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Understanding the Indonesian EFL Zen Students' Synchronous Engagement in a Research Course

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Abstract

Synchronous learning engagement has been studied during the pandemic Covid-19. However, few studies investigated Zen participants' engagement in particular courses. The study aims to disclose the EFL Zen students' devotion to synchronous instructional research courses during the disruption phase. The study focuses on the students'; miscellaneous preferences, commitments, technological learning support, topic searching reports (TSR), and research proposals submitted (RPS). The design is a survey study with descriptive qualitative and quantitative data. 24 students were purposively chosen as total samplings. Three instruments were employed to take data; Google forms (GF), electronic observation, and reflection. The 24 participants answered questions four times in a semester through GF. The data were analyzed in descriptive and parametric statistics. The result shows that the participants changed their time preferences due to changing habits and practical reasons. Google Meet and Zoom have caused different impacts and raised various insights. The majority engaged technologically at the basic level. This study also reveals the poor quality of the participants in presenting some essential parts of a thesis proposal. They faced various difficulties in presenting sections of their RPS. The statistics test shows a significant positive correlation between TPR and RPS ($r = 0.862$, $p < 0.01$). It is concluded that the EFL Zen students perform their optimum engagement and learning achievement despite being supported by sophisticated technology. This research implies that teachers need various scenarios to employ online platforms and charge more creative activities to harvest optimum learning outcomes.

Keywords: Synchronous engagement, students' commitments, learning support, learning outcomes.

Introduction

Scholars have studied students' online learning (OL) over the globe. Moreover, during the pandemic where OL was the primary learning platform. It is true that Covid-19 has caused global disruption in all walks of life (Elangovan et al., 2020) and promoted more OL than offline learning (OFL) for students. However, few studies did focus on the engagement of EFL Zen students and courses at universities in open distributed learning (ODL). This study, therefore, is a perpetuation of prior studies to examine variables of engagement (Wang et al., 2017) as a contribution to the existing knowledge. Consolidated discrepancies, the current investigation explores and explains student engagement types (Dixson, 2015) in research courses through OL during the Covid-19 epidemic in Indonesia (Hidayati & Saputra, 2020). Henceforth, the current study investigates the variables of the student's engagement in a research course covering miscellaneous preferences, commitments, learning support, topic searching report, and research proposal submitted.

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Prior studies have sought engagement in OL, such as assessing higher education students' (HES) use and implementing OL technology (Hidayati & Saputra, 2020). Other studies report OL quality control (Giatman et al., 2020); factors making OL successful (Yudiawan et al., 2021); OL through SPADA (Hudha et al., 2018); perception of students on OL (Rojabi, 2020); satisfaction in ODL (Muzammil et al., 2020); perception of teachers on OL engagement (Rasmitadila et al., 2020). A correlation study reports online active learning practices and OL climate that predict online course engagement (Cole et al., 2019); and students' experiences with OL (Stewart et al., 2011). We found various gaps in the current study upon all these digested studies.

Scholars had studied and reported recent development in online learning (OL) before the Covid-19 outbreak. Studies claim that the development and effect of OL have changed the culture alteration of learners (Hockly, 2015a, 2015b).

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The need to promote OL begins by framing engagement in higher education (HE) and yields the four dominant research perspectives; behavioral, psychological, sociocultural, and holistic (Kahu, 2013). Subsequent studies are theorizing students' engagement in HE with a theoretical engagement foundation and how students participate (Kahn, 2014); examining the necessary condition of OL with learning engagement and study analytics (Ma et al., 2015); and surveying the online student engagement (OSE) with validated online student engagement scale (OSES) as reported (Dixson, 2015). Hence, we scheme what has been done and what gaps are left, but more studies on engagement are worth exploring.

Among engagement, evidence is an instructional design of students' participation, motivation, and success (Czerkawski & Lyman, 2016); theories on facilitating interaction through technology (Kyei-Blankson et al., 2016); interaction patterns; learner-to-learner, learner-to-instructor, and learner-to-content engagement strategies (Martin & Bolliger, 2018). Recent research has revealed drawbacks of OLE: poor collaborative learning, fewer discussions, less cooperative learning, fewer collaboration variations, and fewer interaction qualities (Dumford & Miller, 2018). Later, a correlational study claimed that active learning performance might relate to student engagement in a specific online course (Cole et al., 2019).

