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Student Engagements in a Low-Literacy Culture Country – The Case of Indonesia

Bambang Setiono[a], Mutia Rahmi[b], Putri Aditya[c], Rusyda Hamidah[d], Umar Indrawan[e]
[a] Podomoro University, Jakarta, Indonesia
[b, c, d, e] Sampoerna University, Jakarta, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Objective – Education in the 21st century calls for more student-centered learning systems to promote innovation and creativity skills over compliance and conformity attitudes. Student active engagement is one main feature of a student-centered learning system. In a country with a low literacy rate, this study looked at the effects of teaching strategies and lecturers' classroom behavior on student involvement. Can we introduce a student-centered learning system in this kind of country?
Methodology – Using a survey method, this study collected the perception of undergraduate students from various universities in Indonesia. Online survey was used to capture student perceptions on learnings methods, lectures behavior and student engagement.
Findings – This study found that learning method and lecturers' behavior influenced student engagement in the learning process.
Novelty – This study adds to the literature on learning experiences for students. We found ways to increase and improve student engagement in low literacy-ranking nations.
Keywords: *student-centered learning, literacy culture, learning methods, lecturer behavior, student engagement*

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I. INTRODUCTION

A student-centered learning system has become the main learning method introduced in western countries for the past two decades (Kuh, 2003; Shulman, 2002). The system encourages students instead of teachers to be active in the student learning process where they have flexible learning programs, experiential learning, self-directed and achievement learning (Filatova, 2015; Taylor, 2000; Harden & Crosby, 2000; Bernard, 1999). For Asian countries, such as Indonesia, it is a new phenomenon. In Asian countries, the educational tradition is generally a teacher-centered learning system, with little participatory interaction from students. Asian learning culture tends to put teachers at the center of student learning processes by transferring the knowledge to passive students. Nevertheless, this western education concept has been introduced by higher education in Asia, including Indonesia, especially those with international collaboration with western universities.

Academic literature suggests student active learnings determine the quality of higher education. It will make higher education institutions focus on monitoring the time and energy students devote to knowledge. Active students will record higher time and energy than passive students. The more time and energy students spend learning a subject, the more they know about it (Kuh, 2003). Active students develop habits of the mind and heart that enlarge their capacity for professional development after graduation (Shulman, 2002). This habit is also the foundation of the student learning process in higher education.

Expecting Asian students, mainly Indonesian, to be active students in and out of classes doing class assignments is a high tall order. Reading and literacy culture in Indonesia is low (Tahmidaten & Krismanto, 2020). Indonesia was almost at the bottom of the world literate nation ranking issued by the Central Connecticut State University in New Britain, USA. Miller & McKenna (2016) found Indonesia was 60th out of 61 nations in the rank of the world's most literate nations. Factors included in the determination of the rankings are literacy achievement tests and literate behavior characteristics. Literacy achievement test such as PIRLS – Progress in International Reading Literacy Study and PISA – Programme for International Student Assessment) was used to access literacy culture from the perspective of education outputs. The literate behavior characteristics measure the literacy culture from the educational inputs such as newspaper circulation, number of bookstores, book purchases, library size and accessibility, periodical publishing resources, educational attainment, and Internet resources. Indonesia fell low on both criteria. Given the background above, this study investigates how student involvement, lecturer behaviors, and perceptions of learning methods in Indonesia relate to one another. The research questions of the study are as follows: (1) What is the impact of teacher learning method on student engagement? (2) What is the impact of lecture behavior on student engagement?

Student perception is among the learner-related factors that influence student-active learning. Perception is thinking about a particular phenomenon or circumstance after receiving sensory input from the environment via a sense organ (Aprianto, 2017). Student perceptions in classes can be seen in students feeling about the learning environment. Students will be more involved and active in class assignments when they have a positive opinion of the learning environment and lecture behaviors. They will also be more attentive during lectures and be more engaged overall. Data from Indonesian undergraduate students will be gathered for this study.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. The second section will provide a literature review of previous studies, especially in Indonesia, looking for factors influencing student engagement in the higher education learning process. The third section describes the methodology used in the study. Section four presents and discusses the findings. Finally, section five provides a conclusion and suggestions for future studies.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A process by which people organize and interpret sensory experiences to give their surroundings meaning is referred to as perception (Robbins & Judge, 2017). In other words, perception is the process by which individuals form their own opinions about the things they come into contact with. The perception, the outcome of the judgment, does not always correspond to reality. The perception might not match the reality of the thing (Robbins & Judge, 2017). Compared to the thing's reality, this disparity can also be seen as a misjudgment of the object. Positive and negative perceptions are the two categories under which perception can be categorized (Chukwuere, 2021). Therefore, a misjudgment can cause positive objects that should be negative in the thinking of the one who perceives them to become negative, and vice versa, a negative object that should be positive can become positive in the mindset of the person who has the incorrect view.

