

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the research background, research questions, research purposes, research significances, research scope, conceptual framework, and previous study.

A. Background

Vocabulary learning is a fundamental component of English language education, as it supports students' ability to comprehend texts, express ideas, and participate actively in communication. According to Nation (2001), vocabulary knowledge is a core element of language proficiency that significantly influences learners' success in acquiring other language skills such as reading, listening, speaking, and writing. In the context of junior high school students, vocabulary learning often becomes challenging due to limited exposure, low interest, and difficulties in maintaining attention during learning activities, Bakti (2017). From a pedagogical perspective, these challenges highlight the importance of not only selecting appropriate learning media but also fostering students' active involvement in the learning process.

Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004) define learning engagement as students' active involvement in learning activities, which includes behavioural, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. Engaged students tend to participate actively, show positive emotions toward learning, and invest effort in understanding learning materials. In vocabulary learning contexts, this could manifest as students voluntarily practising words, expressing enthusiasm during game activities, and strategically trying to remember new vocabulary. In English language learning, particularly vocabulary instruction, learning engagement plays a crucial role because actively engaged students are more likely to practice, remember, and apply new vocabulary. Therefore, enhancing students' learning engagement is considered an essential pedagogical goal in vocabulary teaching at the junior high school level.

In response to the need for engaging learning environments, many English teachers have integrated interactive game media into vocabulary instruction. Interactive game media such as Kahoot, Blooket, and Bamboozle are commonly

used because they provide immediate feedback, competitive elements, and visually attractive features that can encourage students' participation.

Beyond the technical features of game media, students' subjective perceptions, play a crucial role in determining how they interact with and benefit from these tools. Whether they find the games enjoyable, useful, and easy to use. According to the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989), users' perceptions significantly influence their actual use and engagement with technology.

However, most previous studies have mainly focused on measuring the effectiveness of interactive game media through experimental or quasi-experimental designs. Most of these studies emphasised learning outcomes such as test scores or achievement gains, while giving limited attention to the learning process itself. In particular, students' internal perspectives, such as how they perceive the use of interactive game media and how these perceptions relate to their learning engagement, have not been sufficiently explored. Several studies have examined students' perceptions or motivation in digital learning contexts. Yet, they did not specifically investigate learning engagement as a pedagogical variable or explore it in depth through qualitative inquiry.

Furthermore, studies that explore students' perceptions and engagement experiences in the context of interactive game media remain limited, especially at the junior high school level. Most existing research has been conducted in senior high school or university contexts, leaving younger learners underrepresented in the literature. As a result, there is a lack of empirical evidence describing how students perceive interactive game media and how they experience engagement during vocabulary learning activities from their own perspectives.

Based on these limitations, the current study uses a qualitative descriptive approach to investigate how students perceive the use of interactive game media and how they experience learning engagement during vocabulary learning activities. This study concentrates on eighth-grade students at a junior high school in Bandung, a context that has not received much attention in earlier studies. This study's pedagogical emphasis on learning engagement as a fundamental learning process variable and its in depth exploration of students' perceptions are what make

it distinctive. By doing this, it is anticipated that this study will offer deeper pedagogical insights into how students view interactive game media and how they experience engagement in vocabulary learning in English.

B. Research Questions

According to the research background, the researcher formulates two research questions:

1. How are the students' perceptions of the use of interactive game media in vocabulary learning at Junior High School in Bandung?
2. How is the students' learning engagement in vocabulary learning when interactive game media are used at Junior High School in Bandung?

C. Research Purposes

The purposes of this study are as follows:

- a) To describe students' perceptions of the use of interactive game media in vocabulary learning at Junior High School in Bandung.
- b) To describe students' learning engagement in vocabulary learning when interactive game media are used at Junior High School in Bandung.

D. Research Significance

This study aims to make significant theoretical and practical contributions to English language teaching, specifically in vocabulary acquisition pedagogy.

