Game-Based Wordwall in Vocabulary Learning: a Teacher's Implementation and Students' Views

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A B S T R A C T

The purpose of this research are to investigate the implementation of Game-Based Wordwall in vocabulary learning, then investigate students' perception on the use of Game-Based Wordwall in vocabulary learning. To answer the research questions, the researcher used a qualitative and case study as the research design. This research was carried out in one of the Junior High Schools in Cikampek, West Java. One English teacher and six secondary students participated in this research. The data collection techniques for this research were observation, interview, and documentation. In addition, the instrumentation included the classroom observation checklist, interview guidelines, and lesson plan. After obtaining the data, the researcher processed the data using thematic analysis. The results of this research show that GameBased Wordwall makes the class atmosphere fun. Game-Based Wordwall also found positive perceptions from students, namely during vocabulary learning activities students became active and often answered questions in the game, students felt happy and challenged, then there were many advantages that students received through using Game-Based Wordwall. Therefore, the implementation of Game-Based Wordwall in vocabulary learning is a good strategy because it has many positive perceptions from students.

1. Introduction

Students' lack of interest in learning vocabulary remains a significant issue in Junior High School. While vocabulary learning may seem simple, it is, in fact, challenging, which leads many students to feel unmotivated and disengaged (Daar, 2020). This disinterest ultimately affects their vocabulary mastery, an essential foundation for developing the four core English skills: speaking, reading, writing, and listening. Vocabulary plays a critical role in communication and learning because adequate mastery allows students to construct meaningful

sentences and access broader knowledge (Schmitt, 2000; Nurmalita & Hafrison, 2022).

Several factors contribute to students' lack of vocabulary proficiency, including their tendency to avoid using resources like dictionaries, which could enhance their vocabulary knowledge (Fitria & Adityarini, 2023; Syafawani, 2023). Furthermore, monotonous and less innovative teaching methods make the learning process boring for students, reducing their engagement (Malau et al., 2024). This highlights the importance of teachers selecting appropriate and engaging teaching models. In today's digital era, integrating technology into teaching methods provides an opportunity to create more exciting and interactive learning experiences, particularly in vocabulary learning.

One innovative teaching approach is Game-Based Learning (GBL), which combines the enjoyment of playing games with educational objectives. GBL involves using specifically designed digital games to facilitate the learning process, promoting student-centered learning and active engagement (Prensky, 2003). Research has shown that gamified learning environments foster motivation, creativity, and enthusiasm among students, making them more active participants in the learning process (Harmer, 2001). One promising application within this framework is Wordwall, a platform that enables teachers to create interactive and engaging quizzes or games tailored to vocabulary learning (Tiagarajah, 2021; Swari, 2023).

Previous studies support the effectiveness of Wordwall and other technology-based learning tools in improving student engagement and learning outcomes. España-Delgado (2023) demonstrated that game-based learning models could increase student motivation and achievement levels in English classes. Similarly, Noftariani (2023) found that Wordwall significantly improved student motivation in English learning. Other studies, such as those by Asri et al. (2024) and Pimpuanga & Yuttapongtadab (2023), highlighted the use of Wordwall for improving students' focus and supporting language skill development. Beyond language learning, Wordwall has also proven effective in teaching other subjects, such as Social Sciences and Indonesian language, as it enhances students' interest and engagement during the learning process (Ramdhani et al., 2022; Rusli et al., 2023).

Building upon these findings, this study aims to investigate the implementation of Game-Based Wordwall in vocabulary learning and explore students' perceptions of its use. Unlike previous research, which primarily focused on general aspects of technology-enhanced learning, this study delves deeper into the specific impact of Game-Based Wordwall on vocabulary mastery in Junior High School contexts. Through this research, it is hoped that Wordwall will be recognized as an effective tool for fostering student motivation, engagement, and success in English vocabulary learning.

2.   Methodology

This research used qualitative methods adopted from Creswell (2014), and the results were presented descriptively using the case study theory from Yin (2018). The study was conducted in a Junior High School in Cikampek, West Java, involving one English teacher and six secondary students determined using specific criteria: two students with low performance, two students with medium performance, and two students with high performance in English based on teacher recommendations.

