

Enhancing Students' Motivation in Learning English Through Wordwall at SMPN 2 Pitu Riase

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ABSTRACT

The reason to choose this title because it was found that many students had low motivation to learn English. Most of them considered English difficult to understand and irrelevant to their daily communication. This study aimed to explore how the use of Wordwall enhances students' motivation in learning English and to examine students' responses toward its implementation in the classroom at SMP Negeri 2 Pitu Riase. The study focused on identifying changes in students' motivation, participation, and engagement before and after the use of Wordwall as a learning medium. This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach. The data were collected through open-ended interviews (pre-intervention and post-intervention), classroom observations, and documentation. The participants consisted of 10 seventh-grade students selected through purposive sampling. The data were analyzed using an interactive qualitative analysis model including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings showed that the use of Wordwall significantly enhanced students' motivation in learning English. Before the implementation, students tended to feel bored, less interested, and passive during the learning process. After using Wordwall, students became more enthusiastic, active, and confident in participating in classroom activities. In addition, students responded positively to the use of Wordwall as it created a more interactive, enjoyable, and engaging learning environment. Overall, Wordwall proved to be an effective digital learning medium to improve students' motivation and participation in English learning.

Keywords: Wordwall; Students' Motivation; English Learning; Digital Media;

INTRODUCTION

Learning English as a foreign language has become a critical aspect of education in non-English speaking countries such as Indonesia. English serves as an international language connecting people globally and is essential in the fields of business, education, science, and technology. Consequently, mastering English is not only a curricular requirement but also a vital skill for future academic and career opportunities. Despite its importance, many junior high school students struggle to achieve proficiency due to lack of motivation and engagement in learning.

Motivation plays a pivotal role in language acquisition, influencing students' persistence, participation, and overall learning outcomes. Intrinsic motivation, such as curiosity and personal interest, and extrinsic motivation, such as grades and teacher feedback, together shape learners' attitudes toward language learning. Research has shown that students who are motivated tend to participate actively, ask questions, and overcome learning difficulties, while unmotivated students often remain passive and disengaged.

Traditional teaching methods, including lectures, textbook exercises, and rote memorization, often fail to sustain students' motivation. Many learners perceive English lessons as boring or irrelevant to their daily lives. The lack of interactive activities and technology integration further reduces engagement, highlighting the need for innovative strategies to enhance students' enthusiasm for learning English. Digital learning tools have emerged as effective means to address these motivational challenges. Among them, Wordwall stands out as an interactive online platform that allows teachers to create educational games and quizzes tailored to students' needs. Wordwall combines learning and entertainment, offering activities such as matching games, quizzes, word searches, and random wheel games, which can transform routine exercises into engaging and enjoyable experiences.

The implementation of Wordwall has several advantages. It promotes active participation, collaboration, and immediate feedback, which helps students identify their strengths and weaknesses while fostering intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The flexibility of the platform allows teachers to customize activities based on learning objectives and student proficiency levels, while students can continue practicing outside the classroom through mobile devices or computers. Preliminary observations at SMP Negeri 2 Pitu Riase revealed low motivation among seventh-grade students. Students expressed that traditional methods were monotonous, teacher-centered, and failed to capture their interest. These findings underscore the need for a more interactive and technology-based approach to foster motivation and enhance the quality of English learning.

The purpose of this research is to investigate how the use of Wordwall can enhance students' motivation in learning English. It aims to explore changes in students' engagement, interest, and participation through the implementation of interactive,

game-based activities. Additionally, this study seeks to examine students' responses to the use of Wordwall as a digital learning medium. This research is expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it offers insights into the integration of digital tools in language learning to improve motivation. Practically, it provides guidance for teachers to apply technology effectively in classrooms, for students to engage more meaningfully in English learning, and for future researchers to explore innovative approaches in language education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Wordwall as Interactive Learning Media

Wordwall is an interactive digital learning platform that allows teachers to create various game-based learning activities such as quizzes, matching games, word searches, random wheels, and other engaging exercises. Azizah & Djalal (2022) describe Wordwall as an interactive learning medium that supports active participation and creates a more enjoyable classroom atmosphere. In this study, Wordwall is conceptualized as a digital learning tool designed to enhance students' motivation, participation, and engagement in learning English through interactive and gamified classroom activities.

Khasanah & Rahayu (2021) and Hafizah & Rahman (2023) highlight that the main strength of Wordwall lies in its gamification features, including instant feedback, rewards, competition, and interactive tasks that encourage students to become more active during the learning process. These features help reduce boredom and anxiety often experienced by students in conventional English classrooms. Wordwall is considered particularly effective for EFL learners because it creates a more student-centered learning environment and supports vocabulary mastery, classroom interaction, and learning engagement. Previous studies in Indonesian EFL contexts indicate that Wordwall contributes positively to students' motivation and participation in English learning (e.g., Putri & Siregar (2022); Rahmawati (2022); Rahayu & Sari (2022); Suryani (2021)).

