

Factors Affecting Learners' Participation through the Integration of Padlet in a Tertiary ESL Classroom

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Abstract

Learners' participation in the English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom is one of the factors supporting teaching and learning sessions in the classroom. Learners' participation, involvement and interaction are the most vital element in creating a conducive classroom, particularly for tertiary learners. In line with the usage of teaching resources in this digital age, the implementation of technology in a classroom gives a positive impact that can assist with the participation of learners in a classroom. Hence, the purpose of this study is to identify factors affecting learners' participation in using Padlet for learning ESL and their perception of the benefits and challenges of using Padlet in enhancing English language learning. A questionnaire was distributed to 100 ESL tertiary learners in one of the private colleges based in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. The data were collected using questionnaires through google form and then analysed using descriptive statistical analysis. According to the findings, it was indicated that the factors of motivation, learning engagement and usefulness influenced learners to participate in ESL classroom lessons and activities. Similarly, the findings showed a positive view on the perception of the participants in using Padlet as a learning tool in the ESL classroom.

Keywords

Padlet, Learners' Participation, ESL Classroom, Tertiary Learners

1. Introduction

Learner involvement and participation, particularly in English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms, are the most critical elements in creating a positive learning environment for them to learn a language, particularly English language.

This is because active engagement between both learners and educators is regarded as an essential factor in learning accomplishment (Taraj & Jani, 2019). However, learning English is always challenging as the factor of learners' participation in class would be the main issue for the learners in order to conduct the lesson. This is due to the lack of participation in classroom discussion or activities and because of this, it would affect the whole class environment as it's not motivating and supportive enough in creating an active conducive classroom lesson. In fact, learning English requires a high level of collaboration between learners and educators, as learning English, particularly in equipping the four main skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking), must be monitored throughout the process of learning it. Learners need modern communication skills, knowledge of a common foreign language (speaking and writing), information acquisition (by reading, listening, and comprehending), talents and capacities, as well as education and training (Hamidova & Ganiyeva, 2020).

The 21st century educators use technology in a teaching-learning session to increase learner involvement and participation in the course. Educators and learners, according to George-Reyes (2021), must learn how to use information and communication technologies (ICTs) and recognise their value in educational contexts. This is due to the ability of technology to create an interesting classroom environment not only for learners, but also for educators. Active participation will occur in the lesson as a result of the engaging classroom atmosphere. Some of the technologies implemented by the educators most of the time are web-based digital wall tools that can be used during a lesson like Padlet, Lino, Pinterest, Trello, Wakelet and others. These digital wall tools are frequently used in a classroom as it is easy for both educators and learners to access them during a lesson. For example, the usage of Padlet as a platform for the educators and learners to be engaged, particularly during class sessions are resulting in a positive outcome with the learners' participation in the lesson. Based on the findings obtained from a study conducted by Mulyadi, Naniwarsih, Omolu, Manangkari, and Amiati (2021), the findings show that with the help of Padlet, students were enthused about and active in classroom activities. For decades, the traditional technique of teaching, which includes lectures and handouts, has been the usual way of instruction, and it was still being used in ESL classrooms. Because the old teaching approach is not suitable for the present generation where the generation and the education system keep evolving, the number of learners participating in the classroom is low when this method is used. As a result, learners will be less motivated to study and engage during the teaching-learning session. Furthermore, conventional methods like memorization, narrative, instruction, question-answer, recitation, and discussion were included in the category of traditional methods employed by most educators in the ESL classroom. According to Hashim, Rafiq, and Md. Yunus (2019), traditional teaching approaches are ineffective for ESL learners. Additionally, numerous studies have been undertaken throughout the years on the factors that contribute to low learner participation in the classroom. Each of the components has a different effect on the

learners, resulting in their most passive engagement in a teaching-learning session. Learner traits, classroom structure, instructor position, classroom climate, and confidence, according to [Ghalley and Rai \(2019\)](#), are all factors that influence learner involvement both intrinsically and extrinsically. As a result, educators play a critical role in developing a lesson that addresses the elements, as well as a classroom atmosphere that is appropriate for the learners, allowing for active learning in the classroom.

