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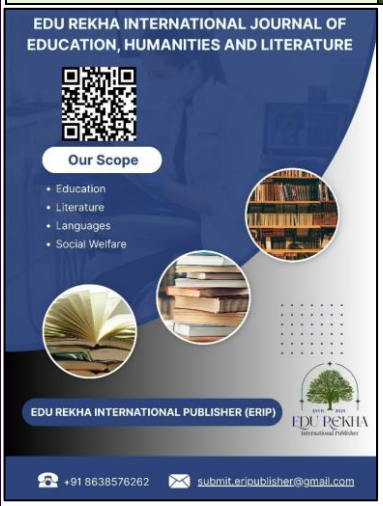
THE EFFECTS OF KAHOOT-BASED LEARNING AND STUDENT'S MOTIVATION ON ENGLISH VOCABULARY ACHIEVEMENT AMONG EIGHT GRADE STUDENTS AT JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL 3 SURAKARTA



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Abstract

This study investigates the effects of Kahoot-based learning and students' motivation on English vocabulary achievement among eighth-grade students at Junior High School 3 Surakarta. A 2×2 quasi-experimental factorial design was used, involving 80 students divided into experimental and control groups with high and low levels of motivation. Vocabulary achievement was measured using pre- and post-tests, while motivation was assessed through a validated questionnaire administered before and after the intervention. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Two-Way ANOVA. The results showed that Kahoot-based learning significantly improved students' vocabulary mastery compared to conventional methods. Students with higher motivation also performed better and participated more actively in classroom activities. Although the interaction between learning method and motivation was not statistically significant, both factors independently contributed positively to learning outcomes. These findings suggest that integrating Kahoot into English vocabulary teaching is an engaging and innovative strategy that can enhance both academic performance and learning motivation. The study also provides practical implications for teachers and opens opportunities for further research on the long-term effects of digital game-based learning or its combination with other teaching methods.

Keywords: Kahoot, game-based learning, motivation, vocabulary achievement, English learning

INTRODUCTION

English is an internationally used language and plays a vital role in various aspects of life, particularly in education, communication, and technology. In today's increasingly globalized world, English language skills are not only considered an added advantage but also a necessity for

competitiveness in an increasingly advanced world. In Indonesian education, learning English is seen as a way to broaden knowledge and access information from abroad. The government also emphasizes the importance of English language skills through a curriculum that focuses on communication skills and global literacy. Therefore, English language skills, particularly vocabulary mastery, are an essential foundation for students to actively participate in both the learning environment and the global world.

Vocabulary and Vocabulary Teaching in Learning Another Language Many educators believe that vocabulary is a key to helping students acquire other language skills of reading, writing, listening, speaking. (National 2013) With poor vocabulary learners have particular trouble saying what they want to say, or understanding what is being said and read. Nevertheless, many junior high school students in Indonesia seem to find it difficult to improve their vocabulary. This is because of low motivation to learn, boring teaching methods and little practice using the language in context. This causes vocabulary learning to be boring, even though vocabulary mastery is an important foundation for successful English language acquisition.

However, in reality, many high school students in Indonesia still struggle to learn English vocabulary. Observations in several schools show that most students tend to memorize vocabulary without understanding the context, leading to forgetfulness and difficulty using words in sentences. This situation is consistent with Alqahtani's (2015) research, which revealed that students often struggle to memorize vocabulary due to a lack of meaningful practice and low learning motivation. Furthermore, teacher centered teaching methods tend to make students passive and quickly lose interest (Aini, 2019). This contributes to low vocabulary achievement, necessitating the use of more engaging, interactive, and life-relevant teaching methods.

One method currently broadly employed to solve this issue is the digital game-based learning or Computer-Based Game Learning (CBGL). One such popular medium is Kahoot, an interactive teaching platform for teachers to create educational quizzes which the students can play live in class on their devices. Not only is Kahoot a fun way to learn, but it also facilitates active student participation. According to Wang and Tahir (2020), the elements and feedback in Kahoot can help students increase motivation and engagement in learning. In addition, students can also understand and remember new vocabulary through challenging and fun learning activities.