Amid the pandemic, many studies in OL perception have increased and reported findings. Among the findings are the four obstacle types in OL in Indonesia (Hidayati & Saputra, 2020); and claim that Microsoft Team supports the students' learning environment optimally, and they perceive the learning environment positively (Rojabi, 2020). Similar studies have yielded interaction patterns: student-students, students-tutors, and students-content positively affect the students' engagement (Muzammil et al., 2020), standard model, and the students support this platform by being creative and innovative participants (Giatman et al., 2020). These synthesized sources make the current gaps clearer.

More studies have revealed more or fewer findings. Among them are a negative attitude toward using zoom, a perception that zoom worsens their learning experience and motivation (Serhan, 2020), admitting zoom as a shifting marker, and a historical milestone in education (Stefanile, 2020). In contrast, synchronous zoom has upraised benefits and drawbacks (Lowenthal et al., 2020), that zoom improved students' learning outcomes better than Google Classroom, and that both platforms supported mathematics instruction (Hamidy, 2021). Beyond this study, numerous scholars proposed tricks to avoid the boredom of using Zoom (Wiederhold, 2020); prescription of dynamic learning through zoom (Serembus & Kemery, 2020), concepts of six fundamental innovative teaching mechanisms, and procedures to maintain OL through zoom remain interesting (Li et al., 2021)we develop innovative procedures and pedagogy to teach pair programming via Zoom breakout rooms in a cloud environment. We report six fundamental innovative teaching mechanisms and procedures: 1. Upon all synthesized articles, we are convinced the formulated objectives are focused on gaps to investigate in the current study.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

This study traces the model of survey study for the quantitative data (You et al., 2016) and a survey review for the qualitative data (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2013), and a combination of qualitative and quantitative data (Turmudi, 2021). The context is in the EFL, where English is officially taught from K-12 to higher education. English is an instructional language in higher education (HE) for all subjects (Mappiasse & Sihes, 2014). This study assumes that the Zen participants would exhibit more cognitive, affective, and psychomotor outcomes as required in their learning objectives (Mazarno & Kendall, 2017)

We define conceptual definition to avoid confusion. Firstly, we defined EFL students as those who study English (the four skills) that are taught officially as L2 or L3 in non-English speaking countries (Cahyono & Amrina, 2016). However, the English language is not officially written in the environments and official documents and thus challenges for students (Mappiasse & Sihes, 2014). Secondly, we digested some theories of the Zen generation (Mohr & Mohr, 2017); Kirschner & De Bruyckere, 2017; Thompson, 2015). Thus, we meant the Zen generation as participants born after 1994 and have characteristics; of being financially focused, entrepreneurial, all about technology, enjoying other people, competitive, adaptive to changes, tolerant, independent, being heard, and inherited Y generation (Berkup, 2014). Thirdly, we rely on previous studies on synchronous such as using platforms of the learning instruction model (Yamagata-lynch, 2014), where students and teachers can do many learning activities with the application's technology immediately. Finally, we define engagement as the attributes of students such as mental, physical, attitude, and commitments shown before, during, and post-learning process as a manifestation of their agreement on the learning contract (Kahu, 2013). The current study covers using Zoom (Lowenthal et al., 2020) and Google Meets (Hamidy, 2021; Kansal et al., 2021). This study seeks to improve the Indonesian learners' English proficiency index (EPI) to meet higher levels among the ASEAN countries (Renandya et al., 2018).

Hence, we believe that this study fills the gaps of prior studies. Accordingly, this study contributes novelty for scholar researchers and educators. Research that examines student involvement in online learning has been widely carried out. However, synchronous learning has not been done using digital platforms in topic searching reports (TSR) to improve research proposals submitted (RPS).