The data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation, using instruments such as classroom observation checklists, interview guidelines, and lesson plans. To obtain data on the implementation of Game-Based Wordwall, the instructional procedure was adopted from Putra et al. (2024), where the teacher explained Action verb material, accessed the Wordwall application, displayed it on the screen, selected templates, and facilitated games. Students answered questions within the games, with correct answers marked by a checkmark on the screen. Researchers used an interview guideline containing directed questions to explore student perceptions, involvement, knowledge, and views on the advantages of Game-Based Wordwall. Thematic analysis based on Braun and Clarke (2006) was applied, comprising six stages: data recognition, data coding, theme identification, theme review, theme definition, and reporting.

3.   Results and Discussion

Results

Based on the observation activities, researcher observed the implementation of Game-Based Wordwall in vocabulary learning. The following are the results of research findings found by the researcher.

a.   *The Implementation of Game-Based Wordwall in Vocabulary Learning*

Based on the observation activities carried out on June 19th 2024, the researcher observed the implementation of Game-Based Wordwall in vocabulary learning. The steps that had been taken by the teacher during the implementation activities are:

1)   Pre-activities

In the pre-activities, the teacher opened the class with a greeting. Afterward, the teacher explained the objectives and learning activities using Game-Based Wordwall in vocabulary learning. The teacher explained the learning objectives of using Game-Based Wordwall with Action verb material. Then, students paid attention to the teacher and participated actively during the learning process.

2) Main-activities

The implementation of Game-Based Wordwall in teaching vocabulary proved to be effective in enhancing students' enthusiasm and engagement in the learning process. The teacher began by explaining the Action verb material in a traditional manner, ensuring students understood the basics before transitioning to the Wordwall-based activities. Using a laptop and a screen for visibility, the teacher accessed the Wordwall application and selected various interactive game templates such as Match Up, Find the Match, Quiz, Open the Box, and Spin the Wheel. Each game was tailored to reinforce students' understanding of Action verbs, with activities requiring them to match English verbs with their Indonesian meanings, answer multiple-choice questions, and interact with gamified elements like spinning wheels and opening boxes.

Students demonstrated high enthusiasm throughout the Game-Based Wordwall activities. They actively participated by answering questions, competing to respond quickly, and celebrating correct answers with cheers. The interactive and gamified approach kept the class lively and engaging, fostering a positive learning atmosphere. While the high energy occasionally led to a noisy environment, the teacher managed to maintain classroom discipline.

Additionally, the implementation of Game-Based Wordwall helped students grasp vocabulary concepts more effectively and quickly. The immediate feedback from the games, such as displaying a checkmark for correct answers, boosted their confidence and motivation. At the end of the activity, students were able to complete the assigned tasks related to Action verbs with ease, indicating that the gamified approach enhanced their comprehension and retention of the material.

Overall, the integration of Game-Based Wordwall transformed the vocabulary learning experience, making it more interactive, enjoyable, and effective for students. This approach not only improved their vocabulary mastery but also motivated them to actively engage in the learning process.

3) Post-activities

After all learning activities finished, the teacher provided feedback and concluded the learning material with the students. The teacher gave feedback on the assignments that had been assigned to the students, and during the conclusion of the learning material, the students appeared enthusiastic.

b. *Students' Perception on the Use of Game-Based Wordwall in Vocabulary Learning*

Students' perception divided into knowledge and behavior, feelings, and advantages.

1) **Students' Perceived in Knowledge and Behavioral on the Use of Game-Based Wordwall**

During the implementation of Game-Based Wordwall, students were actively involved in learning activities. They answered questions contained in the game and engaged in vocabulary learning activities using Game-Based Wordwall. This was supported by the students' statements:

> *"I pay attention to the teacher when explaining using the Wordwall application, I also often answer questions in the game"*
>
> (Vignette 10, Student 04 Interview)

This statement is supported by another student who also stated that she actively answered questions during vocabulary learning using Game-Based Wordwall, namely:

> *"I often raise my hand when questions arise in each game that is starting, I also actively respond to what Mrs. Says"*
>
> (Vignette 11, Student 02 Interview)

The two students' statements are supported by the teacher statement who saw students being active in answering the questions in the games, namely:

> *"I felt the difference in students' responses when using Game-Based Wordwall, which was shown by the students' activeness and courage in answering the questions I asked through the Wordwall application"*
>
> (Vignette 12, Teacher Interview)

During vocabulary learning activities using Game-Based Wordwall, all students actively participated in vocabulary learning by bravely answering questions contained in the game. Students were able to answer well the questions that appeared in the game.