However, the literature also identifies several limitations of Wordwall implementation. Rahman & Alhaisoni (2022) and Mahbub (2022) argue that digital learning tools require adequate technological access, teacher preparation, and classroom management skills to be implemented effectively. In addition, Rizky & Anwar (2021) report that some students may experience difficulties related to internet connection, limited digital literacy, or time pressure during game-based activities. These challenges may influence the effectiveness of Wordwall in certain classroom situations.

Compared with conventional teaching methods, Wordwall places greater emphasis on interaction, engagement, and active learning participation. While traditional learning often focuses on memorization and teacher-centered instruction, Wordwall

encourages collaborative learning, immediate responses, and enjoyable classroom experiences through gamified activities. Therefore, this study adopted Wordwall as the instructional medium expected to enhance students' motivation in learning English at SMP Negeri 2 Pitu Riase.

METHOD

Design and Sample

This research employed a qualitative descriptive method aimed at exploring how the use of Wordwall enhances students' motivation in learning English. The qualitative approach allowed the researcher to describe students' experiences, behaviors, and attitudes naturally during the learning process, focusing on depth of understanding rather than numerical analysis. The research design involved three main phases: pre-intervention, intervention, and post-intervention. During the pre-intervention phase, students' initial motivation, engagement, and difficulties were identified through classroom observations and interviews. The intervention phase involved the implementation of Wordwall activities, such as quizzes, matching games, and word searches, to encourage students' motivation and participation in English learning. In the post-intervention phase, the researcher evaluated changes in students' motivation, confidence, and classroom participation through reflective interviews and further observations. The participants of this study were seventh-grade students of class VII.1 at SMP Negeri 2 Pitu Riase. The population consisted of 17 students, and 10 students were selected as informants using purposive sampling. The selected students were actively involved in the English learning process and were considered capable of providing meaningful insights regarding their motivation and engagement during the implementation of Wordwall activities.

Instruments and Procedures

To collect the data, the researcher employed several instruments to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. The primary instrument was open-ended interviews conducted before and after the intervention. These interviews allowed students to express their thoughts, feelings, and experiences freely regarding the use of Wordwall in English learning. Classroom observations were also conducted to support the interview data. Through observations, the researcher recorded students' attention, participation, collaboration, and engagement during classroom activities. In addition, documentation such as photographs, screenshots, students' work, and field notes provided supporting evidence and contextual information related to the learning process.

The data collection procedure was organized into three phases. In the pre-intervention phase, interviews and observations were conducted to identify students' initial motivation and classroom conditions. During the intervention phase, Wordwall activities were implemented while the researcher observed students' engagement, participation, and collaboration. Finally, in the post-intervention phase, follow-up interviews and observations were carried out to

examine changes in students' motivation and responses toward the use of Wordwall in learning English.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the qualitative descriptive analysis model proposed by Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña, which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation were organized, categorized, and presented narratively and in tables. The researcher identified themes related to students' motivation, engagement, participation, and classroom behavior. Comparisons were also made between pre-intervention and post-intervention findings to examine changes after the implementation of Wordwall activities. To strengthen the trustworthiness of the findings, triangulation was applied by cross-checking data from interviews, observations, and documentation. This process ensured the consistency and credibility of the results and enabled the researcher to obtain a comprehensive understanding of how Wordwall influenced students' motivation in learning English.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this research were obtained from the pre-intervention, intervention, and post-intervention phases through interviews, classroom observations, and documentation. The findings focused on students' motivation, participation, engagement, understanding, and confidence in learning English through the use of Wordwall. Before the implementation of Wordwall, students generally showed low to moderate motivation in learning English. Most students stated that they often felt bored during classroom activities because the learning process mainly involved reading texts, memorizing vocabulary, and completing written exercises. Several students also reported difficulties in understanding English materials and remembering vocabulary, which reduced their confidence and participation during lessons. Classroom observations further revealed that many students were passive, reluctant to answer questions, and less enthusiastic during learning activities.

The interviews also showed that students preferred interactive and game-based learning activities. They explained that conventional teaching methods were monotonous and sometimes stressful, while activities involving games and interaction made the learning atmosphere more enjoyable and less intimidating. These responses indicated the need for a more engaging learning medium that could increase students' interest and motivation in learning English. During the intervention phase, students actively participated in various Wordwall activities, such as quizzes, matching games, and word searches. Classroom observations showed a noticeable improvement in students' attention, enthusiasm, and involvement during the learning process. Students became more focused on classroom tasks and demonstrated greater enthusiasm when participating in the activities. In addition, collaborative behavior was observed as students helped each

other, discussed answers, and interacted more actively with their classmates during the games.