The research questions for this study are:

- What are the factors affecting learners' participation in using Padlet for learning ESL?
- What is students' perception of the benefits and challenges of using Padlet to enhance English language learning?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Factors Affecting Learners' Classroom Participation

Learners' engagement in classroom sessions and activities is critical to their understanding of the material they are studying. Learners will have a poor understanding of the topic they have learned if they are unable to provide their entire dedication to engage in the learning session as well as classroom activities. According to [Abdullah, Bakar, and Mahbob \(2012\)](#), learning is more effective when both educators and learners actively participate in learning activities. As a result, there are numerous elements that influence a learner's classroom involvement. There were several characteristics that influenced learners' engagement in English classrooms, just as there were in ESL classrooms. [Al-Ghafri \(2018\)](#) conducted research on the factors that influence learners' involvement in English classes, with an emphasis on tertiary learners. According to the study, there are three key elements that influence learner engagement in English classes: first, the educator, second, the learner, and third, external factors.

Educator factors included a few elements such as the educator's teaching style and approaches in delivering English lessons, the variety of games and activities utilised in ESL education, and the educator's control and administration of the class. According to [Sayuti, Ann, Saimi, Bakar, Dawawi, and Mohamad \(2020\)](#), educators have devised a variety of teaching methodologies to engage learners in a positive and memorable learning experience, such as assigning them a task or conducting activities in which they can participate, in order for the learners to gain a variety of knowledge perspectives and experiences throughout the learning process. Next, there were certain variables centred on student factors, such as learners' level of proficiency in English, learners' willingness and attitude to learn English language, and learners' motivation to participate in ESL lessons. Other elements mentioned included learners' lack of socialisation with their educators outside of the classroom to practise English and become more familiar with them, the role of administrators in the institution and their role in facilitating English learning, and family support and encouragement in learning English.

According to the study conducted by [Al-Ghafri \(2018\)](#) where in his findings, there were numerous elements contributing to and affecting learner engagement, particularly in the English classroom, as each component plays their own role in affecting learner participation in the ESL classroom.

Another aspect that may influence learner's participation is how well they prepare for class. The majority of learners place a greater emphasis on their educators when it comes to studying and comprehending subject matter. As a result, they will be unprepared for a lesson. As a result, they will feel fearful of their educator because they know what will happen if they show up to class without knowing anything about the topic. Many learners experience fear, according to [Weaver and Qi \(2005\)](#), because they lack appropriate information or are dealing with anxieties in the classroom. According to studies, some learners reported not participating in class if they had not prepared on the topic matter prior to attending, resulting in a lack of confidence in participating in discussions ([Howard, 2002](#)).

2.2. Technology in ESL Class

As we enter the twenty-first century, technology is widely used by communities of all ages, from youngsters to the elderly. Technology has altered the field of education, both in lower and higher education, and this has had a considerable impact on the teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL) ([Mansor & Rahim, 2017](#)). In this current era, the use of technologies in a teaching-learning session is the most popular tool among the learners since it helps to stimulate their interest in the lesson and draw their attention to it. According to [Yunus \(2018\)](#), the transformation in Malaysia begins in the classroom, where technology such as computers, projectors, and internet connection are used. Learners' learning experiences will be different and more meaningful as a result of the change, as technology will assist and improve their interest in learning in the classroom.

There are many different types of technology that can be utilised in a classroom to teach English. Using technology in the classroom has various advantages, particularly for EFL learners ([Wu, Wang, & Wang, 2005](#); [Raw & Ismail, 2021](#)). Learners can utilise computers and software applications to verify and correct their work, develop their language abilities, use the Internet and e-mail to seek information, participate in discussions, publish their work, study technical books, and engage with one another even globally. According to [Soska \(1994\)](#), ESL learners can also benefit from instructional technology to improve their speaking, reading, and writing abilities. Not only is new and more sophisticated technology influencing how learners perceive learning, but it is also changing how "educators think about literacy and education" ([Pilgrim, Bledsoe, & Reily, 2012](#)). Because of that, there is a need to create a collective awareness for teachers' readiness to integrate technology as part of the teaching and learning process ([Avelino & Ismail, 2021](#)).

