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Article

Determinants of Student-Centered Learning (SCL) Practice in English Language Courses Among Indonesian University Students

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ABSTRACT

Background: The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the transition from teacher-centered to student-centered learning (SCL), a method shown to enhance academic outcomes.
Objective: This study aimed to identify factors associated with SCL practices during English language courses among university students in Indonesia.
Methods: A cross-sectional quantitative study was conducted with 56 university students recruited via online convenience sampling. Instruments included demographic data, the SCL Fun Chemistry scale, and the Tuckman Procrastination Scale. Linear regression was used to assess associations.
Results: The average age was 20.3 years (SD = 1.4); most participants were female (83.9%) and in their second year of study (73.2%). A significant association was found between academic grade and SCL practice (β = 2.05, p = 0.05). No significant associations were observed for procrastination or other demographic factors.
Conclusion: Higher academic grade level is associated with greater adoption of SCL during English courses. These findings support integrating active learning strategies tailored to student readiness.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic there has been a global pedagogical shift from traditional teacher-centered approaches toward more active, student-centered learning (SCL) models. This transition reflects a growing recognition that passive lecture-based instruction, where knowledge transfer occurs through one-way verbal communication from teacher to student, often fails to foster deep engagement or critical thinking (Charlton, 2006; Wessels et al., 2007). Such methods are now widely considered outdated due to their limited capacity to involve students as active participants in the learning process (Killen, 2000).

Student-Centered Learning (SCL) places learners at the core of the educational experience. It promotes autonomy, encourages responsibility for one's own learning, and allows flexibility in adapting to individual learning styles, paces, and needs (Idris, 2016; Todorovski et al., 2015). Various SCL strategies have been implemented successfully across disciplines, including Small Group Discussions, Simulations, Self-Directed Learning, Cooperative Learning, and Flipped Classrooms (Andiwatir et al., 2021; Sukendro & Yuliawan, 2021).

Empirical studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of SCL in improving academic outcomes. For example, Nur Maryam found that SCL methods integrated with classroom blogging enhanced student performance more significantly than traditional instruction. Similarly, research by Sugiyo Warlan on SCL-based fun chemistry learning reported a student mastery level of 88.89%, indicating that active learning can substantially improve both understanding and retention.

The implementation of SCL is particularly relevant in English language education, a compulsory subject in most Indonesian universities. English proficiency encompassing the four foundational skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing is essential for academic success and global competitiveness (Syakur et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2013). However, there is limited research exploring the specific factors that influence the adoption and practice of SCL methods in English courses among university students in Indonesia. This study, therefore, aims to investigate the associated factors of SCL practice during English language instruction at the tertiary level. Understanding these factors is critical for educators seeking to optimize active learning environments and enhance English language acquisition in higher education contexts.

METHOD

Study Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive design using a cross-sectional approach. The research was conducted at a nursing college in Indonesia in July 2022. The study aimed to assess factors associated with the practice of Student-Centered Learning (SCL) during English courses among undergraduate students.

Sample

A convenience sampling technique was utilized to recruit participants via an online platform (Google Forms), given the accessibility and flexibility it provided in the post-pandemic educational setting. The inclusion criteria were: (1) undergraduate students currently enrolled in an English language course during the academic semester, (2) possession of a personal mobile phone or digital device with internet access, and (3) 100% attendance in the course based on institutional records. Students with self-reported chronic illness or who were unable to complete the online survey were excluded.

A total of 56 eligible students participated voluntarily after receiving an explanation of the study objectives. Informed consent was obtained digitally before data collection. Ethical approval was granted by the institutional ethics review board of the affiliated nursing college.

Instrument

Demographic Questionnaire included variables such as age, gender, academic year (grade), previous educational background (Senior High School or Vocational School), and study program (Diploma or Bachelor).