The current study investigates the students' synchronous engagements in their research courses. The detailed research questions are:

1. How is the involvement of students in utilizing digital platforms through synchronous learning activities to improve the ability of topic searching reports (TSR)?
2. How is the student's ability to report topic searching research (TSR) and research proposals submitted (RPS) through synchronous learning activities?
3. What correlates topic searching reports (TSR) and research proposals submitted (RPS)?

Methodology

Design

The study employs a survey study of prior studies (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2013; You et al., 2016) with qualitative descriptive and quantitative data. We focused on four variables of the total participants; miscellaneous preferences, commitments, and learning support; topic searching report (TSR); and research proposal submitted (RPS). All variables perform the participants' engagement.

Participants and Sampling

The study employs 24 EFL Zen sophomore students of the English Department who enrolled in a research course; 20 are female, and 4 are male. They were taken as a total sample since they were the only English class available (Doherty, 1994) (Table 1).

Instruments and Data

We create three instruments: questionnaires, electronic observations, and reflection notes with adaptation and modification of the prior studies as described in table 2.

Table 1: The Characteristics of Participants

Similarities	*Differences*
Passed previous courses	English competences
Had to join 16 meetings	Live in cities and urban
Agreed on terms and conditions	Internet providers and internet signal
Did assessment model	50% hold scholarship
Instructional and written works in English	50 % funded by parent-tuitions

Data Collection

The data collection took a semester-long. We requested participants complete the questionnaires online, and they answered the questionnaire four times in a semester through Google Forms. The participants in the first survey were 23, in the second survey were 23, and in the third and fourth surveys were 24 participants. We informed the students of the four survey results in the subsequent meetings. We administered electronic observation and reflection notes after the class throughout the semester, and they were observed electronically in 16 meetings. The result of the raw data analysis was shared as part of clarification through Zoom a week after respectively until the last survey.

Data Analysis

Further, the raw dataset was progressively analyzed and recapped quantitatively and qualitatively. The results from the first and second instruments were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively before being recapped, categorized, ranked, and presented in tables. Thus, data were numerical data and content data. The third and fourth instruments were analyzed qualitatively before recapping, rated based on the frequency, and raised in tables for descriptive statistics. For that reason, the criteria content analysis (CCA) for all content data was applied (Miles et al., 2014). However, the third and fourth instruments were then scored with scales 0-4 by different raters and different processes such as intra-raters twice and inter-raters by other parties once. The resulting data were qualitative data converted into numerical data for parametric statistics. The average scores were calculated statistically using IBM SPSS version 25.

All data were triangulated through a process of data triangulation involving a questionnaire, electronic observation, and reflection notes. Inter-triangulation and intra-triangulation were applied following the model of a previous study (Turmudi, 2020, 2021). The final data were confirmed to all participants through video conferencing with anonymous data.

Result and Discussion

The current study investigates the four variables. The result is presented in descriptive and parametric statistics.

The study seeks to find the involvement of students in utilizing digital platforms through synchronous learning

Table 2: Instruments

Survey	*Questions*	*Data types*	*Sources*
1	Closed and open	Nominal and content	You et al.,2016; Turmudi, 2021
2	Closed and open	Nominal and content	You et al.,2016; Turmudi, 2021
3	Open	Content	Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2013
4	Open	Content	Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2013

activities to improve the ability of topic searching reports (TSR).

The respondents responded to the question regarding time preference, as shown in Table 3**.**

Table 3 shows that most participants preferred to study at 08.00-09.30 and are almost solid. Only one participant did choose an early time. Further, the participants reported their causes to select the designated time described in table 4.

Table 4 shows that the selected time is due to practical reasons such as the transition to another course (TT to OC), followed by a fresh mind, mandatory, change schedule, and duties. The agreed time is the accord that meets the Mandatory program.

Further, as shown in the table, the participants chose the most platforms for synchronous meeting and their reasons.

Table 5 shows that more than half of participants liked GM (52 %) more than chose Zoom (48%) as a learning platform. Their reasons are described and categorized in table 6.

Table 6 shows the top cause of GM is providing a longer time with six voices while the lowest one is comfortable. The use of Zoom is due to the easiness to access, while the lowest category is due to accessibility in poor internet access or low signal.