2.3. Padlet

Padlet (<https://padlet.com/>) is a web-based tool that offers a wide range of options and functionalities, with the primary goal of creating a real-time multimedia wall. Padlet's role is to aid educators and learners in a teaching-learning session, and it is well-known and used in all levels of education institutions. Padlet also works and is appropriate not only for learners in higher education, but it can also be utilised and applied by primary and secondary students. It can also be accessible from a variety of internet-enabled devices, such as a tablet, smartphone, laptop, or even a PC. Furthermore, it is user-friendly because the features are basic and easy to use, especially for tech-savvy learners, as Padlet delivers a simple but effective function that can help learners grasp their course or subject. According to Fuchs (2014), Padlet's support for a wider range of media, produces an extraordinarily successful environment for participation in today's fast-paced information ecosystem. As a result, bringing Padlet into the classroom is appropriate because it is preferred by today's generation due to Padlet's characteristics that cater to their needs and interests in terms of technological learning platforms.

One of the primary reasons why educators prefer to utilise Padlet as a learning tool in their classroom is that the goal and objective of the lesson may be met through the various functions that educators can devise utilising this online web-based platform. The first use is that it is used by educators as a classroom management tool, allowing them to correctly arrange lesson structures, classroom activities, and student resources. Second, learners can attach files to show off their homework or project work. This will facilitate peer review of work/projects and increase student involvement by allowing them to remark and voice their ideas on one another's posts. According to England (2017), learners were particularly proud of their Padlets when they were seen by all of their classmates. Then, using Padlet, learners can provide feedback based on the question, as well as express their opinions on the course and what they have learned, so that educators can determine which areas of the lesson need to be improved for the learners. Padlet can then be utilised as a platform to communicate with the parents. Educators or teachers can create a wall for parents to post information about their children's homework, assignments, and tasks, as well as forthcoming announcements.

There have been numerous researches on the use and application of Padlet to teach English language, just as there have been numerous studies on ESL learning. Rashid, Yunus, and Wahi (2019), for example, did a study on using Padlet for collaborative writing among ESL learners, in which the researchers used Padlet to provide a series of writing tasks. It is clear from this study that it focused on writing skills, which are one of the talents in the English language. In addition, Syahrizal and Rahayu (2020) did a study on the use of Padlet for English speaking activities, in which the researchers assigned the respondents to a video speaking task that focused on their speaking skills. In addition, Prastya

(2019) did a study focusing on combining Mobile Assisted Language Learning (Mall) technique with Padlet to improve reading skills. This is one of the studies that used Padlet to learn one of the English skills.

Indrasari (2019) did a study in which the researcher used Padlet as a platform to conduct an activity focusing on listening abilities. According to this research, Padlet was widely used in ESL classrooms as a medium for teaching, practising, and equipping students with the targeted English language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Finally, using a Padlet in a classroom can help to solve the problem of passive learners. Many learners prefer to remain silent when asked by teachers or lecturers for their opinion or answer to a question because they are frightened of making mistakes, bashful, or have poor self-confidence, among other reasons. As a result, this problem can be resolved because students can write their thoughts and responses while keeping anonymous. According to Ellis (2015), Padlet was proven to be more useful in class discussions than spoken contributions.

Fuchs (2014) focuses on Padlet as a writing wall for whole-class engagement and problems in classroom participation, where the study mentions that there are various hurdles that educators must overcome in order for learners to take part in activities teaching and learning. The researcher decided to use Padlet to overcome these barriers, and as a result, he discovered that by using Padlet, he was able to solve the problem in the classroom, and as a result, the researcher stated that Padlet has provided a non-threatening space and collaborative classroom for the learners.