The perceiver, the item or target being perceived, and the context in which the perception is generated are three aspects that impact how perception is formed (Robbins & Judge, 2017). This assertion indicates

that one of the factors influencing perception is the perceiver. The perceiver's needs, desires, values, and disposition impact perception (Black et al., 2019). Furthermore, people's ideas, values, attitudes, desires, and interests have a considerably stronger impact on how they view the outside world (Qiong, 2017). People's perceptions affect the perceiver in addition to being influenced by these elements. These people act in response to the objects they perceive based on their perceptions (Tankard & Paluck, 2016). According to this assertion, how a person perceives an object affects how they treat it.

The word "student engagement" describes how actively students engage in both academic and extracurricular activities at school. According to Bryson (2014), student involvement relates to students' roles as active learners, which indicates that they are not only consumers of the lessons that the teacher at school explains. In other words, student engagement demonstrates that learning at school involves a two-way interaction between students and teachers, as seen by the fact that students actively participate in acquiring knowledge. In addition, student engagement is a term that focuses on what students do in their studies rather than on what has been done to them by the institution in which they are enrolled (Ginting, 2021). It also includes student motivation, bonding with the school, and self-awareness about learning (Bryson, 2014).

Additionally, there are three categories of student engagement: behavioral engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004). In general, behaviors that are seen as beneficial or constructive by the institution, such as attending lectures (and on time), meeting deadlines for assignments, or participating in extracurricular activities, are indicators of behavioral engagement (Billingham, 2015). Based on this claim, kids' regular, good behavior in school events is an example of behavioral involvement. However, emotionally involved students would experience affective reactions such as interest, delight, or a sense of belonging (Trowler, 2010). For instance, students are content and delighted with their lives at the institution (Billingham, 2015).

The final type is cognitive engagement, which focuses on deep learning and thinking (Billingham, 2015). Students who are invested in their study would aspire to go above and beyond the requirements and would love the challenge indicative of this involvement style (Trowler, 2010). Student achievement is connected with student engagement in cognitive, emotional, and behavioral domains (Pietarinen et al., 2014). This connection makes student participation in the learning process so crucial (Finn & Zimmer, 2012). Additionally, according to Finn and Zimmer (2012), school rules and procedures can change student participation. Accordingly, it follows that the existence of school policies requiring students to participate in extracurricular activities will increase student involvement in these activities.

The educational process includes several core or primary activities, including learning. The definition of the learning technique includes the relationship between the service user and service provider and the relationship between students and lecturers (Djudin, 2018). Student satisfaction as a client of lecturers' services is used to gauge how well a campus or educational program performs. Student satisfaction rises and gets better the better and higher the lecturer's teaching techniques are. As a result, it will affect both the reputation and caliber of the university itself and student involvement, which is determined by motivation, interest, and effort during learning (Triarisanti & Purnawarman, 2019). Additionally, the contact between students and lecturers during the learning process is the primary determinant of how satisfied students are with their education (Djudin, 2018). In light of the aforementioned research, it is therefore suggested:

H1: Perception of lecturer's learning methods has a significant effect on students' engagement.

A previous study found that lecturers fall into three categories of behavior: professional, communication, and physical (Noori et al., 2021). When referring to lecturers' conduct while students are learning in educational institutions, professionalism (Malesky & Peters, 2012). In the meantime, the lecturer informs or interacts with students through communicative behavior (Noori et al., 2021). Next, physical behavior

refers to how instructors engage pupils physically (Levesque, 2014). The learning environment for students will also benefit if these three kinds of professor attitudes demonstrate good and constructive intent (Rahman, 2013). This is because how one behaves toward others impacts how others behave, or, to put it another way, how lecturers behave affects how students behave. Student participation is shifting due to the changing learning environment and student behavior. Activities and expectations in the classroom are influenced by how students view the lecturers' conduct. The more effectively and positively a lecturer interacts with students while they are learning, the more effectively and positively students view the learning environment, which contributes to an increase in student engagement.