Table 3: Time Preferences (R=23)

Time Preferences	*F*	*%*
07.00-08.30 a.m.	0	0%
07.30-09.00 a.m.	1	4,34%
08.00-09.30 a.m.	19	82,60%
08.30-10.00 a.m.	1	4,34%
09.00-10.30 a.m.	2	8,69%
Total	23	100%

Table 4: Reason for choosing time (R=23)

Types of Reason	*F*	*%*
Mandatory Schedule	4	17,39%
Change Schedule	3	13,04%
Duties	3	13,04%
Fresh Mind	6	26,09%
Transition to other courses (TT to OC)	7	30,43%
Total	23	100,00%

The result is related to the student's commitment to using technology and software. This category traces the participants' assurance in using technology and software. The results are plotted in 5 sections, as shown in the following tables. The first section asks if the participants have a laptop; the total responses are shown in table 7 from 23 participants.

Table 7 shows that most students had a laptop as part of their readiness to support their online learning. However, three of them declared that they did not have laptops, and we also found no further argument about why they did not have gadgets.

The second section asks the participants what brand of laptop they have. The total responses are shown in the table. This section does not have any tendency to use certain brands but to map the situation amid the rapid development of hardware and software. The result might be helpful for another purpose of the study.

Table 8 shows that most participants have Asus with 48%, Acer with 35 %, and Toshiba with 4%, and the rest is not mentioned. This result is followed by what operating system (OS) they use, as described in table 9.

Table 9 shows that the participants used the old and new versions but did not use other OS. The most OS to the least is Windows 7, 10, 8, and 13. As for OS types, the finding does not have any tendency to use a particular OS but to map the situation amid the rapid development of hardware and software. It might be further data for related studies in the future.

The fourth section confirms if the participants use Mendeley to arrange cited sources in writing their assignment. The responses are shown in the following table.

Table 10 shows that most participants claimed to have installed Mendeley and succeeded with 74%, tried but failed with 17%, and not tried yet with 9 %. They also reported their testimonial of using Mendeley. The responses are shown in table 11.

Table 11 shows that the total students cast their effective statement and less than a half-realized the possible risk of

Table 5: Learning platform preferences (R=23)

Learning Platform Preferences	*F*	*%*
Zoom CM	11	47,8%
Google Meets	12	52,2%
Others	0	0%

Table 6: Comparative reason for using GM and ZCM

Why Google Meets (GM)	*F*	*Why Zoom Cloud Meeting (ZCM)*	*F*
Provides longer times (LT)	6	Provides longer times (LT)	0
Practical (P)	2	Practical (P)	2
Comfortable or Sophisticated (C)	1	Comfortable or Sophisticated (C)	4
Accessible in poor signal (N)	3	Accessible in poor signal (N)	2
Easiness to access (E)	4	Easiness to entry (E)	4

using Mendeley. However, the majority were not sure yet of the effect of not using Mendeley. The possible risk is awareness of the benefit and drawbacks of using Mendeley when citing sources and arranging lists of references for the research course. They realized it was good to use Mendeley, yet they needed to study more about how to use Mendeley effectively. As for the majority of the students, they did not have any idea of Mendeley's benefits and drawbacks.

The second objective is to seek the students' ability to report: topic searching research (TSR) and research proposals submitted (RPS) through synchronous learning activities. This section covers two subsections: topic searching result (TSR) and research proposal submission (RPS). The TSR has

Table 7: Laptop availability (R=23)

Statement	*F*	*%*
I have a laptop	20	86,95%
I do not have a laptop	3	13,04%

Table 9: Types of Operating System (R=23)

OS types	*F*	*%*
Win13	1	4.34%
Win10	8	34,7%
Win8	3	13,4%
Win7	9	39,1%
Others	2	8,69%
Total	23	100%

Table 8: Types of laptops (R=23)

Types of Laptop	*F*	*%*
Asus	11	47,8%
Acer	8	34,7%
Toshiba	1	4,34%
Others	3	13,4%

Table 10: Installing Mendeley

Have you installed Mendeley	*F*	*%*
Yes, and successful	17	73,91%
Yes, but failed	4	17,39%
Not yet	2	8,69%
Total	23	100%