Following that, Ellis (2015) conducted a pilot study on the use of Padlet to boost learner involvement in lectures. According to the data, 83 percent of the learners felt that using a Padlet in a lecture class is more fascinating, and 79 percent said that reading suggestions given by their peers can help them learn more effectively. The researcher emphasised the study's findings, noting that Padlet can help learners overcome hurdles to participation in classroom discussions. Furthermore, the researcher proposed that future studies use a mixed-methods approach with a larger sample size.

Padlet has also been widely implemented in Malaysian educational institutions. Padlet was employed as a learning aid in a teaching-learning session at all levels, including primary, secondary, and higher education institutions. As a result, studies on the implementation of Padlet have been done to understand how it is interpreted in the Malaysian context. Zainuddin, Azmi, Yusoff, Shariff, and Hassan (2020), conducted a case study on boosting classroom engagement using Padlet as a learning tool, with the goal of concentrating on Padlet as an e-learning tool and characteristics that encourage students to engage in active learning. There are 39 participants in the study, all of them are postgraduate students in a Data Science programme. In order to analyse and measure the students' participation, this study used seven elements. This study takes a quantitative approach, employing open-ended surveys and statistical analysis to analyse

the data. According to the findings of the study, using Padlet has a substantial impact on enhancing student participation in the classroom. Finally, the study found that more learning technologies should be encouraged and developed in order to provide a more effective learning and teaching process.

Rashid, Yunus, and Wahi (2019) did a related study that focused on the use of Padlet for collaborative writing among ESL students. The goal of this research is to examine how using Padlet in a language class might improve collaborative writing. 87 undergraduate students enrolled in a language course at a Malaysian public institution participated in this study. A set of tasks devised by the researcher and scheduled to be completed over the course of 14 weeks during the semester. A qualitative approach is used in this study, which is supplemented with document analysis. Padlet engages students to participate in class activities, improves language accuracy, encourages engagement, and lowers student anxiety, according to the findings of this study.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The researchers decided to utilise a quantitative approach by using questionnaire as a research design and supported by a small qualitative component by including open-ended questions in the questionnaire which to be implemented in this study. This was due to the suitability of the context for this study and to acquire the appropriate data.

3.2. Research Participants

A simple random sampling, which consisted of 100 participants out of 1218 of the population from a private college based in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. The total of the participants was only 146 in which they are from the first semester of their study and all of them are taking diploma courses. However, only 100 participants were involved in this study out of 146 participants. The participants selected were from different faculties and programs as they need to enroll in English subjects offered by their own respective faculty in their first and second semester. In addition, the participants were mixed-proficiency in English language and all of them were coming from different cultural backgrounds.

3.3. Research Instruments

Questionnaire was used as a tool to collect the data of the study. The instrument used in this study was adapted from Zainuddin, Azmi, Yusoff, Shariff, and Hassan (2020). A pilot study has been done to test the adequacy of the questionnaires as there were some changes done in the questionnaire to fit with the context of the researchers' classroom which resulted in the Cronbach's Alpha value for all items which was more than 0.8. Besides that, the questions from the questionnaire have been validated (face and content validity) by an expert in Education. Moreover, the questionnaires consisted of 10 items where 7 of the items

were in a 4-point Likert scale format which 1 for Strongly Disagree, 2 for Disagree, 3 for Agree and 4 for Strongly Agree that focused on motivation, learning engagement and usefulness. The remaining three items were in the form of open-ended questions which used to identify participants' perception and experience using the Padlet.

