

The Students' Perception on the Implementation of Gamification in Learning English at a Private Vocational School

Tri Marningsih^{1*}, Sukarno²

Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta

Corresponding Author: Tri Marningsih trimarningsih.2022@student.uny.ac.id

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: English Learning, Gamification, Engagement, Language Retention, Vocational Education

Received : 3 June

Revised : 23 July

Accepted: 19 September

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the students' perceptions of the benefit of implementing gamification in English learning at a private vocational school. Through a mixed-methods approach, data were collected from surveys and interviews with students who participated in English class utilizing gamified elements. The findings revealed that students perceived gamification as a significant motivator, enhancing engagement, and making the learning process more enjoyable. Additionally, participants reported improvements in language retention and collaboration with peers. However, some challenges, such as varying levels of technological proficiency and potential distractions, were also noted. Overall, this research highlights the positive impact of gamification on students' attitudes toward learning English suggesting that its integration could be beneficial for educational practices in vocational settings

INTRODUCTION

In the modern educational environment, innovative approach are essential to engage students and improve learning outcomes. Gamification, the application of game design elements in non-game contexts, has emerged as a transformative pedagogical strategy. Gamification uses components such as points, badges, and leaderboards to enhance student motivation and engagement (Deterding et al., 2011). This present study has expanded on this concept, emphasizing its potential in educational settings.

The theoretical framework for gamification in education has evolved significantly over the past decade. Anderson and Krathwohl's (2001) revision of Bloom's Taxonomy has been influential, suggesting that gamification can address various cognitive levels by incorporating elements that promote active learning and problem-solving. This aligns with recent findings by Hamari, Koivisto, and Sarsa (2014), who demonstrated that gamification strategies can enhance intrinsic motivation by offering rewards and recognition that align with students' personal goals.

For private vocational schools, where practical and career-oriented skills are paramount, traditional English language instruction methods may not sufficiently engage students or meet their motivational needs. Recent studies indicate that gamification can address these challenges effectively. For instance, Surende and Yang (2020) found that gamified learning environments significantly increased students' engagement and language acquisition in vocational settings by integrating interactive and competitive elements.

Moreover, recent advancements in gamification theory, such as those proposed by Zainuddin, Al-Emran, and Shahid (2019), highlight the role of gamification in creating a supportive and interactive learning environment that fosters both individual and collaborative learning experiences. The application of gamification in language learning has been shown to foster collaborative learning and enhance students' self-efficacy (Kapp, 2012). These findings underscore the potential benefits of gamification in enhancing students' language skills through engaging and contextually relevant activities.

This study aimed to explore the perceptions of students regarding the implementation of gamification in learning English at a private vocational school. Understanding these perceptions is crucial, as they can inform educators about the effectiveness and reception of gamified learning experiences. By examining students' views, this research seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on gamification in education and its potential to transform language learning practices.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gamification

Gamification is the integration-design elements into non-game contexts, gained traction in educational settings as a means to enhance engagement and learning outcomes. This literature review explores the benefits of gamification in the context of learning English among students in private vocational schools, with a focus on how gamification strategies can impact motivation, engagement, and language acquisition.

Gamification in education involves applying game-like elements, such as points, badges, and leaderboards, to educational activities to make learning more engaging and enjoyable (Deterding et al., 2011). This approach has been shown to improve student motivation and participation by leveraging the inherent rewards and challenges associated with games (Hamari et al., 2014).

Research on gamification in language learning suggests that it can significantly enhance students' engagement and motivation. A study by Surendeleg and Roberts (2018) found that incorporating gamified elements in language instruction increased students' willingness to participate and practice their language skills. This is particularly relevant for English language learners, who often face challenges related to motivation and practice opportunities.

Vocational education which focuses on practical and career-oriented skills, can benefit from gamification by making learning more relevant and interactive. According to a study by Lee and Hammer (2011), gamified vocational training programs can help students better retain information and apply skills in real-world scenarios. This is crucial in private vocational schools, where students often seek practical and applicable knowledge.

In the context of private vocational schools, gamification can address specific challenges such as engagement and skill application. Private vocational students often have distinct learning needs and career aspirations, which gamification can cater to by providing tailored and interactive learning experience. For instance, Muntean (2011) emphasizes that gamification can lead to improved student performance and satisfaction by offering immediate feedback and rewards.

