



Students' perception toward the use of Educandy in learning English vocabulary at SMPN 1 Maiwa

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menginvestigasi persepsi siswa terhadap penggunaan Educandy dalam pembelajaran kosakata bahasa Inggris di SMPN 1 Maiwa. Penelitian ini difokuskan untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana siswa memandang penerapan Educandy sebagai media pembelajaran berbasis permainan serta mengidentifikasi faktor internal dan eksternal yang memengaruhi persepsi mereka. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain deskriptif kualitatif. Partisipan penelitian terdiri atas 20 siswa kelas VIII, dengan lima siswa dipilih secara purposive untuk wawancara mendalam. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur, kuesioner, observasi kelas, dan dokumentasi. Data dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siswa memiliki persepsi positif terhadap penggunaan Educandy dalam pembelajaran kosakata. Siswa menyatakan bahwa Educandy membuat proses pembelajaran menjadi lebih menyenangkan, interaktif, memotivasi, dan lebih mudah dipahami dibandingkan metode pembelajaran kosakata tradisional. Platform ini juga meningkatkan keterlibatan, partisipasi, dan kepercayaan diri siswa selama kegiatan pembelajaran berlangsung. Selain itu, fitur interaktif seperti permainan mencocokkan kata, kuis, dan teka-teki kata membantu retensi kosakata melalui pengulangan dan pembelajaran aktif. Penelitian ini juga menemukan bahwa persepsi siswa dipengaruhi oleh faktor internal, seperti motivasi, minat, kepercayaan diri, dan preferensi belajar, serta faktor eksternal, seperti dukungan guru, strategi pembelajaran, lingkungan kelas, dan karakteristik media pembelajaran. Di antara faktor-faktor tersebut, faktor eksternal menunjukkan pengaruh yang sedikit lebih dominan terhadap persepsi positif siswa. Dengan demikian, Educandy dapat dianggap sebagai media pembelajaran berbasis permainan yang efektif dalam mendukung pembelajaran kosakata dan meningkatkan pengalaman belajar siswa dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris.

Kata kunci: persepsi siswa, Educandy, pembelajaran kosakata, pembelajaran berbasis permainan, pembelajaran bahasa Inggris

Abstract

This study investigated students' perceptions toward the use of Educandy in learning English vocabulary at SMPN 1 Maiwa. The research aimed to explore how students perceived the implementation of Educandy as a game-based learning platform and to identify the internal and external factors influencing their perceptions. A qualitative descriptive design was employed in this study. The participants consisted of 20 eighth-grade students, while five students were purposively selected for in-depth interviews. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, classroom observation, and documentation. The data were analyzed using Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's interactive model, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings revealed that students had positive perceptions toward the use of Educandy in vocabulary learning. Students reported that Educandy made learning more enjoyable, interactive, motivating, and easier to understand compared to traditional vocabulary learning methods. The platform also increased students' engagement, participation, and confidence during classroom activities. In addition, interactive features such as matching games, quizzes, and word puzzles supported vocabulary retention through repetition and active learning. The study further found that students' perceptions were influenced by internal factors, including motivation, interest, confidence, and learning preferences, as well as external factors such as teacher support, instructional strategies, classroom environment, and the characteristics of the learning media. Among these factors, external factors showed a slightly stronger influence on students' positive perceptions. In conclusion, Educandy can be considered an effective game-based learning medium that supports vocabulary learning and enhances students' learning experiences in English classes.

Keywords: students' perception, Educandy, vocabulary learning, game-based learning, English learning

Introduction

The integration of digital technology in education has significantly transformed the teaching and learning process in recent years. In English language teaching, technology-based learning media have become increasingly important because they provide interactive, flexible, and student-centered learning experiences. According to Mishra and Koehler (2019), technology integration enables teachers to combine instructional content with innovative pedagogical approaches that encourage active student participation. Similarly, digital learning tools allow students to engage with learning materials more dynamically than conventional classroom instruction. As a result, schools are encouraged to adopt digital media that can improve students' learning experiences, especially in English language classrooms where interaction and engagement are essential for language acquisition.

Vocabulary mastery is one of the most fundamental aspects of learning English because vocabulary functions as the foundation for developing listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Students with limited vocabulary often experience difficulties understanding texts, expressing ideas, and participating in classroom interaction. According to Paul Nation (2020), vocabulary knowledge strongly influences learners' communicative competence and academic achievement in language learning. Furthermore, Stuart Webb and Nation (2022) explain that vocabulary learning requires repeated exposure, meaningful interaction, and continuous practice to support long-term retention. Therefore, English teachers need to implement learning strategies and media that can help students acquire vocabulary effectively while maintaining their motivation and interest during the learning process.