3.4. Data Collection Procedures

The duration allocated for this study was 6 weeks. The implementation of Padlet in the classroom took about 5 weeks as the participants needed to be introduced first to a new online-based application and provided them with some explanations of the procedures on using the features of Padlet in a teaching-learning session. Throughout the 5 weeks, different kind of classroom activities were conducted through Padlet and the participants were experimenting while experiencing Padlet features to accommodate and completed the activities or tasks given. Next, the questionnaire was distributed in week 6 to get some responses and feedbacks from the participants and it was distributed online through Google form by posting the link into the Padlet. Padlet was used as a medium for the participants to access the link as they were familiar in using Padlet as a medium to receive, submitting and completing tasks given. The duration of time allocated to the participants to answer and completing the questionnaire were 2 hours and it needed to be submitted on the same day. Once the 2 hours allocated ended, the researchers closed the link of the questionnaire started their analysis. Additionally, this study was conducted in a classroom that provided suitable tools for this study, which was an LCD projector and Wi-Fi for the accessibility of the participants to access the Padlet website.

3.5. Data Analysis

Statistical Package Social Science (SPSS) was used to analyse the data collected from the questionnaire using the Google form where the data obtained focused and analysed on the three factors which were motivation, learning engagement and usefulness. In order to obtain frequencies and percentages, descriptive statistical analysis was employed in the study. In addition, the three remaining items which were the open-ended questions were analysed by using the example of the excerpt responded by the respondents in the questionnaire. In the next section, the results are provided.

4. Findings and Discussion

Table 1 shows that the majority agree that Padlet indirectly enhanced their learning motivation in learning the English language. Based on the data shown, all of the participants (100%) were consensual that learning English using Padlet was enjoyable and 96% agreed that learning English via Padlet was able to attract their interest to learn the subject. The findings shown were positive in terms of the motivating factor that Padlet has in learning the English language. According

Table 1. Motivation.

Statements	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
1) Learning English language via Padlet was enjoyable.	0	0	30 (30%)	70 (70%)
2) Learning English language via Padlet attracted my interest to learn the subject.	0	4 (4%)	60 (60%)	36 (36%)

to [Stannard \(2015\)](#), Padlet works effectively in an ESL tertiary classroom context with activities like ideation, discussion, and project work. Thus, the implementation of Padlet in the lesson helped to motivate the participants to learn and use the platform as one of their learning tools.

Based on the findings shown in [Table 2](#) which focused on learning engagement, it can be indicated that the usage of Padlet assisted the participants to be engaged in the classroom. According to the findings, 94% of the participants agreed that the use of Padlet helped them to engage with their friends in the lesson. Besides, 98% stated that Padlet helped the participants to engage with the lecturer and lastly, 98% of the participants agreed that they were more engaged in the English lesson after using Padlet. According to the findings indicated in [Table 2](#), it can be analysed that the use of Padlet assisted the participants to be engaged with their peers, lecturer and the most important part where they were more engaged in English lessons. As stated by [Setiawati \(2020\)](#), Padlet is useful for academic engagement as well as for learning the English language.

According to the findings shown in [Table 3](#), it can be indicated that the usefulness of Padlet benefited most of them where 94% of the participants stated that Padlet encouraged them to use English language with their classmates outside of the class using the platform given. Next, 96% of the participants were excited to go to English class where Padlet will be used in the lesson. Based on the findings, it can be seen that the use of Padlet in the lesson plan is an important key in making the participants fully make use of the platform prepared for them which was Padlet in the lesson. This is in accordance with [Dianati et al. \(2020\)](#) whose research found that Padlet was well-received and accepted by students for its utility and ease of use, according to student comments.

Statements in [Table 4](#) shown were the three examples of findings related to learning engagement. All participants agreed that Padlet enhanced their participation in class where they were engaged through the activities prepared for them on the platform like quizzes, questioning and answering sessions, submitting tasks and many more. Besides, some of the participants can overcome their shyness in volunteering to answer or give their opinions by using Padlet which somehow indirectly helped them to participate with the others although they were shy and not confident to voice out. In addition, the interaction of the students in the comment sections helped them to engage more among them in the lesson which none of their peers will be left behind throughout the discussion.

Table 2. Learning engagement.