Learners' motivation is also a vital factor in predicting students' success in learning a language. Motivated students are more concentrated, enduring and aspire to realize positive educational results (Ormrod, 2016). Gardner (1985) explains, through his Socio-Educational Model, that motivation is a significant factor in second language learning; namely English. In his explanation, Dörnyei (1998) suggests that motivation consists of goal orientation, self-confidence and a supportive learning environment. As motivation of students' is rose, they will be more involved in learning and interactive activities such as Kahoot use in class.

Game-Based Learning (GBL) has been found effective to raise learning achievement and enthusiasm. Gee (2003) articulates that game-like structures in learning can deeptellay engage student's cognitive, affective, and social selves. Prensky (2007) further points out that educational games can support learning through challenging tasks, instant feedback, and the feeling of achievement from having finished a game. In the case of English language learning, Kahoot is an excellent tool to introduce a dose of competition and some fun for learning which can boost motivation, improve retention and make lessons more stimulating.

A several studies conducted in the past have indicated positive outcomes with regard to the use of Kahoot in language learning. Licorish et al. (2018) discovered that Kahoot made students more motivated and engaged in the classroom through developing a more interactive, competitive, and enjoyable learning experience. Wang and Tahir (2020) used a similar approach and reviewed more than 90 studies about the effectiveness of Kahoot applied in different educational settings. The review established that most of the teachers and students rated Kahoot as a learning tool that could help in the development of an enthusiasm toward learning, enhancement of concentration, and reinforcement of conceptual learning due to the real-time feedback it offered during the learning process.

The present study is consistent with Rahayu and Purnawarman (2019) who demonstrated that learning with Kahoot in a junior high school in Bandung enhanced active learning as well as enabled students to remember the new vocabulary they had learned. Students were more challenged and also enjoyed learning activities since the learning process became more relaxed but meaningful due to the game-based approach. Nevertheless, the vast majority of past studies simply considered the motivational factor or the learning performance individually without a thorough integration of the two in the framework of the English vocabulary acquisition at the junior high school level.

Nevertheless, most of the preceding investigations have focused on only one facet., motivation or learning outcomes, in isolation. Only a few studies have thoroughly examined the interrelation of these variables in the context of English language vocabulary acquisition in junior high school. This circumstance highlights a longstanding research gap which requires more exploration, especially regarding the effect of using Kahoot in enhancing students' learning motivation as well as their vocabulary mastery (Rahmawati, 2022; Kurniawan, 2023). Consequently, this study is important for providing new findings on the efficacy of game-based learning in simultaneously improving both dimensions.

The current study addresses the following three main research questions: First, does the use of Kahoot constitute a more efficacious method than traditional methods in improving the outcomes of learning vocabulary. Second, does student motivation affect vocabulary achievement. Third, is there an interaction between the two instructional modalities and motivation with regards to English vocabulary learning outcomes. The goal of this study is to provide a more holistic knowledge about the interaction between technology-based learning media and psychological variables of the students, particularly in the context of vocabulary learning in junior high school. The expected results of this study are to be used as a reference by educators in choosing which digital learning strategies are effective, engaging, and relevant to the needs of the students nowadays.

METHOD

Research Design

The present study used a quasi-experimental design with a 2×2 factorial arrangement to examine the effects of learning methods (Kahoot) and students' motivation levels on vocabulary achievement. There were two independent variables: instructional method (Kahoot and conventional) and student motivation (high versus low), while the dependent variable was vocabulary mastery. This design was chosen because it enables the examination of both the main effects of each variable and their interaction within a single investigation (Creswell, 2014). In addition, this design helps control extraneous factors, increases the validity of the findings, and allows the use of inferential statistical techniques, such as two-way ANOVA to compare group differences.

Participants

The sample statistic consisted of eighth-grade students studying at Junior High School 3 Surakarta in the 2025 academic year. Eighty students were selected purposely to make sure that the population was equally proficient in English language speaking and writing. The sample was divided into four sub-groups of 20 students, two of the experimental and two of the control conditions. Each sub-group was then stratified with respect to high and low motivation levels using a validated questionnaire. Participation was voluntary, and there was official consent from the school administration. This distribution was aimed at ensuring that the data obtained was a true measure of the effect of instructional modality and motivational status.