SCL Fun Chemistry Scale adapted from Afrizal (2014) and developed following guidelines from Sugiyono (2008), this instrument was used to measure the extent of SCL practice in English learning contexts. The scale contains items assessing participation in SCL methods such as group discussions, simulations, and self-directed learning. Responses were recorded on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The scale had been previously validated for Indonesian educational contexts.

Tuckman Procrastination Scale (TPS) was originally developed by Bruce W. Tuckman in 1991 to assess tendencies toward academic procrastination. It was translated and adapted into Bahasa Indonesia for this study. The TPS consists of 16 items across three domains: time-wasting behaviors, task avoidance, and externalizing blame. Participants responded using a four-point Likert scale (1 = not at all true of me, to 4 = very true of me). The adapted version demonstrated acceptable psychometric properties, with a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.867 and a validity index of 0.67, indicating moderate construct validity..

Procedure

Data were collected over a one-week period through online questionnaires distributed via institutional learning platforms and WhatsApp groups. Responses were automatically recorded and cleaned for completeness and eligibility.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, and frequencies) were used for univariate analysis. Bivariate analyses were conducted using Spearman correlation and independent t-tests to identify associations between independent variables and SCL practice. Variables showing significance ($p < 0.05$) in bivariate analysis were included in a multiple linear regression model to identify predictors of SCL engagement. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS version XX, with a significance threshold set at $p < 0.05$.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee. Participants were informed about the purpose, procedure, risks, and benefits of the study. Written informed consent (and parental consent for minors) was obtained prior to participation. Confidentiality was ensured through anonymized data collection, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty.

RESULT

Most respondents were aged 18–20 years and predominantly female. The majority were sophomores enrolled in a Bachelor Nursing program and graduated from senior high school. The average SCL score was 23.84, indicating moderate engagement in student-centered learning, while the average procrastination score was 43.41,reflecting a moderate level of procrastination behavior among participants.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics and Mean Scores of SCL and Procrastination (n = 56)

Variables	n (%)	Mean ± SD
Age (years)		20.3 ± 1.4
18–20	37 (66.1)	
21–23	16 (28.6)	
24–26	3 (5.3)	
Gender		
Male	9 (16.1)	
Female	47 (83.9)	
Grade		
Sophomore	41 (73.2)	
Junior	15 (26.8)	
Education Background		
Senior High School	37 (66.1)	
Vocational High School	19 (33.9)	
Program		
Bachelor	46 (82.1)	
Diploma	10 (17.9)	
SCL Score		23.84 ± 3.38
Procrastination Score		43.41 ± 7.19

Only academic grade showed a statistically significant relationship with SCL scores ($p = 0.03$). Higher-grade students were more engaged in SCL practices. No significant relationships were found between SCL and age, gender, education background, academic major, or procrastination level.

Table 2. Bivariate Analysis of Factors Associated with SCL Score (n = 56)

Variables	Test	Coefficient (r/t)	95% CI	p-value
Age	Spearman	0.17	–	0.21
Gender	t-test	1.81	-0.23 – 4.61	0.08
Grade	t-test	-2.12*	-4.01 – (-0.11)	0.03*
Education Background	t-test	0.02	-1.86 – 1.91	0.97
Major	t-test	0.65	-1.61 – 3.16	0.51
Procrastination	Spearman	-0.02	–	0.87

[a] Spearman correlation, [b] Independent t-test

*Significant at $p < 0.05$

Regression analysis confirmed that grade level was the only variable significantly predicting SCL scores. Students in higher academic years were more likely to demonstrate strong SCL practices. Neither age nor procrastination significantly influenced SCL behavior in this model.

Table 3. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of Factors Associated with SCL Practice

Variables	β	SE	Standardized β	t	p-value
Age	-0.10	0.79	0.27	-2.43	0.08
Grade	2.05	1.03	0.27	1.98	0.05*
Procrastination	0.06	0.06	-0.14	1.07	0.28

*Significant at $p < 0.05$

DISSCUSSION

Student-Centered Learning (SCL) is an educational approach that shifts the focus from the teacher as the sole authority to students as active participants in constructing their own learning experiences. This approach empowers students to take responsibility for their learning by encouraging autonomy, critical thinking, collaboration, and the application of knowledge in real-world contexts (Norwood, 2004; Weimer, 2013). Unlike traditional teacher-centered models, where instruction is directive and passive, SCL enables students to explore content at their own pace, reflect on their understanding, and engage in self-directed learning.