Despite its importance, vocabulary learning remains challenging for many junior high school students. Traditional learning methods such as memorizing word lists, translating vocabulary items, and completing textbook exercises are still commonly used in many classrooms. However, these approaches often create passive learning environments that reduce students' engagement and motivation. According to Anita Woolfolk (2020), students tend to lose interest when learning activities are repetitive and lack interaction. In addition, monotonous learning activities may prevent students from actively processing and applying new vocabulary in meaningful contexts. Consequently, students may easily forget vocabulary items and develop negative attitudes toward English learning.

To address these challenges, many educators have adopted educational game-based learning as an alternative instructional approach. Educational game-based learning integrates instructional materials with game elements such as challenges, rewards, competition, and instant feedback to create more enjoyable learning experiences. According to Karl Kapp (2021), game-based learning can increase students' motivation, engagement, and participation because it transforms learning activities into interactive experiences. Likewise, Sailer and Homner (2020) found that educational games positively influence students' motivation and cognitive engagement in classroom learning. Through game-based activities, students are encouraged to participate actively while learning in a less stressful environment.

One digital platform that supports educational game-based learning is Educandy. Educandy is a web-based application that enables teachers to create interactive vocabulary games such as matching pairs, quizzes, crosswords, and

word puzzles. The platform is designed to be simple, accessible, and user-friendly for both teachers and students. According to Venkatesh et al. (2022), students are more likely to accept educational technology when it is perceived as useful and easy to use. Educandy provides opportunities for students to practice vocabulary repeatedly through interactive activities, which may improve vocabulary retention and classroom engagement. In addition, the use of games can reduce students' anxiety and create a more positive atmosphere during English learning activities.

Students' perception is another important aspect in evaluating the effectiveness of educational technology in the classroom. Perception refers to how students interpret and give meaning to their learning experiences. According to Barry Zimmerman (2018), positive perceptions toward learning media can increase students' motivation, self-confidence, and willingness to participate in classroom activities. Conversely, negative perceptions may reduce students' engagement and learning outcomes. Therefore, understanding students' perceptions toward the use of digital learning media is essential because students' attitudes and experiences influence the success of instructional implementation.

Several previous studies have reported positive findings regarding the use of Educandy in English learning. Research conducted by Alchorni (2024) revealed that Educandy increased students' engagement, enjoyment, and participation in vocabulary learning activities. Similarly, Simanungkalit et al. (2023) found that students perceived Educandy as an enjoyable and motivating learning medium because it provided various interactive game formats. Another study by Ni'mah and Shofi

(2024) indicated that Educandy improved students' confidence and reduced boredom during vocabulary practice. Although these studies demonstrated the benefits of Educandy, most previous research focused primarily on learning outcomes or general classroom implementation. Studies specifically investigating students' perceptions in junior high school contexts, particularly in semi-rural schools, remain limited.

In the context of SMPN 1 Maiwa, vocabulary learning still presents several challenges. Based on preliminary observations, many students show low motivation and passive participation during conventional vocabulary learning activities. However, students appear more enthusiastic and actively involved when digital media are integrated into classroom instruction. This phenomenon indicates that interactive learning platforms such as Educandy may help create a more engaging and meaningful learning environment. Therefore, this study aims to investigate students' perceptions toward the use of Educandy in learning English vocabulary at SMPN 1 Maiwa and to identify the factors influencing those perceptions. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the development of innovative English learning practices, particularly in vocabulary instruction through digital game-based learning media.

Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to investigate students' perceptions toward the use of Educandy in learning English vocabulary at SMPN 1 Maiwa. A qualitative descriptive approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to explore and describe students' experiences, opinions, and perceptions in a natural classroom setting without manipulating variables. According to

John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth (2023), qualitative descriptive research focuses on understanding participants' perspectives and presenting detailed descriptions of a phenomenon based on real experiences.

The participants of this study were eighth-grade students of SMPN 1 Maiwa. A total of 20 students from one class participated in the research because they had experienced learning English vocabulary using Educandy during classroom activities. In addition, five students were purposively selected as key informants for semi-structured interviews. Purposive sampling was used because the selected students were considered capable of providing rich and relevant information regarding their learning experiences with Educandy. According to Sharan B. Merriam and Elizabeth J. Tisdell (2021), purposive sampling allows researchers to select participants who can contribute meaningful insights related to the research objectives.

