SENIOR HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES IN USING KAHOOT! AS A GAMIFIED LEARNING TOOL

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2026

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A THESIS

Submitted to fulfil one of the Requirement for *Sarjana Pendidikan* Degree at English Education Department

By :

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Assalamu'alaikum, Wr. Wb.

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Saya menilai bahwa naskah skripsi tersebut sudah dapat diajukan kepada Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Ilmu Keguruan UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan untuk diujikan dalam sidang munaqasyah.

Demikian nota pembimbing ini dibuat untuk digunakan sebagaimana mestinya. Atas perhatiannya, disampaikan terimakasih.

Wassalamu'alaikum, Wr. Wb

Pekalongan, 19 Desember 2025
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MOTTO

"Involve Allah in all matters, so that what is heavy becomes light dan what is difficult becomes easy."

"Pada akhirnya takdir Allah selalu baik, walaupun terkadang perlu air mata untuk menerimanya."

- Umar bin Khattab -

ABSTRAK

Penggunaan alat pembelajaran gamifikasi seperti Kahoot! semakin meluas, namun tidak selalu menghasilkan respon siswa yang konsisten. Beberapa siswa terlihat antusias, sementara yang lain justru tampak tertekan atau kurang tertarik selama kegiatan berlangsung. Kondisi ini menunjukkan perlunya memahami apa yang benar-benar dialami siswa dalam lingkungan pembelajaran yang digamifikasi. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggali pengalaman siswa saat menggunakan Kahoot! dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif naratif dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa wawancara semi-terstruktur. Data dianalisis secara tematis untuk mengidentifikasi pola pada pengalaman siswa ketika menggunakan Kahoot! dalam pembelajaran. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa siswa mengalami pengalaman yang bersifat edukatif ketika Kahoot! meningkatkan motivasi, mendorong partisipasi aktif, interaksi antar teman, serta membantu pemahaman melalui umpan balik instan. Namun, siswa juga mengalami pengalaman mis-educative ketika siswa kurang memperhatikan refleksi guru, fokus bealajar bergeser ke perolehan skor dan kecepatan, serta ketika pembelajaran berkelanjutan terganggu oleh masalah teknis. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini memberikan pemahaman yang mendalam mengenai bagaimana siswa mengalami pembelajaran gamifikasi secara personal serta menawarkan wawasan yang dapat bermanfaat bagi peneliti dan pendidik yang ingin merancang lingkunga pembelajaran gamifikasi yang lebih efektif dan mendukung.

Kata Kunci: *Kahoot!, gamifikasi, pengalaman siswa, pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris*

ABSTRACT

The growing use of gamified learning tools such as Kahoot! does not always lead to consistent student engagement. Some learners responded enthusiastically while others appeared disengaged or pressured during its use. This situation raised the need to understand what students actually experienced in gamified classroom environments. Therefore, this study explored student's experience in using Kahoot! as a gamified learning tool in tenth-grade English classroom. Using a qualitative narrative inquiry, the data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The data were analyzed thematically to identify patterns in students' experiences when using Kahoot! during the learning process. The findings revealed that students experienced educative learning when Kahoot! increased motivation, active participation, peer interaction, and understanding through instant feedback. However, mis-educative experiences occurred when students paid less attention to teacher's explanations and preferred to move quickly to the next question. In addition, challenges arose when learning focus shifted toward score achievement and speed, as well as when technical issues disrupted learning continuity. Overall, this study provided a deeper understanding of how students personally experienced gamified learning and offered insights that might benefit researchers and educators who aimed to design more effective and supportive gamified learning environments.

Keywords: Kahoot!, gamification, student experience, English learning

PREFACE

Praise and gratitude be to Allah SWT, the Most Gracious and The Most Merciful. With His endless blessings, guidance, and strength, the researcher is finally able to complete this undergraduate thesis entitled "**Students' Experiences in Using Kahoot! as a Gamified Learning Tool**" as one of the requirements for obtaining a bachelor's degree in the English Education Department. The completion of this thesis is not solely the result of the writer's efforts, but also the support, guidance, and prayers from many individuals. Therefore, the researcher would like to express sincere gratitude to all parties who have contributed to this work, either directly or indirectly.