Chickering and Gamson (1987) outlined seven engagement indicators in the student learning process and five principles related to faculty behaviors and characteristics. Faculty must encourage cooperation among students and active learning, communicate high expectations, encourage contact between students and faculty, and use active learning techniques. Active student engagement enhances student learning when students and faculty develop strong alliances through formal and informal contact (Kuh, 2003; Ginting, 2021). It is not only faculty to develop engagement practices with students, but higher education institution also needs to show engagement practice with students (Adams et al., 2020). Higher education officers should develop formal and informal contact with students. It is a well-developed practice in developed countries to ask students to submit self-reported student engagement behavior (Ginting, 2021). In light of the aforementioned research, it is therefore suggested:

H2: Perception of lecturers' behavior has a significant effect on students' engagement.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study is focused on how lecturers' actions and teaching strategies affect students' participation. The study was carried out in Jakarta, Indonesia, from November 7 to 10, 2021, during which time data were gathered. Undergraduate students in Indonesian public and private universities make up the study's population. The sample size for this study is set at a minimum of 40 participants, with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. The approaches used to collect the data for this study are quantitative or primary. The information-gathering tool of surveys will be made available online. This online survey comprises 15 items: 5 for the characteristic demographic statements and 10-item statements referring to the research variables. Demographic variables include gender (male or female), age (minimum age of 18), university type (public or private), and the semester of college in which respondents or students are currently enrolled. Then, this survey adopted a five-point Likert-type scale, with each item receiving a score between one (strongly disagree) and five (strongly agree). The research variables were adopted from Noori et al. (2021).

The relationship between the independent variable (variable X) and the dependent variable is shown by the model framework of this study (variable Y). Students' perceptions of the lecturer's learning technique and lecturers' behavior are the independent variables in this study, and student involvement is the dependent variable. Figure 1 depicts the research's conceptual framework.

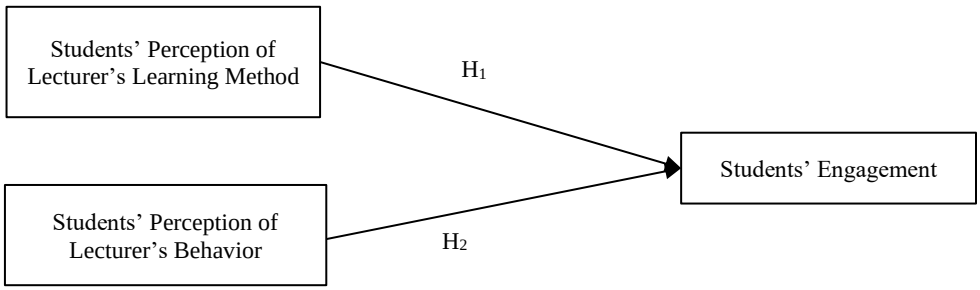

Figure 1. Conceptual Model of the Study

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study uses Google Forms to collect quantitative data via surveys and questionnaires. Some of the 20 questions ask about the respondents' backgrounds and characteristics. Through social media platforms like WhatsApp and Telegram, the questionnaire created was disseminated. Therefore, the sample for this research publication will consist of the 67 respondents who filled out the questionnaire following the survey's findings.

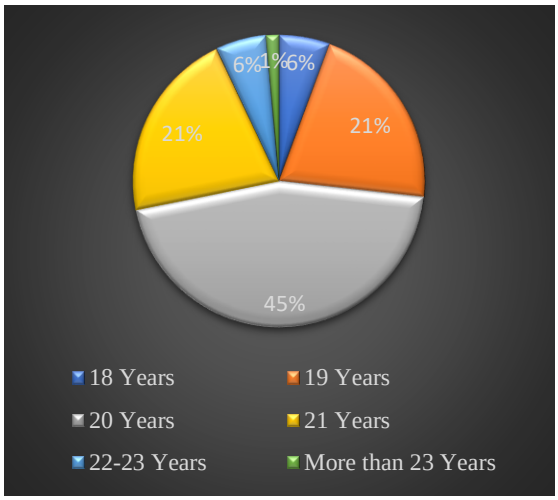

Figure 2. Respondents' Age

The gender of the survey respondents is shown in Figure 3. Accordingly, 31 respondents (46%) who participated in the study were men, whereas 36 (54%) were women. From this, we can observe that women make up the majority of the respondents. Additionally, Figure 2 displays the respondents' ages who participated in the survey. It reveals that 4 respondents (6%) who responded to the survey are under the age of 18, 15 respondents (21%) are between the ages of 19 and 20, 32 respondents (45%) are between the ages of 20 and 21, 4 respondents (6%) are between the ages of 22 and 23, and only 1 respondent (1%) is over the age of 23. Figure 2 demonstrates that most survey participants are under the age of 20.