2) **Students' Perceived in Feeling on the Use of Game-Based Wordwall in Vocabulary Learning**

As is known, students easily become bored with monotonous learning strategies, so the use of Game-Based Wordwall made students happy because they felt like they were playing games. This is supported by the student's statement:

> *"I'm very happy because it's different from the general learning method which is just listening to the teacher explain, but if I use the Wordwall application I don't feel bored because it's like playing a game"*

(Vignette 16, Student 6 Interview)

This statement is supported by other student statements which also stated that using Game-Based Wordwall makes students feel happy:

> *"My feelings when using the Wordwall application were quite happy because I learned using the game method"*
> (Vignette 17, Student 1 Interview)

The students' statement was supported by the teacher's statement who was also happy because she saw students happy and enthusiastic about using Game-Based Wordwall, namely:

> *"I feel happy because I see students feeling happy and enthusiastic during learning activities, I also feel challenged and believe that this Game-Based Wordwall will be more effective and fun when used in learning English vocabulary"*
> (Vignette 20, Teacher Interview)

The use of Game-Based Wordwall in vocabulary made students feel happy, preventing them from feeling bored. Apart from that Game-Based Wordwall made students feel challenged by the games, thus they were enthusiastic about actively answering the questions in the game. The teacher also felt happy because the students were enthusiastic about participating in learning activities.

3) **Students' Perceived in the Advantages of the Use of Game-Based Wordwall in Vocabulary Learning**

The use of Game-Based Wordwall in vocabulary learning also provides several advantages for students, particularly making it easier for them to understand and remember vocabulary material. This is supported by students' statements

> *"I can understand more about studying after using the Wordwall application"*
> (Vignette 21, Student 4 Interview)

Another student also stated that using Game-Based Wordwall made it easier for student to remember learning material, namely:

> *"The advantage I get from Game-Based Wordwall is that I can more easily remember all the learning material discussed"*
> (Vignette 22, Student 2 Interview)

The use of Game-Based Wordwall made students not feel lonely while studying. This is supported by students' statements, namely:

> *"The advantage of learning using Game-Based Wordwall is that there is no more loneliness in studying"*
> (Vignette 22, Student 1 Interview)

This statement is supported by other students' statements who also mentioned that the use of Game-Based Wordwall prevented students from feeling bored because it encouraged active participation in learning activities.

> *"It was easier for me to understand the material and I didn't feel bored, because I was invited to play rather than just sitting there listening to the teacher's explanation and getting bored"*
> (Vignette 23, Student 6 Interview).

Based on the results, the use of Game-Based Wordwall in vocabulary learning had a positive impact on students' perceptions in several areas. Students were actively engaged in the learning process, demonstrating improved knowledge and behavior during the games. They expressed feelings of happiness and enthusiasm, as the game-based approach helped reduce boredom and created an enjoyable learning atmosphere. Additionally, students found that using Game-Based Wordwall made it easier to understand and remember vocabulary, while also helping them overcome difficulties in writing and memorization. The teacher also observed long-term positive effects, with students retaining vocabulary and feeling more confident in their writing abilities. Based on these results, Game-Based Wordwall was proven to be an effective and engaging tool for enhancing vocabulary learning.