Engagement

Engagement in education has become a focal point for researchers, as it significantly impacts students' success. According to Fredricks et al. (2004), engagement is a multifaceted construct, encompassing behavioural, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. Recent studies, such as those by Reeve (2013), emphasized the importance of fostering intrinsic motivation to enhance emotional engagement, suggesting that when students find personal relevance in their learning, their overall engagement increases. A study by Wang and Eccles (2013) explored the role of supportive relationships in promoting engagement, arguing that positive teacher-student interactions can lead to higher levels of behavioural and emotional engagement. Furthermore, Sinatra et. al (2015) highlighted the impact of cognitive engagement, noting that students who employed metacognitive strategies demonstrated deeper involvement in learning tasks, which correlates with better academic performance. In a different perspective, Deterding et al. (2011) examined the application of gamification,

showing that game-like elements can enhance engagement by making learning more interactive and enjoyable. Finally, Skinner and Pitzer (2012) provided a comprehensive framework for understanding engagement, suggesting that it is influenced by individual, contextual and temporal factors.

Students' Engagement Contribution to Academic Success

Positive Correlation

Research by Fredricks et al. (2004) highlighted a strong correlation between high levels of engagement and improved academic achievement. Students who actively participated in their learning tend to achieve higher grades.

Motivation and Perseverance

Wang and Eccles (2013) found that students who were emotionally and cognitively engaged exhibit higher levels of motivation, which leads to greater perseverance when facing challenging tasks.

Social Engagement

Skinner and Pitzer (2012) emphasize the importance of social support in enhancing engagement. Student who feels connected to their peers and teachers are more likely to engage in the learning process.

Better Learning Strategies

Sinatra et al. (2015) demonstrated that cognitively engaged students were more likely to employ metacognitive strategies, helping them manage and optimize their learning process.

Increase Academic Satisfaction

Research by Reeve (2013) indicated that students who were engaged in their learning experience higher levels of academic satisfaction, contributing to better overall outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design, aiming to explore in-depth the students' perceptions of gamification in their English learning experience. A qualitative approach is suitable as it allows for rich, detailed insights into participants' thoughts, feelings, and experiences regarding gamification (Cresswell, 2014).

Participants

The participants of this study were 33 students of a private vocational school who participated in English lesson that incorporated gamification elements. The participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure a diverse representation of experiences based on gender and academic performance. This approach aligned with qualitative research principles, as it allowed for targeted insights from those most knowledgeable about the topic (Patton, 2015).

Data Collection

The data of this study were collected through semi-structured interviews, which allowed for flexibility in exploring topics that arose during the conversation. The interview focused on several key areas including: students' experience with gamification in their English learning, perceived benefits and challenges of gamification and the impact of gamification on motivation and engagement.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the interview data, following the process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This involved familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, identifying themes, and reviewing themes to ensure they accurately represent the data. This method allowed for an in-depth understanding of the participants' perceptions and the meanings they attributed to their experiences with gamification.

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Decy & Ryan, 2000), which emphasized the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in fostering motivation and engagement in learning. The implementation of gamification was expected to enhance these psychological needs, thus influencing students' perceptions and experiences.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This thematic analysis was based on the result of the interview with some of the students dealing with their perception before and after the implementation of gamification in learning English.

Table 1. The Students' Perception before the Implementation of Gamification

Researcher	:	Apa pendapatmu sebelum pembelajaran menggunakan gamifikasi? <i>What did you assume about the learning before the implementation of gamification?</i>
S1	:	Saya berpikir ini bakalan membosankan dan tidak seru. <i>I thought it would be boring and not fun.</i>
S3	:	Saya kira pelajarannya biasa aja. <i>I thought the learning would be the same as usual.</i>
S13	:	Pasti waktunya terasa lama dan membosankan. <i>It seemed too long and was boring.</i>
S21	:	Saya merasa malas dan mengantuk. <i>I felt I was reluctant to join the learning and felt sleepy.</i>
S22	:	Saya takut tidak bisa mengikuti pembelajaran dengan baik. <i>I was afraid that I could not follow the lesson well.</i>