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May this thesis provide benefit for readers and contribute to the development of educational research, especially in the field of gamified learning.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

In modern education, technology plays a growing role in making learning more engaging and effective. As classrooms continue to shift toward more student-centred approaches, digital tool have become essential in supporting interaction, motivation, and understanding. One strategy that has gained significant attention is gamification. In the last twenty years, gamification has become increasingly popular in the field of education (Luo, 2022). Gamification combines game elements such as points, badges, leaderboard into the learning process. It is designed to tap into students' natural desires for competition, achievement, and instant feedback, making the learning process more engaging and enjoyable. According to Qudsi (2024), gamification has become an effective method to increase student engagement and enhance learning outcomes. Similarly, Wulan et al. (2024), found that gamified learning can significantly increase student participation, knowledge retention, and problem-solving skills. In addition, gamification turning academic tasks into interactive experiences, fostering active involvement and create a sense of purpose and progress (Wikiel & Mytnik, 2024). When implemented effectively, it has the potential to make conventional learning experiences more meaningful, enjoyable, and motivating.

One of the most widely used platforms that applies gamification in education is Kahoot!, where students can answer question interactively and receive

immediate feedback from the teacher. Kahoot! has gained popularity for its positive effect on learning performance, classroom dynamics, and student engagement (Wang & Tahir, 2020). Through gamification, this platform promotes active learning, enhance classroom dynamics, and potentially improves academic performance (Hilmun & Fitriah, 2021). In particular, many teachers use Kahoot! in English language learning to reinforce vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension in a more interactive way. Many studies have shown that Kahoot! can increase student engagement in the classroom, especially in English language learning. For example, a study from Rahmadani et al. (2024) found that the use of Kahoot! in learning can help increase students' learning motivation, including competitive feeling, interactive learning, visual experience, fun learning, and customization. In addition, Kohnke & Moorhouse (2021) emphasize that features like points, rankings, and time limits help create a more interactive and challenging learning atmosphere that maintains students' attention and interest. These game elements not only make learning more enjoyable but also encourage active involvement and immediate reflection. As a result, Kahoot has become a practical and effective tool for integrating gamification into classroom instruction, especially in language education contexts where learner engagement is crucial.

Despite the growing use of gamification in classrooms and the popularity of platform like Kahoot!, there is still limited understanding of how students personally experience these tools. Most existing studies have focused on the learning effects (Elvyra &

Pratiwi, 2023; Iwamoto et al., 2017; Wang & Tahir, 2020), increase motivation (Bahri & Nurhidayah, 2024; Handayani, 2020), or engagement levels (Heni et al., 2019; Plump & LaRosa, 2017). These studies have shown that gamified platforms like Kahoot! can improve students' academic performance, encourage active participation, and foster greater interest in classroom activities. While these findings are valuable, they do not fully capture students' emotional responses, cognitive processes, or social interaction from their own perspectives during gamified learning. In an informal conversation with an English teacher who frequently uses Kahoot!, the researcher learned that student responses varied. Some classes are lively and enthusiastic, while others show little interest or even appear anxious during Kahoot! sessions. This observation suggests that gamification may not be equally effective for all learners and raises important questions about what students actually experience in such environments. Only a few studies have explored this individual perspective in depth, especially through qualitative methods that give students the chance to express their own stories. Therefore, further research is needed to better understand how students experience gamified learning from their own point of view.

Based on this gap, this research aims to explore students' experiences in using Kahoot! as a game-based learning tool. Rather than focusing only on learning outcomes or engagement levels, this research seeks to understand how students personally experience gamification, what they enjoy, what challenges they face, and how they respond during the learning process. Listening to students' own stories and perspectives can

reveal both the strengths and limitation of using Kahoot! in real classroom settings. The findings are expected to provide useful insight for teachers in designing learning activities that not only attract students' attention but also support their emotional and cognitive development. This study also hopes to help educators apply gamified tools more effectively, ensuring they offer meaningful learning experiences rather than just fun or competitive ones.