Table 11: Affective to Mendeley

Affective of Using Mendeley	*F*	*%*
Accepted the risk	9	39,13%
Unsure	14	60,87%
Total	23	100%

Table 12: Descriptive responses to the difficulties of TSR (R=24)

No	*Research section*	*Yes*	*%*	*No*	*%*
1.	The topic of the analyzed article	24	100	0	0,0
2.	The list of found problems	24	100	0	0,0
3.	The problem limitation	23	95,83	1	4,17
4.	The problem formulation	24	100	0	0,0
5.	The objectives of the study	24	100	0	0,0
6.	Significance	24	100	0	0,0
7.	Previous studies	22	91,67	2	8,33
8.	Thinking framework	17	70,83	7	29,17
9.	Research questions or hypotheses	13	54,17	11	45,83
10.	Research design	24	100	0	0,0
11.	Participant	23	95,83	1	4,17
12.	Focus or variables	23	95,83	1	4,17
13.	Instruments	22	91,67	2	8,33
14.	Data collection techniques (DCT)	21	87,50	3	12,50
15.	Data analysis technique (DAT)	21	87,50	3	12,50
16.	Statistical test	17	70,83	7	29,17
17.	The results-discussion (sum)	23	95,83	1	4,17
18.	Conclusion (main points)	23	95,83	1	4,17
19.	Implication	8	33,33	16	66,67
20.	Limitation	6	25,00	18	75,00

22 open questions; however, two questionnaires are excluded from reporting, and thus only 20 questions are presented. The descriptive result is presented in the following table 12.

Table 12 shows three-level levels of responses in the TSR. The first type is the most difficult aspect (between 0-8 frequencies). The participants failed to present limitations (75,00%) and implications (66,67%). The second category is the medium aspect (between 9-16 frequencies), and they failed to present the hypothesis (45,83%). The last category is the easiest aspect (17-24 in frequencies). They failed to present statistics tests (29,17%) and thinking frameworks (29,17%). Thus, the result shows that the participants accomplished the sections in the articles at different levels.

As for the research proposal submitted (RPS), this questionnaire provides 17 open questions. The scoring model was not applicable for the correlation process. So, the descriptive result is presented in table 13.

Table 13 shows that there are three categories of difficulty. The first type is the most difficult aspect (between 0-8 frequencies). All students succeeded in performing in this category. The second category is the medium aspect (between 9-16 frequencies). They failed to perform statistical tests (54,17%) and hypotheses (58,33%). The last category is the easiest aspect (17-24 in frequencies). They efficiently performed many aspects (topic, problem identification, problem formulation, research design, instrument, significance, objectives, data collection, data analysis, focus, participants, thinking framework, and references).

The last objective is to seek what correlates topic searching reports (TSR) and research proposals submitted (RPS). The TSR and RPS are scored by rating scales (0, 1, 2, 3, and 4), considering the quality and accuracy of the content responses for the correlation test.

1). Validity Test of TSR

The item's validity is tested by looking at the consistency of the correlation between the item score and the total scale scores. An item has a good consistency if it has a correlation coefficient – a total above 0.25. The total item correlation test results are presented in table 14.

The result shows that there are 13 valid items with a correlation coefficient of items ranging from 0.24 - 0.671. The deleted items are items 1,8,9,13,16,19, and 20 because they were not valid.

2). Validity Test of RPS

The item validity on the RPS scale was tested on the TSR scale by looking at the consistency of the correlation between the item score and the total scale scores. Correcting the spurious overlap effect is the total item correlation coefficient formula. The total item correlation test results can be seen in the table.

Table 15 shows that there are ten valid items and have a correlation coefficient of items - totals ranging from 0.28 - 0.679. The deleted items are items 8, 9,11,13,14, 15, and 16 because they were not valid.

3). Reliability Test of TSR

The reliability testing scale was conducted using Alpha Cronbach's reliability formula, and resulted from 13 items with good internal consistency. The test results can be seen in the table.

