



Teacher's Perspective on Students' Engagement across Gender in Writing Class Using Google Classroom Platform

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Abstract

How teacher perceives students' interaction and activities can play a crucial role in assessing educational progress and cultivating a more fruitful and meaningful learning experience, particularly when considering the gender factor. This study aimed to investigate teacher's perspective regarding students' engagement across gender in a writing class using Google Classroom platform. It used qualitative approach through case study method. Purposive sampling technique was employed to select an English teacher at the vocational high school level that used Google Classroom in teaching writing as the participant of this study. To fulfill the research goal, teacher's interview were conducted which was supported by documentation to collect the data. For data analysis, an interactive model of analysis was employed to derive findings and conclusions of the research. The outcomes revealed a noticeable gap in students' engagement between male and female students in writing class facilitated by the Google Classroom platform, according to teacher perception. Female students engaged in online discussions had greater enthusiasm and actively responded to teacher's or other students' comments on online forum. In contrast, male students preferred to interact with their peers in real setting. It was influenced by their participation, performance, emotional responses, and skills.

Keywords: *Gender; Google Classroom; Students Engagement; Teacher Perspective; Writing*

Introduction

Students' engagement plays a crucial role in determining the level of students' interaction and activities that can contribute significantly to fostering a more productive and meaningful learning experience for students. Student engagement is defined as the active efforts undertaken by students to facilitate their learning (Tai et al., 2019). The essence of educational engagement is closely tied to the fundamental concept of learning itself. Regarding the learning process, Olson and Peterson (2015) stated that students' engagement refers to the degree of attention, curiosity, and eagerness that learners exhibit while acquiring knowledge, factors that stimulate their learning motivation. It contributes significantly to their overall educational experiences including boosting students' motivation to actively participate in learning, as well as fostering their active participation in endeavors related to enhancing and assuring the quality of education. Engagement comprises three fundamental aspects (Fredricks et al., 2004): 1) Emotional engagement entails students expressing favorable and unfavorable emotions regarding learning

to both their educators and fellow students involving emotions like positivity, self-assurance, frustration, or unease; 2) Behavioral engagement encompasses students' readiness to invest effort, show persistence in academic assignments, maintain focus, and engage actively in classroom conversations; 3) Cognitive engagement focuses on the assortment and nature of strategies learners employ to complete tasks or resolve problems, ultimately resulting in collaborative knowledge building and profound learning.

The significance of student engagement underscores the importance of their active participation in the classroom, playing a central role in academic accomplishments and student adaptability. Achieving optimal engagement among students in their academic pursuits signifies their attentiveness, thoughtfulness, and enjoyment of the learning journey. This outcome is highly desirable for educators, who often focus discussions on motivating students to foster active engagement (Oga-Baldwin & Nakata, 2017). Teachers are encouraged to refine their teaching methodologies by investigating engagement as a pivotal determinant of desired learning outcomes (Burch et al., 2015). Preliminary study with the teacher has revealed differences in students' engagement influenced by gender. Such differences in students' engagement, particularly across genders, could potentially shape how English teachers design writing tasks, offer feedback, and interact with students in digital learning environments. This, in turn, might influence students' utilization of Google Classroom, their responses to specific features or activities within the platform, and the platform's effectiveness in fostering writing skills.

Gaining insight into an individual's perception of a phenomenon can be valuable, as perception is a fundamental cognitive engagement tool with the environment shaped by experiences (Efron, 1969; Rojabi, 2020). Various factors, including demographic variables such as age, gender, and race, can influence an individual's perception. According to Nielsen et al. (2017), gender diversity has the potential to enrich researchers' perspectives, interests, and areas of study. Murphrey and Arnold (2012) emphasized the importance of understanding students' demographics and their utilization of Internet-based technology to design effective online course delivery techniques. In a study by Lim (2004), it was observed that, in terms of gender differences in computer use, female students exhibited better management of the learning process using computers and the Internet compared to male students. Another related study by Murphrey and Arnold (2012) suggested that technology could positively influence participants' perceptions based on their gender and categorization.

Driven by a curiosity to explore modern educational technologies, the researcher intends to carry out a case study aimed at investigating students' engagement in English writing class using Google Classroom, focusing on gender differences as perceived by teacher. While prior research has delved into methods for augmenting student engagement in online learning environments, the focus of this study was a gender-based comparison in the digital learning context. In particular, the present study seeks to investigate teacher perspective students' engagement across gender in writing class using Google Classroom application.

Literature Review

Numerous investigations have explored the aspects of student engagement in relation to English studies. Iskandar and Pahlevi (2021) conducted research focusing on students' emotional involvement in collaborative online writing using Google Document. The outcomes revealed that students not only gained new vocabulary but also exhibited enthusiasm during the collaborative writing exercise. Baldwin (2017) examined the correlation between engagement and motivation. The findings underscore that actively involving students in their academic tasks is a crucial step towards fostering intrinsic motivation for learning a foreign language, aligning with key policy objectives. These results illuminate how students' active participation and enjoyment during lessons dynamically influence their subsequent motivation. Moreover, active engagement classes have the potential to cultivate a positive emotional state, foster a sense of value, and stimulate interest in the English language.