1.2 Formulation of the Problems

Based on the background of the study, the research problems are formulated as follows:

1. How do senior high-school students experience the use of Kahoot! as a gamified learning tool?

1.3 Aim(s) of the Study

In line with the research questions, the aims of the study are:

1. To explore senior high-school students' experiences in using Kahoot! as a gamified learning tool.

1.4 Operational Definitions

To avoid misunderstanding about the terms of this study, the researcher provides some definitions related to the study as follows:

1. Gamification : In educational settings, gamification refers to the implementation of game-based elements in instructional system that are applied in non-game environments, such as

formal school (Deterding et al., 2011 as cited in Lin et al., 2018).

2. Kahoot! : Kahoot! is a game-based student response system (GSRS) that turns the classroom into an interactive game show setting, with the teacher acting as the host and the students participating as contestants (Wang, 2015).
3. Experiences : Experience is the result of the interaction between an individual and their learning environment, and it forms the basis of meaningful learning (Dewey, 1938a).

1.5 Significances of the Research

The researcher expects that this research can provide the following advantages:

1. **Theoretical use :** This study contributes to the theory of gamification in education by exploring how game-based learning tools like Kahoot! influence students' engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes.

2. Empirical use :	This study provides empirical insights about the real-life experiences of students using Kahoot! as a gamified learning tool.
3. Practical use :	This study presents information for the readers that can helps educators optimize the use of Kahoot! to enhance student participation and learning outcomes by understanding students' perspective.

CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

Based on the findings and discussion in the previous chapter, this study shows that students experience both educative and mis-educative experiences when using Kahoot! as a gamified learning tool in English learning activities. The educative experiences appear when Kahoot! are able to create an engaging learning atmosphere, encourage active participation, and support understanding through instant feedback. Students report being more enthusiastic, more involved in answering questions, and more comfortable learning through an interactive platform. These patterns align with Dewey's principle of interaction and with the motivational function of gamification elements described by Werbach and Hunter. This suggests that Kahoot! can function as an effective experiential learning environment when its features are used to support engagement, participation, and meaningful interaction during English lessons.

However, the research also identifies several mis-educative experiences. Some students shift their focus from understanding to speed, prioritizing points and ranking rather than processing the material. This leads to reduced refection, as students pay less attention during the teacher's explanation and prefer to moving to the next question. Technical problems such as unstable connection, lagging devices, or delayed system responses further

interrupt the learning flow. These experiences break Dewey's principle of continuity, create fragmented understanding, and limit meaningful engagement with the content. The implication of these findings is that high levels of engagement and participation do not automatically lead to meaningful learning. While Kahoot! provides strong potential for meaningful learning, its effectiveness is also shaped by how teachers manage the competitive elements and handle technical constraints during instruction.

5.2 Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommends that educators, teachers, and pre-service teachers use the results of this research as a reference to improve their instructional practices, particularly in implementing gamified learning tool such as Kahoot!. Understanding how students experience Kahoot! enables teachers to design gamified activities that not only enhance motivation and engagement but also support reflective and meaningful learning. Teachers should carefully consider how game elements such as time limit, competition, feedback, and scoring chape students' focus, participation, and learning behaviour.

Teachers are also advised to pay attention to the challenges identified in this study, including learning focus shifting toward speed and difficulties in maintaining continuous participation. These challenges can be addressed by adjusting time settings, providing opportunities for reflections, and

applying differentiated learning and effective classroom management strategies to accommodate diverse student needs.

Regarding future research, this study is limited by its focus on students' experiences in using Kahoot! and by the relatively small number of participants. Therefore, future research is recommended to explore in greater depth in strategies teachers use to manage gamified learning challenges, particularly in maintaining learning continuity and reflective engagement. Further research also may involve different educational levels, subjects, or research design to gain a more comprehensive understanding of gamified learning experiences.

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