion section rather than studying on a regular and independent basis. Essentially, in order to emerge with a good cognitive, interaction between peers and teacher is required (Dixson, 2015). Studies show that students are more engaged in online collaborative classes than in face-to-face classes (Pellas & Kazanidis, 2015; Saritepeci & akir, 2015). Furthermore, the cognitive and behavioral students' engagement can both decrease in a larger class because the students' responses in the discussion are not varied. It is also supported by another study, which found that the more cognitively engaged teachers are, the less cognitively and behaviorally engaged students are (Pilotti et al., 2017).

In contrast, the engagement of Indonesian EFL students in online learning in this study revealed that behavioral engagement is greater than cognitive engagement. It is because students prefer to study independently via online learning, and the teacher is less cognitively engaged (Pilotti et al., 2017). However, if a teacher found ways to engage students by conversing individually or in groups, their behavioral engagement increased; this is because students' behavioral engagement is linked to their participation engagement. The teacher is expected to communicate with students by giving them feedback. It has an impact on pupils since they are always engaged in the debate, as well as their participation and emotional engagement (Dixson, 2010; Nguyen et al., 2018).

Furthermore, students who were found to have a high level of behavioral engagement expressed a positive attitude and enthusiasm for participating in the online learning platform when an instructor offered them some exercises. On the other hand, because ideas in the application of e-learning cannot be articulated properly, students' cognitive engagement appeared difficult to comprehend (Adams et al., 2020). Furthermore, Azrin et al. (2020) and Mohd et al. (2017) asserted that students can be cognitively engaged by performing tasks such as task planning, monitoring, and review. Adams et al. (2020) discovered that students are more engaged cognitively before they engage emotionally in order to make themselves comfortable and correlate to each other. As a result, Manwaring et al. (2017) added that in order to support students' engagement growth in e-learning, teachers must understand their students' behavior, feelings, and thinking.

## CONCLUSION

This study gathered two findings based on the previous section's results and discussion. The first finding was that students were engaged positively in online language



learning platforms in all four engagement aspects, including behavioral, emotional, participation, and cognitive engagement. According to the findings of this study, the fundamental aspects that influence students' cognitive thinking are their engagement. Students will achieve better learning outcomes if they perform well in all aspects of engagement.

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