The demographic variables also offer valuable insights into the phenomenon under study. Regarding the impact of demographic variables on perceptions of online learning, several research studies have examined how learners' demographic backgrounds influence the outcomes of online learning (Gašević et al., 2016). Numerous investigations have delved into the role of gender, as demonstrated in studies by Boyte-Eckis et al. (2018) and Cai et al. (2017), in shaping the results of online learning. However, the influence of gender on online learning outcomes remains a topic of debate. Tsokova et al. (2017) investigated the influence of gender, age, specialty, and prior e-learning experience on healthcare students' opinions about online learning. Their findings indicated that students of different genders held distinct views on online learning, with female students being more receptive to its implementation. In contrast, a study by Mahawar and Nandedkar (2019) revealed no significant gender-based effect on the perceived effectiveness of e-learning. Both male and female students were equally comfortable with online learning, displaying no gender biases. Conversely, Rafiq et al. (2020) discovered conflicting opinions in a study conducted in Pakistan, where male students exhibited more positive attitudes toward e-learning compared to female students.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research approach which is commonly used to investigate complex phenomena such as engagement and is well-suited for examining how individuals perceive and experience a specific phenomenon. Qualitative research involves understanding human beliefs, behaviors, values, and perceptions within their respective contexts. A case study was undertaken to address the research objectives and the nature of the research problem. Yin (2018) defined a case study as an in-depth examination of a current event within its natural setting, where the boundaries between the event and the context are blurred, and multiple sources of evidence are utilized. This study aimed to delve into the events that transpired, focusing on students' engagement in a writing class using Google Classroom, particularly considering gender differences.

Instead of random selection, a purposive sampling technique was employed, where participants were chosen based on specific criteria. This approach, as described by Dawson (2009), enables the selection of individuals who can provide valuable insights into the research problem. The research participants included a vocational high school English teacher in Central Java who utilized Google Classroom for teaching writing, along with a tenth-grade class comprising 15 male and 20 female students. The selection of the teacher was based on specific criteria, including having a proficient level of English, substantial experience in teaching English, familiarity with instructing using the Google Classroom application, and a willingness to participate in the research.

Data collection involved an interview session with the teacher. Semi-structured interview was employed to gather qualitative data on the teacher's perspectives. This approach offers flexibility and in-depth exploration of the research question. The interview included a combination of 20 open-ended and closed-ended questions. The questions were about students' emotional, behavioral, and cognitive engagement adapted from Fredricks (2004). The researcher also documented by screenshotting the teaching and learning activities using Google Classroom platform to know students' engagement in writing class. It was analyzed by counting the number of male and female students engaged in the learning process.

Ensuring the trustworthiness of the data in this qualitative case study was crucial. Triangulation, proposed by Creswell (2009), was used to enhance data credibility by comparing different data sources. Triangulation involves cross-validating data from various sources to enhance evidence reliability. This research employed methodological triangulation by using both interview and documentation data sources. Member checking was utilized to guarantee the accuracy of the qualitative findings by sharing both the

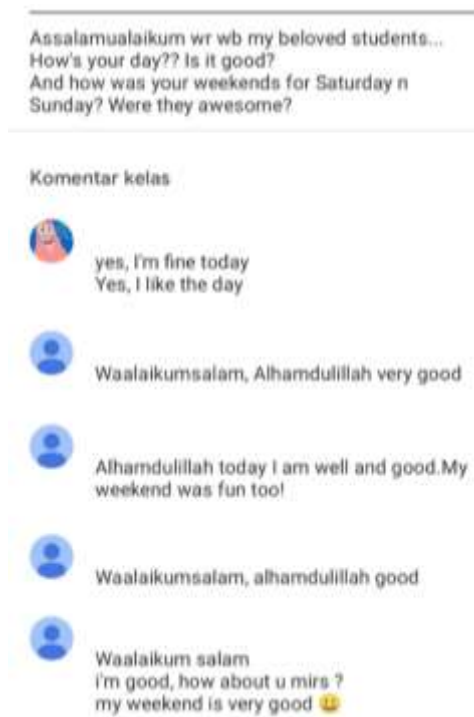
interview transcript and the final report with the participants and verifying whether they deemed them to be accurate. This process enhances the credibility and authenticity of the findings.

In data analysis, the researcher analyzed the qualitative data from interview in-depth, following the interactive model of analysis by Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2014), which includes data condensation, data display, and data verification stages. The interview outcomes frequently included intricate and convoluted statements from participants, necessitating transcription, coding, and data simplification in the data condensation process. In the data display phase, the researcher presented descriptive accounts to depict the status of the data. The verification of data involved addressing the research problem, presenting new information pertinent to the research objectives, and validating the findings against existing theories in the literature and previous studies.