Table 2. The Students' Perception after the Implementation of Gamification

Researcher	:	Apa pendapatmu setelah mengikuti pembelajaran menggunakan gamifikasi? <i>What is your opinion after the implementation of gamifikasi in learning?</i>
S1	:	Pembelajarannya menyenangkan, saya merasa senang selama pembelajaran karena seru. <i>The lesson was fun. I was excited during the learning because it was fun.</i>
S3	:	Saya senang sekali. Tidak membosankan. <i>I was very happy. It was not boring.</i>
S13	:	Saya lebih fokus ketika pembelajaran, aktivitasnya tidak membosankan. <i>I became more focus in learning. The learning activities were not boring.</i>
S21	:	Awalnya saya ngantuk tapi ketika diajak mengerjakan soal menggunakan gamifikasi saya jadi ilang ngantuknya. Seru bu. <i>I felt sleepy at the beginning but when the teacher asked us to do the tasks through gamification I was not sleepy. It was fun, Mam.</i>
S22	:	Saya merasa pembelajaran dengan gamifikasi lebih menyenangkan, tidak membosankan, membuat saya semangat untuk belajar. <i>I think learning through gamification was more exciting, it was not boring and it motivated me to learn.</i>

Initial Perceptions before the Implementation of Gamification:

Boredom Anticipation

Many students expressed concerns about the learning boring. For instance, Student 1 expected the experience to be tedious and unexciting, while student 3 felt it would be similar to usual classes.

Disengagement

Several students indicated feeling of reluctance, Student 21 noted a sense of sleepiness and a lack of motivation, and Student 22 fearing that they would not keep up with the lesson.

Positive Changes after Implementation of Gamification:

Increased Enjoyment: Post-implementation, students overwhelmingly reported a shift in their attitudes. Student 1 highlighted that the lesson was enjoyable and engaging.

Enhanced Focus: Students noted improved concentration during lessons. Student 13 mentioned that activities were engaging enough to keep them focused.

Overcoming Sleepiness: Student 21 shared that initial drowsiness was replaced by enthusiasm once they started interacting with the gamification tasks, reflecting a significant boost in engagement.

Motivation to Learn: Student 22 emphasized that the gamified approach made learning exciting, motivating them to participate actively.

Below is the thematic analysis of student perception on gamification in their English learning that were based on the interview.

Table 3. The Students' Perception on the Learning Method Using Gamification

Researcher	:	Bagaimana pendapatmu tentang beragam metode pembelajaran, seperti penggunaan gamifikasi? Apakah kamu merasa hal tersebut membuat pembelajaran lebih menarik? <i>What is your opinion about the variety of learning method like the use of gamification?</i>
S1	:	Media interaktif gamifikasi membuat saya lebih tertarik mengikuti pelajaran. <i>Interactive media as gamification made more interested in following the lesson.</i>
S3	:	Menurut saya jadi lebih menarik dan mudah dimengerti <i>I think it's more interesting and the lesson was easy to understand.</i>
S13	:	Terasa lebih menarik dan tidak monoton. <i>It seemingly more interesting and it was not monotonous.</i>
S21	:	Aku merasa ini lebih menarik dan membuat anak jadi melek teknologi. <i>I think it was more interesting and made the students technologically literate.</i>
S22	:	Lebih seru, Bu. Pelajarannya jadi gak membosankan. <i>It was more exciting. The lesson was not boring.</i>

Increased Engagement and Interest

The responses from students consistently highlight how gamification enhances their engagement with the learning material. For instance, S1 noted that "interactive media as gamification made them more interested in following the lesson." Similarly, S22 stated that gamification made the lesson "more exciting" and "not boring." This indicated that the interactive elements of gamified learning captured students' attention and motivated them to participated actively.

Improved Comprehension

Students also expressed that gamification aids in understanding the content better. S3 mentioned that lessons are "more interesting and easier to understand." This suggested that gamified elements may simplify complex concepts, making them more accessible to students. The integration of game mechanics likely provided a framework that helps students grasp and retain information more effectively.

Break from Monotony

Some students emphasized that gamification helped to break the monotony often associated with traditional teaching methods. S13 specifically stated that it felt "more interesting and not monotonous." This sentiment reflected a broader trend in education where traditional methods are viewed as dull compared to the dynamic nature of gamified approaches.

Development of Technological Literacy

S21's comment about students becoming "technologically literate" points to an additional benefit of gamification: the enhancement of digital skills. By engaging with gamified platforms, students were not only learning English but also acquiring essential technology skills that are crucial in today's digital world.