Table 13: Descriptive responses to the difficulties of RPS (R=24)

No	*Section*	*Yes*	*%*	*No*	*%*
1.	Topic of proposal	20	83,333	4	16,667
2.	Problem's identification	20	83,333	4	16,667
3.	Problem limitation	18	75,00	6	25,00
4.	Problem formulation	20	83,333	4	16,667
5.	Objectives of the study	19	79,167	5	20,833
6.	Significant	19	79,167	5	20,833
7.	Reviewed previous studies	18	75,00	6	25,00
8.	Thinking framework	17	70,833	7	29,167
9.	Research questions or hypotheses	10	41,667	14	58,333
10.	Research design	20	83,333	4	16,667
11.	Participant	18	75,00	6	25,00
12.	Focus or variables	19	79,167	5	20,833
13.	Instruments	20	83,333	4	16,667
14.	Data collection technique (DCT)	19	79,167	5	20,833
15.	Data analysis technique (DAT)	19	79,167	5	20,833
16.	Statistical test	11	45,833	13	54,167
17.	References	17	70,833	7	29,167

Table 16 shows that the value of the alpha Cronbach coefficient is α = 0.818. Alpha coefficient values above 0.8 indicate a scale of fairly good reliability (Cronbach, 1986).

4). Reliability Test of RPS

The reliability testing scale was conducted using Alpha Cronbach's reliability formula, and the test was conducted on only ten items with good internal consistency. The test results can be seen in table 17.

Table 17 shows that the value of the alpha Cronbach coefficient is α = 0.807. Alpha coefficients above 0.8 indicate a reasonably good reliability scale (Cronbach, 1986).

5. Hypothesis Test Results: Normality Assumption Test

The data normality assumption test was conducted with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov formula. The results of the analysis can be seen in table 18.

Table 14: TSR Item-Total Scales Correlation Coefficient

Item	*Corrected Item-Total Correlation*	*Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted*
2	.671	.787
3	.390	.811
4	.598	.795
5	.240	.823
6	.458	.806
7	.553	.797
10	.597	.793
11	.318	.819
12	.362	.813
14	.301	.817
15	.504	.811
17	.630	.790
18	.480	.805

Table 16: TSR Test Reliability Test Results

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	*N of Items*
.818	13

Table 18 shows that the normality test results of TPS (***TSR)*** and RPS were normally distributed with a value of the distribution (p > 0.05).

6. Product Moment Correlation Test Results from Pearson.

The relationship between TSR and RPS was tested with Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient formula. The results of the analysis can be seen in table 19.

Table 19 shows that the test results showed a significant positive correlation between TSR and RPS (r =0.862, p<0.01). The coefficient of determination is obtained by r^2= 0.74; this indicates that the TSR variable contributes a positive determination of 74% to the RPS variable.

Discussion

The study seeks to disclose the EFL Zen students' devotion to synchronous instructional research courses during the disruption phase. The first objective is to discuss the involvement of students in utilizing digital platforms through

Table 15: Result of Test Validity

Item	*Corrected Item-Total Correlation*	*Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted*
1	.280	.810
2	.679	.764
3	.448	.795
4	.594	.780
5	.570	.784
6	.546	.783
7	.364	.808
10	.593	.785
12	.526	.785
17	.402	.803

Table 17: RPS Test Reliability Test Results

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	*N of Items*
.807	10

Table 18: Normality Test Results

Null Hypothesis	*Test*	*Sig.*	*Decision*
The distribution of TSR-X is normal, with a mean of 30.58 and a standard deviation of 7.868	One-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test	.2001,2	Retain the null hypothesis
The distribution of TSR-Y is normal, with a mean of 32.04 and a standard deviation of 7.056	One-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test	.2001,2	Retain the null hypothesis
Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .0.5. 1 Lilieffort is corrected. 2 This is a lower bound of true significance.			

Table 19: Pearson Correlation Test Results

		TSR_X	*RPS_Y*
TSR_X	Pearson Correlation	1	.862**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.000
	N	24	24
RPS_Y	Pearson Correlation	.862**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	
	N	24	24

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

synchronous learning activities to improve the ability of topic searching reports (TSR).