The information regarding the universities from which the respondents are from is displayed in Figure 4. With 42 responses (63%), the data reveals that private university students make up the majority of the survey's respondents. Twenty-five respondents (37% of the total) are from public universities, making up

the remaining respondents. Additionally, Figure 5 displays information about the university semester respondents enroll in. According to the data, 44 respondents (66%), or students enrolled in semester 5, made up the majority of survey respondents. The remaining respondents include students in semesters 3 and 7, with students in semester 1 having the fewest respondents—4 respondents from that semester (6%), 12 respondents from semester 3 (18%); and 7 respondents from that semester (10%).

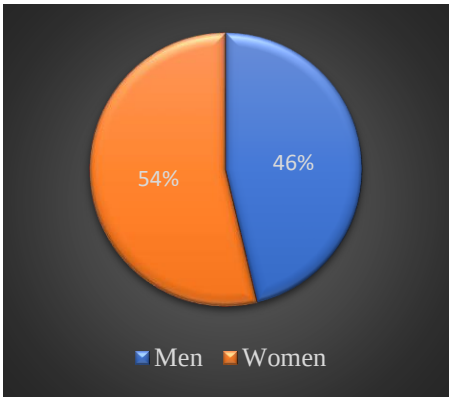

Figure 2. Respondents' Gender

By examining the validity of the questions using the average variance extracted and the reliability of the questionnaires using Cronbach's Alpha, we evaluated the consistency of the survey results (AVE). Consistency measures how well a set of elements is used to measure a notion fit together (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). A particular questionnaire has moderate internal consistency and reliability if Cronbach's Alpha is between 0.5 and 0.7. Values above 0.7 indicate good internal consistency, whereas values below 0.7 indicate appropriate internal consistency (Aithal & Aithal, 2020).

The survey questionnaires' dependability is measured by their validity, which assesses how effectively they measured the things they designed. It explains how well the data represent the subject of the inquiry. We can draw inferences and conclusions from the regression results when the questionnaires satisfy the validity test. In order to evaluate convergent validity, average variance extracted (AVE) is frequently used. It is frequently used to evaluate discriminant validity, or how much one static inferred variable varies from other questionnaire variables. The inferred variable that has greater variance than measurement errors, unmeasured external effects, or other constructs inside the conceptual framework is said to have discriminant validity, also known as divergent validity.

The average variance explained (AVE) for a construct indicates how much of the variance in the items can be accounted for by the construct or latent variable. For instance, the construct or latent variable known as "perceived quality of the information in the firm's annual reports" was measured using four items. The AVE for these items is 0.658, which indicates that, on average, 65.8% of the variations in respondents' perceptions of the quality of the information in the firms' annual reports are explained by these four items or questions. It also indicates a 34.2% mistake in our measurement items, on the other hand. Therefore, an AVE of at least 0.50 is strongly advised as a general rule and for adequate convergence.

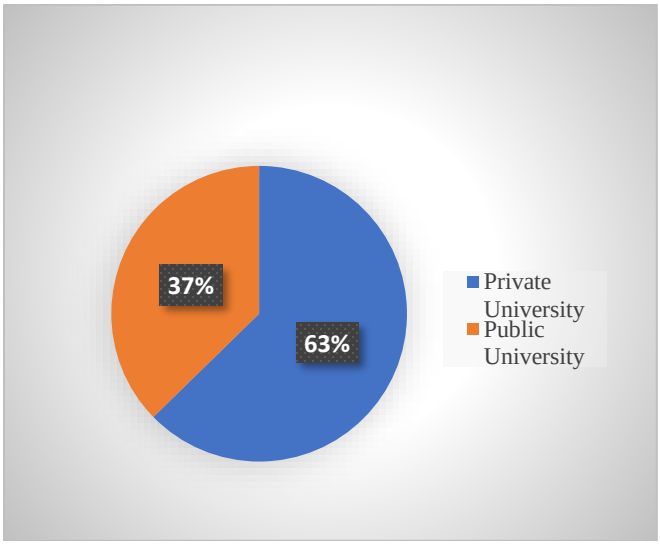

Figure 4. Respondents' University

The Average Variance Index (AVE) value for the learning technique variable is 0.52 in Table 1. Given that the questionnaire's AVE value is more than 0.5, it may be used to process the learning technique variable into a regression model and is therefore valid. The Cronbach's Alpha value for the learning technique variable is 0.75. We can observe that the learning method variable's Cronbach's Alpha value is higher than 0.7. As a result of the variable's dependability, the learning method variable is stable and consistent enough to be handled by a regression model.