The instruments used in this study included observation, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. Classroom observation was conducted to identify students' engagement, participation, and interaction during vocabulary learning activities using Educandy. The semi-structured interview guide consisted of open-ended questions related to students' motivation, interest, confidence, learning experiences, and opinions toward the use of Educandy. Meanwhile, the questionnaire was distributed to all participants to obtain broader information regarding students' perceptions and the factors influencing those perceptions. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

The data collection process was conducted during English vocabulary learning activities in the classroom. First, the researcher observed the teaching and learning process while students used Educandy as a learning medium. Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five selected students to explore their experiences and perceptions in greater depth. Third, questionnaires were administered to all 20 students to identify general patterns of responses regarding the use of Educandy. Documentation such as classroom

photographs, screenshots of Educandy activities, and learning materials was also collected to support the research findings and provide contextual information.

The data obtained from interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documentation were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña (2014). The analysis process consisted of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction stage, the researcher selected and organized relevant data related to students' perceptions. Next, the data were displayed in the form of narrative descriptions and thematic categories to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on patterns and relationships identified from the data.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, the researcher applied triangulation by comparing information obtained from different instruments, including interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documentation. This triangulation process helped strengthen the credibility and consistency of the findings. Furthermore, the researcher carefully interpreted the data to ensure that the conclusions accurately reflected students' actual perceptions and experiences regarding the use of Educandy in learning English vocabulary at SMPN 1 Maiwa.

Result and Discussion

The findings of this study were derived from interviews, questionnaires, classroom observations, and documentation conducted with eighth-grade students at SMPN 1 Maiwa. The data revealed that students generally had positive perceptions toward the use of Educandy in learning English vocabulary. Most students described the learning activities as enjoyable, interactive, and more engaging than traditional vocabulary learning methods. During classroom observation, students showed active participation and enthusiasm while completing vocabulary games through Educandy. They appeared more motivated to

answer questions, interact with peers, and participate in classroom activities.

The interview findings indicated that students perceived Educandy as an enjoyable learning medium that reduced boredom during vocabulary learning. Students explained that conventional learning methods such as memorizing vocabulary lists and translating words from textbooks often felt monotonous and less interesting. In contrast, Educandy created a more relaxed and entertaining classroom atmosphere because students learned while playing games. Several students stated that the activities made them feel “happy,” “excited,” and “more active” during the lesson. These responses suggest that Educandy positively influenced students’ emotional engagement in learning English vocabulary.

Another important finding was related to students’ vocabulary understanding and retention. Most participants reported that Educandy helped them remember vocabulary more easily because the games provided repeated exposure to words in different formats. Interactive activities such as matching pairs, quizzes, and word puzzles encouraged students to recall vocabulary continuously during gameplay. In addition, the immediate feedback provided by the platform enabled students to identify mistakes and correct their answers directly. As a result, students felt that vocabulary learning became easier and more meaningful compared to traditional memorization methods.

The findings also revealed that Educandy increased students’ classroom participation and interaction. During the implementation of the games, students actively communicated with their classmates, discussed answers, and competed to complete tasks successfully. The game-based activities created a collaborative and dynamic classroom environment where students became more confident in participating. Observation data showed that students who were usually passive during conventional lessons became more involved when Educandy was integrated into the learning process. This indicates that the platform successfully encouraged active learning and student-centered interaction.

In terms of supporting features, students identified several aspects of Educandy that contributed positively to their learning experiences. The most frequently mentioned features included matching games, quizzes, word searches, and guessing activities. Students explained that these variations prevented them from feeling bored because they could practice vocabulary using different game formats. Furthermore, the visual appearance and simple navigation of Educandy made the platform easy to use. Most students stated that they could understand how to play the games after receiving brief instructions from the teacher.

Although the findings were generally positive, some challenges in using Educandy were also identified. A few students initially experienced difficulties because they were unfamiliar with the platform and required time to adapt to the game-based activities. Some students also reported difficulties understanding unfamiliar vocabulary items or responding quickly during timed games. However, these difficulties were temporary and gradually decreased after students became more familiar with the platform and received guidance from the teacher. Overall, the challenges did not significantly reduce students’ positive perceptions toward the use of Educandy.

The questionnaire findings further supported the interview results. The data showed that most students selected “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” responses toward statements related to motivation, engagement, classroom enjoyment, and vocabulary understanding. Regarding internal factors, students demonstrated high levels of motivation, interest, and confidence while learning through Educandy. Most students felt comfortable and enthusiastic when participating in game-based vocabulary activities. However, a small number of students still showed neutral or negative responses due to adaptation difficulties and differences in learning preferences.