Table 4. The Students' Perception on the Learning Activities Using Gamification

Researcher	:	Apakah pembelajaran hari ini lebih menyenangkan dari pertemuan sebelumnya? Berikan alasanmu. <i>What do you think about today's learning? Is it more exciting? Give your reason.</i>
S1	:	Saya pikir ini lebih menyenangkan dan lebih seru karena gamesnya lebih menarik. <i>I think it was more interesting and more fun because the game was more interesting.</i>
S3	:	Iya, lebih seru karena ada menyimak videonya, ada gamesnya ketika latihan soal. <i>Yes, it was more fun because it used video and when the students did the tasks using games.</i>
S13	:	Iya lebih menarik karena quiznya lebih menarik menggunakan gamifikasi. <i>Yeah, it was more interesting because the quiz using gamification was more interesting.</i>
S21	:	Iyaa, Bu karena pakai gamifikasi lebih asik. <i>Yes, Mam because using gamification was more fun.</i>
S22	:	Menurutku lebih menyenangkan karena mengerjakan soal dengan gamifikasi jadi lebih seru. <i>In my opinion it was more exciting because doing the tasks on gamification was more fun.</i>

Increased Engagement Through Gamification

Students consistently express that gamification significantly enhances their engagement in the learning process. For instance, S1 stated that the lesson was "more interesting and fun" due to the appealing nature of the game used. This sentiment is echoed by S21, who noted that "using gamification was more fun," highlighting how interactive elements capture their attention and make the learning experience more dynamic.

Variety in Learning Activities

The incorporate of diverse media and activities, such as videos and quizzes, contributed to a more enjoyable learning environment. S3 mentioned that the use of videos alongside games during tasks made the lesson "more fun." This suggested that variety in instructional methods not only keeps students engaged but also caters to different learning preferences.

Appeal of Gamified Quizzes

Several students specifically highlighted the attractiveness of gamified quizzes. S13 noted that the quizzes utilizing gamification were “more interesting” indicating that this format effectively stimulated students’ interest and motivation. S22 reinforced this by stating that gamification made completing tasks “more fun,” suggesting association with the learning process.

Overall Positive Sentiment

Across all responses, there is a clear consensus that gamification transforms the learning experience into something enjoyable and exciting. Students appreciated the innovative approach to lessons, which they perceive as “more exciting” and “more fun.” This overall positive sentiment indicated that gamification not only enhanced engagement but also fostered a more favourable attitude toward learning.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATION

Conclusions

The implementation of gamification transformed student perception from initial reluctance and boredom to enthusiasm and engagement, highlighting the effectiveness of gamification in enhancing the learning experience.

The thematic analysis reveals that students perceive gamification in English language learning positively. It increases their engagement, improves comprehension, alleviates monotony, and fosters technological literacy. These insights underscore the potential of gamification as a valuable educational tool, encouraging educators to explore and implement gamified strategies in their teaching practices.

The students perceived gamification as a highly effective tool in the learning process. It enhanced engagement, introduced variety in activities, and specifically increased the appeal of quizzes. These insights underscored the potential of gamification in creating a more enjoyable and effective educational experience.

Recomendation

1. For Other Researchers

Explore Diverse Contexts: Conduct studies in various educational settings to understand the broader applicability of gamification across different student demographics and subject areas.

Longitudinal Studies: Implement longitudinal research to assess the long term impacts of gamification on language acquisition and student attitudes toward learning.

Investigate Teacher Perspectives: Examine how teachers perceive and implement gamification strategies, identifying challenges and best practices that could inform training and professional development.

Focus on Specific Outcomes: Research specific learning outcomes related to gamification, such as vocabulary retention, reading comprehension, and student motivation, to build a more comprehensive understanding of its effectiveness.

2. For English Teachers

Incorporate Gamified Elements: Actively integrate gamification into lesson plans, using interactive media, quizzes, and rewards to enhance students engagement and motivation.

Foster Collaboration: Create opportunities for collaborative learning through gamified activities, encouraging teamwork and communication among students.

Utilize technology: Leverage digital platforms and tools that support gamified learning, ensuring students develop both language skills and technological literacy.

Gather Feedback: Regularly solicit student feedback on gamified activities to refine and adapt approaches, ensuring they meet learners' need and preferences.

FURTHER STUDY

Longitudinal Research: Conduct long-term studies to evaluate the sustained effects of gamification on student learning outcomes, engagement, and motivation over time.

Comparative Studies: Explore comparisons between traditional teaching methods and gamified approaches to identify specific advantages and limitations of each.

Impact on Specific Language Skills: Examine how gamification influences particular language skills, such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing, to provide a nuanced understanding of its effects.

Student Perception Over Time: Investigate how students' perceptions of gamification evolve as they progress through their education, including potential shifts in motivation and engagement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all those who contributed to the successful completion of this research article.

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