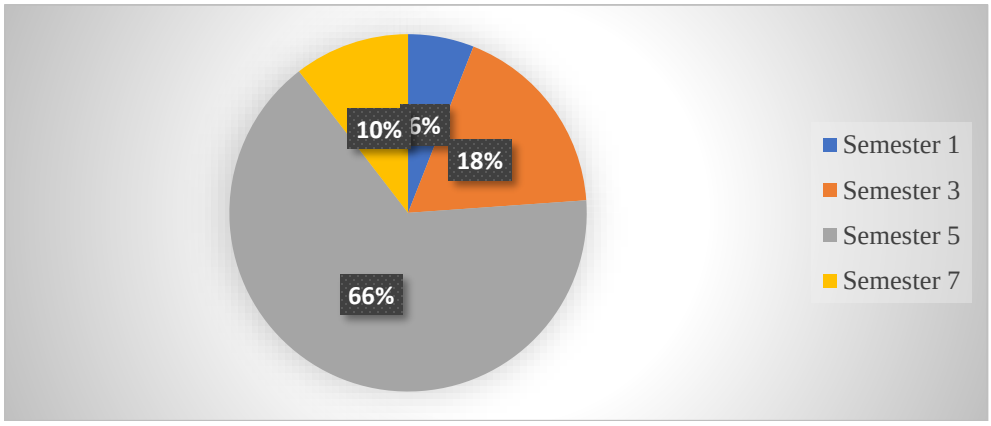

Figure 5. Respondents' Semester

The researchers employ a multivariate regression model in this study. In Sekaran and Bougie's (2016) view, multiple regression is a correlation coefficient that demonstrates the strength of the association between two or more variables. A multiple regression model can be used in this research article because there are two independent variables and one dependent variable. The results of multiple regression are shown below, with a p-value of less than 5%.

Table 1. Items' Measurement Properties

Variables and Items	Cronbach's α	AVE
Lecturer's Behavior The attitudes and the ways lecturers give the materials… Your perception of the lecturer's creative learning methods… Your perception of lecturers implementing games/quizzes in class… Your perception of lecturers always giving evaluations at class end… …will affect your academic performance and involvement in class.	0.760	0.570
Learning Methods Lecturers who always give positive feedback on assignments… A fun lecturer learning strategy… Your perception of lecturers who teach friendly and interactively to students… Lecturers who have high expectations of students… …can affect your academic performance and engagement in class.	0.750	0.520
Student Engagement Lecturers who are easy to contact and enthusiastic in responding to messages… Your willingness to answer questions from the lecturer… Your perception of lecturers who rarely come in without news… …will affect your academic performance and engagement in class.	0.770	0.590

Table 2 reveals that the attitude P-value for the first hypothesis test is 0.009, which indicates that it is significant because 0.009 is smaller than alpha 5%. (0.05). H1 should be approved as a result. In other words, student involvement is significantly influenced by their opinion of the lecturers' teaching strategies. Regarding P values at 0.05, the second hypothesis (H2) performs better than the ideal. It demonstrates that H2 has a P-value of 0.001. It indicates that H2 is acceptable because its P-value is less than 0.05. In other words, how students perceive their lecturers' behavior greatly impacts how engaged they are.

Table 2. Regression Analysis

Hypothesis	Path	β	Mean	Std. Dev.	T Statistics	P Values
H1	Learning Method → Student Engagement	0.365	0.365	0.139	2.620	0.009
H2	Lecturer's Behavior → Student Engagement	0.377	0.393	0.117	3.240	0.001

V. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine how perceptions of teaching strategies and lecturer conduct impact student involvement. Based on the research findings and discussion, student involvement is significantly influenced by the lecturers' behavior and how the students view their learning processes. This demonstrates how students' perceptions influence their behavior, particularly their participation in educational events. This finding suggested that a student-centered learning system can still be introduced in Indonesia and other countries with low literacy culture countries by improving the way lectures introduce learning methods in and outside class engagements and by improving the attitude and ethics of the lectures. Courses that offer creative learning methods, games, and quizzes will encourage active student engagement. Students will be more involved in the classes and doing outside engagement when lectures are easily approached and always available for students.

The finding of this study is very encouraging despite the problem of low literacy in Indonesia. However, this study has some limitations. It tested only the perception of students. Students might respond positively

(strongly agree) to answers that they like. In an actual learning process, students might not actively engage even when lectures already give broad access to students. They still wait to ask questions on any assignment before it is due, especially for a long-term project.

Moreover, active student engagement only sometimes translates into better class performances. Future studies need to test student engagement measured by different methodologies, such as time spent on assignments in and out of classrooms. Studies also need to find the relationship between student engagement and student performance improvement.

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