Statements	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
3) Padlet helped me to engage with my friends.	0	6 (6%)	32 (32%)	62 (62%)
4) Padlet helped me to engage with my lecturer.	0	2 (2%)	26 (26%)	72 (72%)
5) I was more engaged in English lessons after using Padlet.	0	6 (6%)	54 (54%)	40 (40%)

Table 3. Usefulness.

Statements	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
6) Padlet encouraged me to use English language with my classmates outside of the class.	0	6 (6%)	80 (80%)	14 (14%)
7) I felt excited to go to the English class where Padlet will be used.	0	4 (4%)	44 (44%)	52 (52%)

Table 4. Example of excerpt on learning engagement. 8. Do you think Padlet enhanced your participation in class? How?

Participant A	“Yes, because when I am ashamed to speak, I can answer through Padlet.”
Participant B	“Yes, we did have so many fun activities like doing quiz and answer question even without speaking. Just typing or send the work only.”
Participant C	“Yes, because it attracts me by having a quiz which something more like a game and able to see what friends give for different answer and unique way of answering, I was able to compare and learn new thing and also able to discuss afterward.”

Statements in **Table 5** shown were the three examples of findings related to usefulness of Padlet which focused on how it helped in English language learning. Based on the statements given, it can be indicated that Padlet is a platform that provided varieties of approach to the participants as the features of Padlet helped the participants to experience a new learning experience by using Padlet as a platform in learning English language. Some of the participants stated that, Padlet is a platform that can help them to learn individually and in groups that focus on the skills of English language which can assist them to learn independently in a meaningful and beneficial way. The existence of Padlet in their lesson helped the participants to make use of the opportunity in experiencing different types of approaches in learning the English language.

Table 5. Example of excerpt on usefulness. 9. How do you think the use of Padlet helped you in learning the English language?

Participant A	“Padlet has numerous distinctive learning features. This can assist students with learning meaningful communication.”
Participant B	“It encourages people to be confident while speaking or reading. Lecturer and other helping each other.”
Participant C	“In my opinion, Padlet can be helpful in providing links, slides that are good and suitable for students to study English either individually or in groups.”

Table 6. Example of excerpt on challenges. 10. What are the challenges that you faced when using Padlet? Elaborate?

Participant A	“Website often lags if there are too many comments on one discussion post.”
Participant B	“Padlet is really new to me and my other friends. Sometime it makes us confusing and didn't know how to use it correctly but things get better if we learn it right.”
Participant C	“Need to use internet. If the internet connection was not good, we can't open it through the websites.”

Statements in **Table 6** shown were the three examples of findings related to the challenges in using Padlet. According to the findings, most of the participants were not familiar with Padlet when it was first introduced to them. Because of this, some of them were having difficulties in understanding and using the features of Padlet. Besides, since Padlet is an online web-based tool, the usage of a good and stable internet connection was required in order for them to use and experience a better way of using Padlet. Moreover, if the internet connection was unstable, some of them will be facing slow live feedback during the discussion which will cause some delays in receiving and posting the comments.

5. Conclusion

According to the findings, the integration of Padlet in the lesson, particularly in English language learning, has had a positive impact on creating a conducive learning environment that encourages the participation of the learners in the classroom. Through the integration of Padlet, the factors of motivation, learning engagement and usefulness were the main elements in influencing learners' participation to participate in classroom lessons and activities. Moreover, with the support of Padlet features, it can allow the learners to work in different modes while learning individually or collaboratively with their peers. By having this impact, learners' classroom participation, particularly in participating in classroom activities shouldn't be a problem for them when they are getting used to the usage of Padlet inside and outside of the classroom lesson.

Furthermore, it is hoped that this study could benefit and become a good resource and reference to the other educators who are planning to implement

Padlet as one of the platforms to be used in their teaching-learning sessions, particularly in ESL classrooms. Thus, it is recommended that further research on the learners' classroom participation should be carried out in order to explore more factors that can contribute to learners' participation in the classroom.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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