Instruments

The two instruments used in this study were a vocabulary test and a motivation questionnaire. The vocabulary test was composed of 40 multiple-choice questions consisting of samples taken from the official eighth-grade textbook and was given pre- and post-treatment to assess overall vocabulary learning. Students' motivation was measured by means of a questionnaire from the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (Gardner, 2004), that measures both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation toward English learning. The validity of the instruments was checked by an experienced lecturer in English language education, and the reliability coefficient for the test on vocabulary was 0.85, which shows the internal consistency of the test. Prior to use in the main study, both instruments were pilot-tested in order to ensure clarity, validity, and contextual applicability in junior high school students.

Data Collection

The research procedure included three major stages, which are pre-test, treatment, and post-test. In the pre-test, the students were given the vocabulary test and motivational questionnaire to determine the baseline competencies and motivation profile, and hence have equivalence across the groups before the intervention. The phase of treatment involved the use of differential instructional interventions for the experimental and control groups, and a post-test was conducted after the intervention to determine the resultant vocabulary mastery and motivational changes. This consecutive order allowed methodological data gathering and the possibility to compare data within the different instructional modalities and motivation levels.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was done through descriptive and inferential methods. Descriptive procedures obtained means and standard deviations, which give a broad description of learning outcomes and motivational states. Inferentially, a two-way ANOVA was used to discuss the primary effects of instructional modality and motivation, and their interaction, on vocabulary mastery. Tests of normality and homogeneity of variances were done before the analysis to ensure that the parametric assumptions were met. The derived results guide the effectiveness of Kahoot-based teaching and explain the moderating effects of student motivation on vocabulary performance at the eighth grade.

Treatment

The treatment was conducted over eight sessions, each lasting approximately 40 minutes, with two sessions per week for four weeks. The schedule was the same for all groups so that the duration and learning opportunities were balanced. The overall treatment period was planned to be long enough to introduce new vocabulary, practicing its use, and reflecting on learning. The distribution of sessions was adjusted between the experimental and control groups so that each group received identical material in terms of topics and vocabulary, but differed in the method of delivery. This scheduling supported consistent implementation of the intervention and reduced potential time bias.

The experimental group used Kahoot as an interactive learning medium. After the vocabulary material was delivered, students took a 15 multiple-choice quiz displayed on the classroom screen and answered it using their own devices. This activity combines games with evaluation, encouraging students to think actively and compete in a healthy manner. On the other hand, the control group followed the conventional method of printed worksheets and teacher explanations, with activities such as reading texts, writing word lists, and sentence completion exercises. This difference in methods was the main focus of the learning impact evaluation.

The role of the teachers was that of a facilitator, observer, and giving feedback. In the experimental group, the teacher explained the meaning of vocabulary, provided direct feedback, and encouraged students to interact with each other. During the Kahoot learning, the teacher also observed student engagement and modified the presentation of the material to suit each student's needs. In the control group, teachers introduced material and led exercises linearly. A teacher's presence is essential to make sure that learning occurs evenly and that the bias does not exist, so as to be able to provide each student with an environment in which they can learn.

After eighth meetings and at the end of the course, a vocabulary posttest was administered to all students together with the motivation questionnaire. Observations of student behavior and response were made during the last class, particularly in the experimental category instructed through

Kahoot. The final data collection occurred post-treatment and was intended to verify the effect of the treatment on student vocabulary achievement and motivational level, as well as to compare between interactive and control group. This data was then used as a basis for analysis to understand the relationship between learning methods, student motivation, and learning outcomes.

RESULTS

Vocabulary Achievement

This section provides the results of students' mastery of vocabulary after participating in Kahoot-based learning and conventional methods. The variable was assessed in three main indicators, namely the ability to recognize the meanings of the words, the use of vocabulary within contexts of sentences, and the use of words within

their appropriate meanings. The assessment was done through pre-test and post-test consisting of 40 multiple-choice items taken from the eighth-grade textbook. These tests were given before and after the intervention in a series of eight instruction sessions to measure the degree of change in students' vocabulary skills after the learning had taken place. The results are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Vocabulary Achievement