The choice of time indicated that the participants had changed their habits due to some associated reasons. Interview notes clarify their reasons in that they could have studied at 07.00 but argued that their habit fossilized. The previous studies do not reveal this aspect. However, a study confirms that the Covid-19 outbreak has changed the participants' time habits in the education process (Stefanile, 2020) and the learners' learning styles via the OL platform (Yudiawan et al., 2021). Their OL has further changed their culture (Hockly, 2015a). The participants changed their preferences due to practical, psychological, and duties. This evidence clarifies a clear psychological engagement statement as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Yudiawan et al., 2021). This study implies a positive contribution to knowing the habit change to theorize the evidence (Kahn, 2014). Thus, their time habit may be a problem with the new normal.

The finding indicates that the participants chose GM more than Zoom. It differs from the previous study in that Zoom was more favored than GM (Serhan, 2020) but is the same as another study in higher education(Maulana, 2021). The current study reveals six reasons for GM's technical and esthetical reasons. Nevertheless, a prior study claims that GM was chosen because the participants were from remote areas. Thus GM was accessible in a poor signal (Maulana, 2021). Hence, the current study affirms that the choice of GM or Zoom is under dependent circumstances. In the current study, Zoom is favored due to easiness to access, sophistication, and technical reasons. This result does not mean they like GM over Zoom because we employed the free Zoom version. Thus, we assume that the participants needed more time to engage in their learning.

The current study indicates that GM and Zoom are interchangeable for learning. Prior studies also claimed that GM and Zoom were good learning media (Maulana, 2021), which means that both learning platforms supported their learning. Further, both GM and Zoom increased the learning achievement in mathematics (Hamidy, 2021). However, GM was claimed to be better than Zoom in usage (Maulana, 2021). The current finding also differs from the prior study on the attitude toward using Zoom. Students had a negative attitude toward using Zoom and perceived it as harming their learning experience and motivation to learn (Serhan, 2020). Theories confirm that Zen generation like a practical tool as the primary consideration (Kirschner & De Bruyckere, 2017; Mohr & Mohr, 2017)they can multitask. Hence, the current study implies that the choice of GM or Zoom needs further studies considering uncontrolled variables.

Observation and reflection notes indicate the positive and negative effects of both platforms. A prior study also confirms the benefits and drawbacks of engagement in higher education (Dumford & Miller, 2018; Lowenthal et al., 2020). The studies reveal that the students had fewer intensities of collaborative learning, fewer assortments of discussions, less quality in collaborative learning, and less quality of interactions (Dumford & Miller, 2018). The current study confirms that GM and Zoom cause different impacts and raise students' perceptions. Prior studies do not clarify these findings as the current study has a different focus and direction.

The current study reveals that almost all participants had laptops. However, the fact that some participants did not have laptops was unidentified and against theories. The Zen characteristics are supposed to be **about technology (Berkup,2014).** The absence of having laptop abolishes their technological engagement. Prior research evidence implied that technological engagement positively increased learning attunement (Chen et al., 2021). The interview notes clarify that half of them were under a scholarship program. However, it was not confirmed if the three participants who did not have laptops were under the scholarship scheme. The identified participants reported doing homework at any internet café as this model was safe and practical. Beyond this reason, they claimed that their android could do more than a laptop. Some studies suggest that technological engagement is essential (Chen et al., 2021) and promotes online learning better (Yudiawan et al., 2021). Thus, the finding implies that not all students are fully engaged technologically, which may affect their psychological engagement (Serhan, 2020). Thus, the technological property was not supposed to be a problem for Zen participants.

This study reveals that Asus conquers other brands. This finding is convergent with the prior study of the Asus brand (Lubis et al., 2018). However, the reason for choosing these gadget types was not clarified, implying that the participants had logical reasons for choosing specific brands. Further, the current finding reveals that Microsoft dominates the participants' operating system (OS) choice. However, the arguments why they chose various Windows types are unrequited. Besides, the prior studies do not confirm this finding.