The implementation of Wordwall also increased both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation among students. The gamified features, instant feedback, and friendly competition encouraged students to participate more actively in classroom activities. Students who were previously passive became more involved in answering questions, completing tasks, and interacting during the lesson. The learning atmosphere became more dynamic and enjoyable, which contributed to higher participation levels among the students. After the implementation of Wordwall, students reported higher motivation in learning English. They stated that the lessons became more interesting, enjoyable, and engaging compared to previous classroom experiences. Students also showed greater willingness to participate in discussions, answer questions, and communicate with their peers during English lessons. These findings indicated that Wordwall created a more positive learning environment that supported students' motivation and engagement.

Furthermore, students explained that Wordwall helped them understand the lesson more effectively. The interactive games supported vocabulary mastery and improved students' comprehension of the learning materials. Students also expressed increased confidence when answering questions and performing tasks in front of the class. The use of game-based activities appeared to reduce students' anxiety and encouraged them to participate without fear of making mistakes. The students responded positively to the implementation of Wordwall in English learning. They considered Wordwall to be a fun, interactive, and effective learning tool that made classroom activities more enjoyable. Although a few students mentioned minor difficulties, such as recalling answers quickly in certain games, these challenges did not significantly affect their learning experience. In general, the findings demonstrated that Wordwall positively influenced students' motivation, participation, engagement, understanding, and confidence in learning English.

The findings of this research indicate that the integration of Wordwall in English learning significantly enhanced students' motivation, engagement, understanding, and confidence. Before the intervention, students' low motivation was largely influenced by conventional teaching methods that emphasized reading, writing, and memorization. These methods often resulted in boredom, minimal participation, and low attention levels. This aligns with prior research by Rahmawati (2022) and Putri (2021), which showed that traditional approaches could limit students' enthusiasm in learning English.

During the intervention, Wordwall transformed the classroom environment from teacher-centered to student-centered. The gamified features, including quizzes, matching games, and immediate feedback, fostered active participation. Students were not only motivated to perform well but also engaged in peer collaboration, demonstrating that game-based learning can promote social interaction and

cooperative behavior. This supports the framework of Gamified Learning Theory by Deterding (2021), emphasizing the importance of rewards, challenges, and interactive elements in sustaining motivation.

The use of Wordwall also addressed students' psychological needs by providing a safe and enjoyable learning space. Students expressed reduced anxiety and fear of making mistakes, which contributed to higher confidence levels. According to Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory (2020), motivation increases when learning activities satisfy autonomy, competence, and enjoyment. Wordwall successfully met these needs by allowing students to control their learning, receive immediate performance feedback, and engage in enjoyable activities.

Furthermore, Wordwall enhanced comprehension by presenting materials in an interactive and visually appealing format. Students reported that vocabulary and grammar lessons were easier to understand through games, which transformed abstract concepts into concrete learning experiences. This aligns with findings by Hafizah and Rahman (2023), who noted that digital learning media improve cognitive engagement while supporting affective aspects such as enjoyment and confidence.

Observations revealed that students' engagement and participation were significantly higher compared to pre-intervention conditions. Previously passive students became active contributors, indicating that Wordwall effectively stimulated intrinsic motivation. The competition and instant feedback features supported extrinsic motivation, providing students with recognition and reinforcement for their achievements. This dual motivation system confirms the importance of combining intrinsic and extrinsic factors in educational settings. Students' positive responses suggest that Wordwall was perceived as an effective and enjoyable tool. They preferred interactive, game-based learning over traditional methods, highlighting the role of enjoyment in maintaining long-term motivation. Even minor difficulties in using the platform did not diminish overall satisfaction, indicating that digital learning media are resilient to small usability challenges and can sustain engagement over time.

The improvement in classroom atmosphere was another key outcome. Wordwall created a lively, student-centered environment where students collaborated, interacted, and expressed themselves freely. This positive atmosphere reduced boredom and promoted active learning, consistent with previous research emphasizing the connection between classroom climate and student motivation (Rachmawati, 2020). Teachers can leverage these insights to enhance instructional strategies by integrating technology and gamification. Wordwall proved to be an effective pedagogical tool in motivating students, enhancing comprehension, and fostering confidence in English learning. The integration of interactive and gamified digital media successfully transformed the learning process into a meaningful, enjoyable, and student-centered experience. These findings provide

strong evidence for incorporating digital learning tools in junior high school English curricula to improve both cognitive and affective learning outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the use of Wordwall effectively enhanced seventh-grade students' motivation in learning English at SMP Negeri 2 Pitu Riase. The integration of interactive, game-based activities created a more engaging, enjoyable, and student-centered learning environment compared to traditional methods. Students demonstrated higher levels of participation, attention, confidence, and understanding after using Wordwall, indicating that digital learning media can positively influence both cognitive and affective aspects of language learning. Furthermore, students responded positively to the use of Wordwall, perceiving it as a fun, effective, and meaningful tool that combined learning with play. The platform not only supported intrinsic and extrinsic motivation but also promoted collaboration, interaction, and a positive classroom atmosphere. These results suggest that Wordwall can serve as a practical solution for teachers seeking to enhance motivation and learning outcomes in English classrooms, particularly in junior high school contexts.

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