Group	Test Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Experimental High Motivation	Pre-test	20	63.40	6.21
	Post-test	20	78.90	5.84
Experimental Low Motivation	Pre-test	20	58.60	7.12
	Post-test	20	70.75	6.93
Control High Motivation	Pre-test	20	62.30	6.44
	Post-test	20	71.80	6.18
Control Low Motivation	Pre-test	20	55.80	7.03
	Post-test	20	62.20	6.85

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for all groups. The experimental high-motivation group increased from a pre-test mean of 63.40 (SD = 6.21) to 78.90 (SD = 5.84). The experimental low-motivation group showed an improvement from 58.60 (SD = 7.12) to 70.75 (SD = 6.93). In the control condition, the high-motivation group increased from 62.30 (SD = 6.44) to 71.80 (SD = 6.18), whereas the low-motivation group rose from 55.80 (SD = 7.03) to 62.20 (SD = 6.85). These descriptive outcomes represent the distribution of scores across the pre- and post-testing phases.

Across all four groups, the post-test means presented in Table 1 are higher than the pre-test means. The amount of increase ranges from 6.40 points in the control low-motivation group to 15.50 points in the experimental high-motivation group. The standard deviations remain relatively stable across testing periods, indicating similar score dispersion in both phases. Overall, the data presented in Table 1 reflect the changes in scores for all groups between the pre-test and post-test. These descriptive results require further analysis to determine their statistical significance.

Students' Motivation Levels

The measurement of students' learning motivation was conducted before and after the treatment. Motivation was measured using a questionnaire taken from the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery that included three major dimensions: interest in learning, effort in following instructions, and attitude towards English. Measurements were conducted twice, before the treatment (pre-test) and after the treatment (post-test), in order to be able to see the change in motivation by each group. The descriptive findings are given in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Motivation

Group	Test Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Experimental High Motivation	Pre-test	20	76.20	5.62
	Post-test	20	84.10	5.05
Experimental Low Motivation	Pre-test	20	65.10	6.71
	Post-test	20	73.50	6.33
Control High Motivation	Pre-test	20	75.30	5.44
	Post-test	20	78.20	5.61
Control Low Motivation	Pre-test	20	64.40	6.82
	Post-test	20	67.10	6.59

Table 2 shows that all groups experienced an increase in motivation scores after the instructional period. The experimental high-motivation group rose from 76.20 (SD = 5.62) to 84.10 (SD = 5.05), while the experimental low-motivation group increased from 65.10 (SD = 6.71) to 73.50 (SD = 6.33). The control high-motivation group improved from 75.30 (SD = 5.44) to 78.20 (SD = 5.61), and the control low-motivation group from 64.40 (SD = 6.82) to 67.10 (SD = 6.59). These values summarize the distribution of motivation scores before and after the intervention.

Overall, the data in Table 2 show that all groups experienced an increase in motivation scores after the instructional period. The experimental high-motivation group had the largest gain, while the control low-motivation group had the smallest. Standard deviations remained relatively stable, reflecting consistent changes among students. These descriptive results summarize the general pattern of motivation growth across the groups without providing further interpretation or statistical analysis.

Comparison and Interaction Effects Between Learning Method and Motivation Level

This analysis attempts to determine the extent to which learning strategies and motivational levels have an impact on vocabulary learning, and to find out if an interaction between these variables. As the present study has a 2 x 2 factorial design with two independent variables and one dependent variable, Two-Way ANOVA was chosen. This statistical technique was used to assess the effect of each of the factors individually (main effects) as well as their combined effects (interaction effect) on the dependent variable, namely students' vocabulary acquisition. The statistical results are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Two-Way ANOVA Results on Vocabulary Achievement

Source	F	Sig.	Interpretation
Learning Method	10.54	0.002	Significant
Motivation Level	8.76	0.004	Significant
Method × Motivation	2.31	0.134	Not significant

The results of the Two-Way ANOVA presented in Table 3 show that the learning method significantly affected students' vocabulary achievement. The Kahoot-based group obtained higher mean scores than the control group, with a significance value of 0.002. This indicates that instructional method influenced performance regardless of motivation level. These descriptive outcomes illustrate the distribution of vocabulary scores according to the two instructional approaches, showing that game-based learning corresponds with improved student achievement across the measured groups.