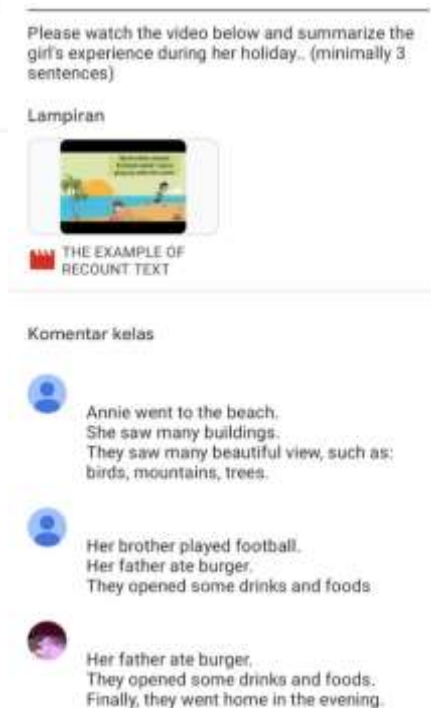
Findings and Discussion

The findings of this study indicated that teacher noticed a difference in the levels of participation between male and female students, with females typically showing greater average engagement. The engagement of both male and female students seemed to be primarily shaped by their active participation, performance, emotional reactions, and skills. Results from teacher interviews indicated that female students exhibited more enthusiasm in responding to greetings and discussing learning materials as showed in Picture 1 and 2. The teacher noted:

"Female students were eager when I inquired about their condition and weekend activities, often responding with happy emoticons. Additionally, they actively watched and summarized videos, writing sentences in the comment section promptly."



Picture 1



Picture 2

It indicated that female students demonstrated significantly higher enthusiasm and active participation in the learning process in contrast to their male peers. Female students demonstrated an

eagerness for online writing instruction through Google Classroom, as evident from their enthusiastic statements and use of positive emoticons. It is contradict with Harvey et al., (2017) that claimed there were no notable gender distinctions observed in the satisfaction with learning among online millennial learners.

This enthusiasm extended to their behavioral engagement. Female students' participation took the form of engaging in online discussions, interacting with peers, actively participating in various learning activities, and promptly completing assignments. On the flip side, male students demonstrated lower involvement in classroom discussions and showed less inclination to make frequent posts on online forums. In their approach when receiving instructions or assignments, the teacher said:

"If they didn't understand my explanations, instructions, or feedback, female students directly sought clarification from me, while male students tended to ask their peers."

These findings align with the conclusions drawn by Hussin et al. (2019), highlighting the significance of social interaction within the teaching and learning process, particularly emphasizing active interactions. These interactions encompass activities such as idea-sharing, discussions, negotiations, opinion exchanges, and decision-making. In previous studies, the role of emotions has been underscored as a meaningful factor in online engagement. Mallette and Ackler (2018) previously demonstrated that women tend to comment on teachers' posts or respond to their peers' comments more frequently than men.

Furthermore, in situations where the teacher singled out a student for a question they didn't know the answer to, female students tended to venture a response, even if uncertain. The teacher explained:

"Female students would attempt to answer casually, even though they were not sure if their response was accurate. In contrast, male students typically admitted not knowing the answer or remained silent."

The teacher added:

"Lack of initiative, male students provided feedback on their peers' work and responded to questions related to the learning topic only when prompted."

Moreover, female students conveyed higher levels of satisfaction with their online learning encounter, attributing it to the enhancement of their English language and teamwork skills. Female learners in online settings demonstrate greater perseverance and engagement compared to their male counterparts (Richardson & Woodley, 2003). It is in line with Tsokova et al. (2017), where female students exhibited a more positive outlook on incorporating online learning in the classroom. This aligns with the results obtained by Apriani et al. (2022), who found that female students in Indonesia held favorable views toward the use of online tools or information and communication technology (ICT) in language learning. They perceived it as more beneficial in terms of enhancing their competence, knowledge, and motivation, despite the observation that male students possessed higher skills in ICT literacy. Although females exhibit stronger self-regulation in online learning environments (Alghamdi et al., 2020), males tend to employ more learning strategies and possess superior technical skills. Furthermore, online learning indirectly impacts students' cognitive development. Through discussion sessions, students acquired new vocabulary and practiced English language usage when providing comments, thereby enhancing their grammar skills.

Conclusion and Suggestion

The teacher observed a discrepancy in engagement levels between male and female students, with females generally exhibiting higher levels of engagement on average. The engagement of both male and

female students appeared to be predominantly influenced by their participation, followed by their performance, emotional responses, and skills. The results revealed that female students displayed notably greater enthusiasm and active involvement in the learning process compared to their male counterparts. Female students showed a preference for actively engaging in the online class through effortful participation. Conversely, male students exhibited lower participation in classroom discussions. Furthermore, female students expressed greater satisfaction with their online learning experience. Consequently, Google Classroom serves as a suitable tool for fostering positive emotional engagement in online writing classes. To address these differences, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers should concentrate on developing suitable instructional methods by providing a variety of courses and tasks to engage the interest of both genders. This can contribute to improving the participation of male students, ultimately leading to a more balanced involvement between male and female students. Further research in this field could delve deeper into these dynamics for a more comprehensive understanding.

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