Discussion

In this section, the researcher presents the analysis and discussion to address the research questions derived from observations and interviews. The focus is on the implementation of Game-Based Wordwall in vocabulary learning and students' perceptions of its use in the learning process.

a. The Implementation of Game-Based Wordwall in Vocabulary Learning

Teaching strategies play a crucial role in determining students' success in absorbing knowledge. Teachers are encouraged to select engaging learning models to foster students' interest, particularly in vocabulary learning. In this research, the teacher implemented Game-Based Wordwall in vocabulary activities, as supported by Maruf & Anjely (2020), who emphasized the benefits of incorporating technology in education. The implementation involved several steps, starting with pre-activities where the teacher introduced the objectives and demonstrated how to use the Wordwall application. Observations showed that the teacher employed five game templates Match Up, Find the Match, Quiz, Open the Box, and Spin the Wheels to engage students interactively. Students participated actively by answering questions, receiving immediate feedback in the form of checkmarks for correct responses.

The findings highlight that using Game-Based Wordwall increased students' enthusiasm and motivation. This aligns with Harmer's (2001)

assertion that incorporating games into the learning process fosters student engagement. Students became more motivated to participate, and the interactive features of Wordwall helped them grasp vocabulary concepts more effectively. This outcome is supported by Noftariani (2023), who found that digital media tools like Wordwall enhance student motivation and engagement in English classes. Moreover, España-Delgado (2023) observed that game-based learning models positively impact students' achievement and participation levels. This research reinforces the notion that Wordwall is a valuable tool in creating an enjoyable learning atmosphere and supporting vocabulary mastery.

b. *Students' Perception on the Use of Game-Based Wordwall in Vocabulary Learning*

Students' perceptions of the use of Game-Based Wordwall in vocabulary learning were overwhelmingly positive, as revealed through interviews with six participants. The findings show that students were more attentive during lessons and actively engaged in answering questions within the application. Misliyanti, et al. (2023) highlighted that Wordwall significantly boosts student participation in learning activities. Combining questions with interactive games captured students' interest, making it easier for them to comprehend and respond to vocabulary exercises. This aligns with Mahayani (2020), who reported that integrating games with subject matter improves students' focus and participation. The application also created an enjoyable and engaging atmosphere, as noted in España-Delgado's (2023) study, which emphasized the entertaining and beneficial aspects of educational applications.

The use of Game-Based Wordwall provided various advantages for students. It simplified the process of understanding and memorizing vocabulary, reducing boredom and creating a more enjoyable learning experience. This aligns with Ramdhani, et al. (2022), who found that educational games increase students' interest in learning. Unlike traditional methods, Wordwall combines learning with play, allowing students to concentrate better without feeling fatigued or disengaged. Saputra, et al. (2023) noted similar findings, emphasizing how Wordwall's variety of games sustains students' attention and minimizes stress. Additionally, students gained confidence in using vocabulary in their writing, as mastery improved. This supports Habibah's (2019) claim that vocabulary knowledge enhances students' confidence in expressing ideas. The application also addressed challenges such as difficulty in memorization, enabling long-term retention of vocabulary, as reported by Aristanto, et al. (2024). These findings confirm that Game-Based Wordwall is an effective tool for vocabulary learning, providing numerous positive outcomes and fostering a productive learning environment.

4. Conclusion

The research concludes that the implementation of Game-Based Wordwall in vocabulary learning offers numerous positive outcomes. It enhances students' learning motivation and alleviates boredom during vocabulary activities. The teacher implemented Game-Based Wordwall by following the appropriate steps and actively involving students in the process. Students showed enthusiasm and quickly grasped vocabulary meanings while engaging in the games. The fun and interactive atmosphere created by Wordwall kept students focused, making it easier for them to understand the material. Moreover, the students' vocabulary mastery improved significantly, preparing them better for writing tasks.

Students perceived the use of Game-Based Wordwall positively, as it created a pleasant and challenging learning environment. It simplified vocabulary learning, making it easier for students to understand and remember the material. Game-Based Wordwall also eliminated feelings of boredom and loneliness by creating an engaging and fun atmosphere, which increased students' interest and focus in vocabulary activities. Additionally, students became more confident in expressing ideas in writing as their vocabulary knowledge improved. The use of Wordwall addressed previous learning difficulties, enabling students to memorize vocabulary easily and retain it in the long term. The implementation of Game-Based Wordwall is a highly effective strategy, as evidenced by the positive perceptions and benefits reported by students.

Acknowledgement

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