Motivation also demonstrated a significant impact on vocabulary scores, as shown in Table 3 with a significance value of 0.004. Highly motivated students consistently achieved higher scores than those with lower motivation. The descriptive statistics reflect that learners' motivation contributes to performance by maintaining engagement and attention throughout the instruction period. These figures summarize the effect of motivation on learning outcomes across both experimental and control groups without inferring causal mechanisms.

The interaction between learning method and motivation level, however, was not significant ($p = 0.134$), indicating that the combined influence of the two factors does not differ from their individual effects. Table 3 shows that both high and low motivated students benefited from Kahoot-based learning independently of their motivational level. These descriptive results demonstrate the positive contribution of each factor on vocabulary achievement while showing no statistical interaction, providing a clear picture of performance patterns across all subgroups.

Overall, the descriptive results presented in Tables 1–3 provide a clear overview of students' vocabulary achievement and motivation levels across different groups. The data indicate consistent increases in both vocabulary scores and motivation following the instructional interventions. While significant main effects of learning method and motivation level were observed, no interaction between these factors was detected. These findings summarize the observed trends and establish a foundation for the subsequent discussion of their educational implications.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that Kahoot-based learning significantly enhances students' vocabulary mastery compared to conventional methods. The experimental group, particularly those with high motivation, achieved the highest post-test scores. Integrating interactive game-based activities facilitates better vocabulary retention and contextual understanding. Immediate feedback, competitive dynamics, and active engagement in fast-paced quizzes encourage thorough processing of new words. By creating an enjoyable learning environment, Kahoot promotes consistent participation and aligns with the principles of Game-Based Learning, particularly suitable for digital-native learners.

The interactive features of Kahoot allow learners to engage in rapid decision-making, problem-solving, and active cognitive processing. Unlike teacher-centered instruction, Kahoot reduces passivity and encourages participation from all students. Team-based quizzes also stimulate collaborative learning and peer discussion, reinforcing vocabulary comprehension. These observations demonstrate that digital game-based methods can transform traditional vocabulary learning into a dynamic, motivating, and effective process. Such approaches are particularly relevant for contemporary learners who prefer engaging and interactive educational experiences.

The effectiveness of Kahoot can be explained through the Game-Based Learning (GBL) theory, which emphasizes active engagement as a core learning component. According to Gee (2003) and Prensky (2007), students retain knowledge more effectively when learning involves interactive participation rather than rote memorization. In this study, Kahoot successfully blends learning with entertainment, supporting natural vocabulary acquisition. This mechanism highlights how well-designed educational games can align instructional strategies with students' cognitive preferences, fostering deeper understanding and retention of lexical items.

These findings are consistent with prior research. Wang and Tahir (2020) reported that Kahoot improves student attention and engagement, while Licorish et al. (2018) emphasized that competitive elements enhance participation. In Indonesia, Rahayu and Purnawarman (2019) observed improvements in vocabulary retention and learner confidence through Kahoot. Collectively, these studies support the effectiveness of interactive digital media for vocabulary acquisition. The present study further corroborates this evidence, showing that Kahoot positively affects achievement across varying motivation levels, demonstrating its broad applicability in educational contexts.

Student motivation emerged as a critical factor influencing vocabulary learning outcomes. High-motivation learners consistently outperformed their lower-motivation peers, indicating that intrinsic and extrinsic drivers significantly affect engagement and effort. Motivated students exhibit attentiveness, persistence, and active self-directed study, facilitating deeper retention and comprehension. Even when instructional methods are consistent, motivation substantially shapes performance, emphasizing the psychological dimension of language learning. These results underline the need to consider motivational factors alongside instructional design when aiming for optimal learning outcomes.

The importance of motivation is reinforced by theoretical and empirical literature. Gardner's socio-educational model (1985) and Dörnyei's motivational framework (1998) highlight that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation sustain learner persistence and effort. Recent studies by Nursyifa (2021) and Rahmawati (2023) show that motivated students practice vocabulary consistently, seek guidance, and engage in independent study. In this sense, motivation functions as a driving psychological force that complements interactive learning platforms like Kahoot, enhancing overall vocabulary learning effectiveness and supporting engagement across diverse learner profiles.