Theoretically, this study enriches the literature on interactive game media and student engagement by highlighting learner engagement as a fundamental pedagogical variable. By analyzing students' perceptions and engagement experiences in vocabulary learning, this study emphasizes the learning process in contrast to many earlier studies that concentrated only on learning outcomes or motivation. By exploring how students perceive interactive game media and experience engagement in vocabulary learning, this study enriches pedagogical theories, particularly the TAM (Davis, 1989) in educational contexts and Student Engagement Theory (Fredricks et al., 2004) by examining their intersection in game-based vocabulary learning through qualitative inquiry. This study extends TAM by applying it to interactive game media rather than general technology, and

deepens engagement theory by describing how it manifests in students' actual classroom behaviors.

Practically, the findings provide educational stakeholders with a number of advantages. The findings give English teachers a deeper understanding of how students view interactive game media and how they experience participation in vocabulary learning exercises. Teachers can choose and use games more wisely if they have this knowledge. For instance, teachers should highlight how the game improves vocabulary knowledge if students perceive usefulness positively. Teachers should prioritize game components that promote motivation and enjoyment if perceived enjoyment is important. This shifts the use of games from random selection to integration that is motivated by education. The report helps schools make informed decisions about integrating digital and game-based learning resources that not only grab students' interest but also encourage active learning. Furthermore, for future researchers, this study can serve as a reference for conducting qualitative research focusing on pedagogical variables such as perceptions and learning engagement, particularly in the context of interactive game media and junior high school EFL learners.

E. Research Scope

The scope of this study is limited to describing students' perceptions of interactive game media use and their learning engagement in vocabulary learning. The participants of this study are 34 eighth-grade students at Junior High School in Bandung who have experienced learning English vocabulary using interactive game media as part of their regular classroom activities.

This research focuses on two main aspects, namely students' perceptions of interactive game media use and students' learning engagement in vocabulary learning. Learning engagement in this study is conceptualized based on Fredricks et al.'s (2004) three-dimensional framework encompassing behavioural (participation/attention), emotional (interest/enjoyment), and cognitive engagement (mental effort/persistence). This study does not aim to measure the effectiveness of interactive game media or to compare learning outcomes before and after the use of the media.

The data are collected through three main techniques: a closed-ended questionnaire administered to 34 students to measure their perceptions of interactive game media use (covering perceived enjoyment, perceived usefulness, and perceived ease of use based on Davis's Technology Acceptance Model). Semi-structured interviews with 3 students selected representing different levels of English proficiency (advanced, intermediate, beginner) to gain deeper insights into their perceptions and engagement experiences, and three classroom observation sessions conducted during vocabulary learning activities using Kahoot, Blooket, and Bamboozle to observe and describe students' learning engagement behaviours.

This study does not involve any teaching intervention, or experimental treatment. Other language skills such as reading, speaking, listening, and grammar, as well as variables such as students' motivation, learning outcomes, teacher competence, and classroom environment, are beyond the scope of this research. By clearly defining this scope, the study seeks to maintain focus on the pedagogical description of students' perceptions and learning engagement in vocabulary learning through interactive game media within the specific context of eighth-grade students at Junior High School in Bandung.

F. Conceptual Framework

This study is grounded in educational and psychological theories that explain how students' perceptions influence their engagement in learning. The conceptual framework is mainly based on Student Engagement Theory proposed by Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004), which emphasizes that learning engagement consists of three interconnected dimensions: behavioural, emotional, and cognitive engagement. According to this theory, students who are actively involved behaviourally, emotionally invested, and cognitively engaged tend to experience more meaningful learning processes.

In addition, this study adopts concepts from the TAM introduced by Davis (1989), which explains users' perceptions toward technology use. In an educational context, students' perceptions of learning media such as perceived enjoyment, perceived usefulness, and perceived ease of use can influence how they respond to and engage with learning activities. When students perceive interactive game media

as enjoyable, useful, and easy to use, they are more likely to participate actively, show positive emotions, and invest cognitive effort during vocabulary learning.