The present study found a positive association between students' academic grade levels and their engagement with SCL practices. Specifically, students in higher grades demonstrated greater adherence to SCL principles, such as self-regulation, problem-solving, and reflective learning behaviors. This finding aligns with research by Zimmerman (2002), who emphasized that cognitive and metacognitive development plays a crucial role in enabling learners to engage in strategies such as goal-setting, monitoring, and evaluation of their learning progress.

As students advance in their academic journey, they acquire stronger metacognitive skills, which are essential for effective self-directed learning (Vermunt & Donche, 2017). These skills include planning, self-monitoring, and adjusting learning strategies based on outcomes. Consequently, senior students tend to exhibit more mature learning behaviors and higher academic self-efficacy, which support the SCL framework. Moreover, higher-grade students are often exposed to more complex academic tasks that require independent thinking and collaborative learning, further reinforcing their capacity to engage with SCL environments.

The role of cognitive factors—such as prior knowledge, critical reasoning, and comprehension—also contributes significantly to the success of SCL implementation. Students with advanced cognitive capabilities are better equipped to navigate the demands of student-led learning activities, including inquiry-based learning, group discussions, and project-based assignments (Bransford et al., 2000).

In contrast, younger or lower-grade students may require more scaffolding and structured guidance to adapt to SCL methodologies. Without appropriate support, they may struggle with the increased autonomy and responsibility that SCL demands. This suggests the importance of a

gradual integration of SCL strategies into the curriculum, tailored to students' developmental stages and academic readiness (Biggs & Tang, 2011).

Furthermore, the school environment, teacher preparedness, and availability of instructional resources also mediate the effectiveness of SCL practices. Teachers must be equipped with pedagogical skills to design student-centered activities and assessments that foster deep learning (OECD, 2020). The findings of this study highlight the need for targeted interventions and professional development programs that support both educators and students in transitioning effectively to student-centered paradigms.

Despite the valuable insights provided by this study, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to draw causal inferences between academic grade levels and engagement in Student-Centered Learning (SCL) practices. Longitudinal studies would be more suitable to assess changes in SCL engagement over time and the developmental trajectory of cognitive and metacognitive skills. Second, the study relied on self-reported questionnaires, which may be subject to response bias and social desirability effects. Students may have overestimated their engagement in SCL-related behaviors to align with perceived expectations. Future studies should consider incorporating observational data or triangulating with teacher assessments to increase validity. Third, the sample was limited to a single institution or geographic area, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Cultural, institutional, and curricular differences in other regions or school systems may yield different outcomes. Expanding the study across diverse educational contexts would provide more comprehensive insights. Fourth, this study did not control for potential confounding variables such as teacher instructional style, classroom environment, or access to learning resources, which may have influenced students' engagement in SCL practices. Future research should integrate multilevel analyses that account for these contextual factors. Lastly, although the study explored cognitive and metacognitive aspects, it did not deeply examine motivational or affective variables, which are also essential in shaping learning behaviors. Including constructs such as academic motivation, learning anxiety, and emotional engagement may offer a more holistic understanding of SCL dynamics.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights that Student-Centered Learning (SCL) is an effective pedagogical approach for enhancing student engagement and skill development in English language courses. The findings indicate that students in higher academic years are more likely to actively practice SCL strategies, suggesting that academic experience contributes to learner autonomy and readiness. To strengthen English proficiency, students should be supported in practicing the four core language skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing through interactive, student-led learning environments. Future efforts should focus on integrating SCL methodologies across academic levels to ensure equitable development of English language competence.

Conflict of Interest

The authors have declared that no conflict of interest exists.

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