Analysis of the interaction between instructional method and motivation revealed no statistically significant interaction ($p = 0.134$). This suggests that Kahoot's effectiveness operates independently of initial student motivation. Both high- and low-motivation learners benefited from game-based activities, demonstrating that even students with lower intrinsic motivation can experience situational engagement in an interactive, enjoyable environment. This finding emphasizes Kahoot's potential to stimulate interest and participation across a variety of learner profiles, making it an inclusive tool for diverse classroom contexts.

These results support both the Game-Based Learning model and Gardner's motivation theory. Practically, English teachers can implement Kahoot through regular formative quizzes, collaborative team competitions, and structured feedback sessions. Adjusting quiz difficulty and pacing according to students' proficiency ensures purposeful and educational engagement. Such practices strengthen vocabulary retention, maintain enthusiasm, and promote continuous participation. Therefore, integrating Kahoot in classroom instruction provides an effective and adaptable approach to enhance learning outcomes while sustaining student motivation and engagement.

Overall, the study demonstrates that both Kahoot and student motivation positively affect vocabulary mastery. While motivation enhances engagement and self-directed effort, Kahoot provides

interactive scaffolding that strengthens retention and contextual understanding. The combination of these factors fosters a stimulating learning environment, although each contributes independently to student achievement. These findings highlight the complementary roles of instructional design and psychological factors in language acquisition, underscoring the importance of considering both elements in curriculum planning.

Despite its benefits, Kahoot presents several limitations. Students may become overly focused on scores, overly reliant on gadgets, or distracted by the game-like format. Unequal access to devices and unstable internet connections may further disrupt learning, particularly in resource-limited classrooms. Teachers should mitigate these challenges by balancing Kahoot with guided explanations, emphasizing learning objectives over competition, and adapting quiz designs to classroom conditions. Implementing these strategies ensures that Kahoot remains an effective pedagogical tool rather than a source of distraction.

In conclusion, Kahoot-based learning significantly improves vocabulary mastery among junior high school students, irrespective of their initial motivation levels. Motivation remains a critical psychological driver, while interactive game-based learning provides an engaging and supportive environment. Both factors contribute independently to enhancing learning outcomes. The study confirms that integrating digital tools with consideration of learner motivation is essential for fostering effective vocabulary acquisition in modern classrooms.

This study has several limitations. The sample was limited to eighth-grade students from a single school, which may restrict generalizability. The research focused on short-term vocabulary gains measured through pre- and post-tests, without examining long-term retention. Additional factors, including prior English proficiency, learning styles, and classroom dynamics, were not controlled. These limitations suggest careful interpretation and underscore the need for broader investigations to validate findings.

Future research should involve larger and more diverse samples across multiple schools or regions. Longitudinal studies could examine the long-term impact of Kahoot-based learning on vocabulary retention and overall language competence. Combining Kahoot with other instructional strategies or motivational interventions may further enhance outcomes. Investigating individual differences, such as prior knowledge, learning styles, or digital literacy, would provide deeper insight into how interactive game-based learning interacts with student motivation in varied educational contexts.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, Kahoot-based learning was found to have a higher effect in improving the mastery of English vocabulary of students than the conventional methods. All the groups showed improvement, but the experimental group of high motivation showed the most improvement. These findings prove that the use of interactive media such as Kahoot can help to create a fun learning experience, engage active participation and help students to understand vocabulary in context in a better and deeper way. Learning motivation has also remained an important aspect that aids in learning outcomes.

Kahoot, which increases the efficiency of vocabulary learning, also has a great impact on students' motivation to learn. The resulting confidence, motivation, and active participation of students in the interactive learning practices was found out to be relatively high, while the improvement of the control group was found to be relatively small. This research shows that using digital, game-based learning can evoke learner engagement, create a more self-directed learning experience for the learner, and facilitate interest in learning English. These findings are in line with Game-Based Learning theory which focuses on students' cognitive, affective and social engagement in the learning process.

Although the interaction between learning methods and motivation was not significant, the results of this study nonetheless have important implications for educators. The incorporation of digital learning media, such as Kahoot, is a great alternative to help improve student learning outcomes and motivation in the classroom. This research also creates opportunities for additional research such as exploring the long-term impact of Kahoot, or applying Kahoot to other strategies to consolidate vocabulary knowledge. Consequently, Kahoot may provide an innovative remedy to developing English language learning experiences that are more interesting, relevant and effective.

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