Based on these theories, this study assumes that students' perceptions of interactive game media use are related to their learning engagement in vocabulary learning. Positive perceptions may encourage higher levels of behavioral engagement (active participation), emotional engagement (interest and enjoyment), and cognitive engagement (effort and persistence). Therefore, this research employs a qualitative descriptive framework to describe students' perceptions and their learning engagement behaviors in vocabulary learning. Students' perceptions are explored through questionnaire data and semi-structured interviews, while their learning engagement behaviours are captured through three classroom observations and further explored through interviews. The integration of these three data sources allows for a comprehensive and triangulated description of how students perceive interactive game media and how these perceptions are reflected in their behavioural, emotional, and cognitive engagement during vocabulary learning.

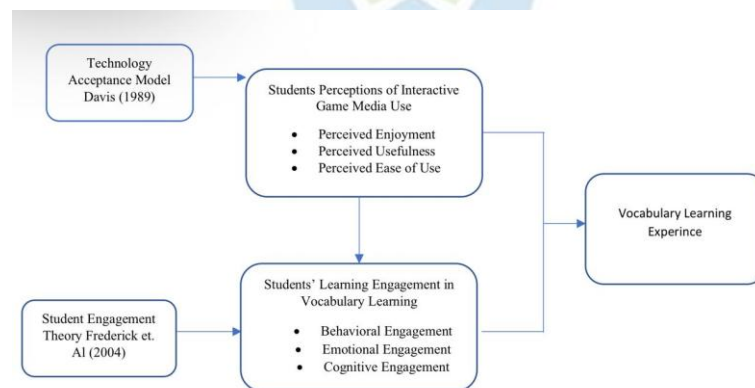


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

G. Previous Studies

Research on the use of interactive digital games in language learning, particularly for vocabulary development, has gained increasing attention in recent years. Previous studies generally fall into three main categories: studies exploring students' perceptions of interactive game media, studies investigating students' learning engagement during game-based learning, and studies describing students' learning experiences in vocabulary learning contexts.

The first category focuses on students' perceptions of interactive game media in English vocabulary learning. These studies aim to understand learners' opinions, attitudes, and acceptance of game-based learning rather than measuring learning achievement.

For example, Kamal, Utami, and Kamil (2024) conducted a qualitative case study involving junior high school students to investigate students' perceptions of Kahoot in vocabulary learning. Data were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. The findings revealed that students perceived Kahoot as a fun, engaging, and motivating learning medium that facilitated vocabulary acquisition through interactive quizzes, visual support, and immediate feedback. The gamified features also encouraged active participation and created a more dynamic classroom atmosphere, although several students reported technical challenges such as unstable internet connections and limited response time.

Similarly, Aulia and Warni (2024) conducted a descriptive qualitative study involving eight EFL students to explore students' perceptions of Quizizz as an assessment tool in English classrooms. Using classroom observations and in-depth interviews, the researchers found that students viewed Quizizz positively because it increased their interest, motivation, confidence, and English skills, particularly vocabulary acquisition. Students also appreciated the interactive and enjoyable learning atmosphere created by Quizizz.

Furthermore, Khairani and Fithriani (2025) investigated EFL students' perceptions of using Kahoot as a formative assessment tool for vocabulary acquisition. Through questionnaires and interviews, the study found that students considered Kahoot enjoyable, motivating, and effective for improving vocabulary

learning because its game-like features increased interest, concentration, and participation during classroom activities.

Overall, these studies consistently indicate that students hold positive perceptions of interactive game media because such platforms create enjoyable, motivating, and interactive vocabulary learning environments. Nevertheless, they primarily focus on students' perceptions without providing a comprehensive description of how those perceptions are reflected in students' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement during vocabulary learning activities.

The second category investigates students' learning engagement in game-based learning environments. Unlike perception studies, these studies focus on how game-based learning promotes students' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement during classroom activities.