Not all participants were concerned about using Mendeley referencing tool. The use of Mendeley is due to theoretical and

empirical significance. Prior studies claimed Mendeley was cheerful and helpful (Parabhoi, 2017). Mendeley was claimed to help authors gain better manuscript accuracy (Iskandar & Patak, 2019). More studies on using Mendeley favor students (Iskandar & Patak, 2019; Kousha & Thelwall, 2019). Indeed, we believe that Mendeley promotes better manuscripts in their research course.

The minority accepted the risk of using Mendeley software, indicating that they knew the benefits and drawbacks of Mendeley. Likewise, most participants were unsure about Mendeley's effect, meaning they did not know what to do with Mendeley. Prior studies claimed to have multi-benefits of using this referencing tool (Iskandar & Patak, 2019; Parabhoi, 2017; Patak et al., 2016). Hence, the participants do not understand well about Mendeley.

The second objective is to discuss the student's ability to report topic searching research (TSR) and research proposals submitted (RPS) through synchronous learning activities.

The result of TSR shows that the participants failed to present different sections such as limitations, implications, hypotheses, and thinking framework (see table.12). Prior studies revealed that doctoral students had broader problems in the thesis (Lei & Hu, 2019). The result is different because the subject and scope were different. The current study confirms the prior studies related to the problem of writing the undergraduate thesis introduction (Maznun et al., 2017). The participants also report their problems in finding statistics and thinking frameworks properly. Prior studies claimed that students' thesis structure and psychological, sociocultural, and linguistics factors were problems (Dwihandini et al., 2013). Nevertheless, a later study claimed that students only had problems with the research topic and methodology (Lestari, 2020)and 2, which are not problems in the current study. In brief, this study reveals the incompetence of participants in an essential part of a thesis.

The RPS table implies different difficulties for the participants to show their RPS; low and medium difficulties (see table 13). Prior studies found sociocultural, linguistics, and psychological problems (Dwihandini et al., 2013). Another study found English proficiencies, time management, research methodology, attitude, research, and research topics as problems (Lestari, 2020). The current study's methodology and research topic belong to manageable sections. It means that not all findings are well confirmed with the current evidence; some are equal, but others are unequal.

The last objective is to discuss what correlates topic searching reports (TSR) and research proposals submitted (RPS).

The statistical test shows that ten items of TSR were valid, and only 13 items had good internal consistency. The RPS scale obtained ten valid items with a correlation coefficient and only ten with good internal consistency. The coefficient of determination is obtained by r2= 0.74, indicating that the TPS variable contributes a positive determination of 74% to the RPS variable. Indeed, there is a significant correlation between TSR to RPS. Prior studies confirmed different findings since most were qualitative findings (Dwihandini et al., 2013; Lestari, 2020; Maznun et al., 2017). Therefore, statistically, the current finding is not well confirmed in detail. It implies that further study to investigate the correlation between TSR and RPS is needed with more participants in different areas and departments since research exists in all courses.

Conclusion

Realizing constraints, we have concluded. The Zen participants changed their convenient time to learn from the normal before the pandemic due to pragmatic reasons, which may become a new challenge in a new normal. Google Meet is chosen for technical and esthetical reasons, while Zoom is favored for practicality, sophistication, and technical reasons. Almost all participants provided laptops to mark their technological engagement with different trusted practical and endurance brands. The majority employed older Microsoft operating systems. The participants used reference tools, and a minority failed to thrive. Few participants realized the benefits and drawbacks of using Mendeley. The participants faced problems showing the vital parts of the thesis or articles. Most students are weak in formulating research questions or hypotheses. The participants do not indicate appropriate Zen generations in performing technology, an exhibition of attitude, independent learning, and particular learning outcomes. Above all, the participants performed various engagement levels for all variables.

Limitation and Implication

This study is limited to insufficient participants in the framework of the survey study and fewer types of data. It suggests using mixed methods and broadening various level participants to make the findings generable. The unique idea is to use structural equation modeling (SEM). It is also beneficial to explore the two other instruments in the findings. Upon all, this study implies that stakeholders prepare a better preparation to understand the intervening variables better. Teachers should be prepared and creative to design, implement and evaluate the instructional design. Students should be more responsible for exhibiting their Zen characteristics. The government should provide ample facilities to support OL's soul and stable internet connection.

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