Regarding external factors, the findings revealed that teacher support, instructional strategies, classroom environment, and the characteristics of Educandy strongly influenced students’ positive perceptions. Students stated that clear instructions and encouragement from

the teacher helped them understand how to use the platform effectively. In addition, the supportive classroom atmosphere and the interactive features of Educandy contributed to students' active participation and enjoyment during learning activities. Overall, the findings indicate that Educandy successfully created a positive learning experience that supported vocabulary learning and increased students' engagement in English classes.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that students generally have positive perceptions toward the use of Educandy in learning English vocabulary. Students perceived the platform as enjoyable, interactive, and motivating, which contributed to a more engaging learning environment. This finding supports the theory proposed by Goldstein and Brockmole (2021), who state that perception is formed through individuals' interpretation of their experiences. In this study, students interpreted Educandy as a meaningful and enjoyable learning medium, resulting in positive attitudes toward vocabulary learning activities.

The positive emotional responses shown by students also align with Dale H. Schunk (2020), who explains that positive perceptions influence students' motivation, engagement, and learning behavior. Students in this study expressed feelings of excitement, enjoyment, and enthusiasm while using Educandy. These positive emotions encouraged students to participate actively during classroom activities. Therefore, the findings demonstrate that game-based learning can support students' affective engagement, which is essential for successful language learning.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that Educandy helps students improve vocabulary understanding and retention. This result supports the theory proposed by Paul Nation (2020), which emphasizes that vocabulary learning requires repeated exposure and meaningful interaction with words. Educandy provides repeated practice through interactive games such as quizzes, matching activities, and word puzzles. These repeated encounters with vocabulary items help students strengthen memory retention and improve understanding. In addition, immediate feedback enables students to

recognize and correct mistakes directly, which supports deeper learning processes.

The findings also confirm the effectiveness of educational game-based learning in promoting active learning and student participation. According to Karl Kapp (2021), game-based learning increases students' motivation and participation because it combines educational content with enjoyable activities. In this study, students became more actively involved during vocabulary learning activities using Educandy. They interacted with peers, discussed answers, and responded enthusiastically to classroom challenges. This condition indicates that Educandy successfully transformed vocabulary learning into a more student-centered activity.

Another important finding concerns the role of classroom interaction and collaboration during learning activities. Students not only interacted with the learning content but also communicated actively with classmates while playing the games. This finding is consistent with Lev Vygotsky's social constructivist perspective, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in learning processes. Through collaborative and competitive activities, students were able to exchange ideas, support one another, and learn vocabulary in a more meaningful social context.

The study also found that students' perceptions were influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors included motivation, interest, confidence, and learning preferences. These findings support Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan (2020), who explain that students' intrinsic motivation plays a significant role in shaping learning perceptions and engagement. Students who felt motivated and interested during game-based activities tended to develop more positive perceptions toward Educandy. However, students with lower confidence required additional time to adapt to the platform.

In addition to internal factors, external factors were found to play a slightly stronger role in influencing students' perceptions. Teacher support, instructional strategies, classroom environment, and media characteristics contributed significantly to students' positive experiences. This finding aligns with John Hattie (2021), who

emphasizes that teacher guidance and classroom support strongly affect students' learning experiences. In this study, students appreciated the teacher's clear instructions and encouragement during the implementation of Educandy. A supportive classroom atmosphere also helped students feel comfortable participating in learning activities.

Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate that Educandy is an effective game-based learning medium for vocabulary instruction in junior high school classrooms. The platform not only supports vocabulary acquisition but also increases students' engagement, motivation, and classroom participation. Although some students initially experienced adaptation difficulties, these challenges were manageable and temporary. Therefore, Educandy can be considered a valuable digital learning tool that helps create enjoyable, interactive, and meaningful English vocabulary learning experiences for students at SMPN 1 Maiwa.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that students at SMPN 1 Maiwa generally have positive perceptions toward the use of Educandy in learning English vocabulary. The platform creates an enjoyable, interactive, and engaging learning environment that helps students participate more actively during classroom activities. Compared to traditional vocabulary learning methods, Educandy makes learning more interesting and less monotonous, which increases students' enthusiasm and motivation in learning English vocabulary.

The study also reveals that Educandy supports students' vocabulary understanding and retention through repeated practice, interactive games, and immediate feedback. Features such as matching games, quizzes, and word

puzzles help students remember vocabulary more effectively while encouraging active learning and classroom interaction. In addition, the use of Educandy promotes student-centered learning because students become more involved in completing tasks, discussing answers, and interacting with peers during the learning process.

Furthermore, students' perceptions toward the use of Educandy are influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include students' motivation, interest, confidence, and learning preferences, while external factors include teacher support, instructional strategies, classroom environment, and the characteristics of the learning media. Among these factors, external factors appear to have a slightly stronger influence on students' positive perceptions. Therefore, Educandy can be considered an effective game-based learning medium that enhances vocabulary learning experiences and supports more engaging English language instruction in junior high school classrooms.

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