For example, Rojabi et al. (2022) conducted a quasi-experimental study involving university students to examine the implementation of Kahoot in English vocabulary learning. Using vocabulary tests together with student engagement and motivation questionnaires, the researchers found that students who learned through Kahoot demonstrated higher engagement, stronger motivation, and better vocabulary achievement than before the intervention. The interactive features of Kahoot, including instant feedback, competition, and game elements, encouraged students to participate actively and remain engaged throughout the learning process. These findings indicate that gamified learning environments can effectively foster students' engagement while simultaneously improving vocabulary learning outcomes.

Similarly, Suci (2024) conducted a qualitative case study involving 25 vocational high school students to explore students' engagement in practicing English vocabulary through Kahoot. Data were collected through classroom observations, questionnaires, and interviews. The findings revealed that Kahoot encouraged students to participate more actively in classroom activities, increased their emotional involvement during learning, and helped them understand unfamiliar vocabulary in an enjoyable learning atmosphere. The study concluded

that Kahoot positively influenced students' engagement in vocabulary learning by promoting active participation and sustained learning interest.

Furthermore, Lestari, Dewi, and Shalehoddin (2024) investigated the effects of Kahoot-based game-based learning on seventh-grade students' vocabulary acquisition using a mixed-methods design. Besides improving vocabulary achievement, classroom observations and interviews showed that students became more enthusiastic, interactive, and actively involved during learning activities. The researchers concluded that gamified vocabulary instruction created a more engaging classroom environment than conventional teaching methods.

Overall, these studies consistently demonstrate that interactive game media can enhance students' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement during vocabulary learning. However, they primarily investigate the impact of game-based learning on students' engagement and achievement rather than describing how students' perceptions of interactive game media are reflected in their learning engagement. Therefore, further qualitative descriptive research is needed to provide a comprehensive description of both students' perceptions and their learning engagement during English vocabulary learning.

The third category focuses on students' learning experiences when interactive game media are implemented in English vocabulary learning. These studies seek to describe how students experience game-based vocabulary instruction in authentic classroom contexts.

For instance, Wulaningrum and Novitasari (2024) conducted a qualitative case study involving Indonesian vocational high school students to investigate the implementation of Quizizz in vocabulary learning. Using classroom observations, interviews, and reflective journals, the researchers found that Quizizz created enjoyable learning experiences, encouraged students to participate actively, enriched vocabulary knowledge, and increased learning motivation. The findings also showed that students appreciated the interactive features of Quizizz, which made vocabulary learning more meaningful and engaging. However, the study primarily emphasized vocabulary enrichment and students' classroom experiences

without comprehensively explaining learning engagement from behavioral, emotional, and cognitive perspectives.

Similarly, Medina, Mobit, and Puspitaloka (2024) explored the implementation of Game-Based Wordwall in vocabulary learning through a qualitative case study involving one English teacher and six junior high school students. Data were collected through classroom observations, interviews, and documentation. The findings revealed that Wordwall created an enjoyable classroom atmosphere, encouraged students to participate actively, and provided meaningful learning experiences through interactive vocabulary games. Students reported feeling happy, challenged, and motivated while learning vocabulary because the game-based activities increased their involvement and interaction during classroom instruction. Nevertheless, the study mainly focused on students' learning experiences and views without integrating students' perceptions and learning engagement into a comprehensive qualitative descriptive framework.

Overall, previous studies indicate that interactive game media create meaningful, enjoyable, and motivating vocabulary learning experiences. Nevertheless, these studies mainly describe students' classroom experiences without comprehensively integrating students' perceptions and learning engagement into a single qualitative descriptive investigation.

Therefore, this study aims to describe students' perceptions of interactive game media and their learning engagement in English vocabulary learning through a qualitative descriptive design. By employing a qualitative approach and integrating the TAM and Student Engagement Theory, this research seeks to provide a deeper understanding of how interactive game media can support active and meaningful learning among eighth-grade students in Bandung, Indonesia.