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The Effect of Scrabble in Improving Vocabulary Mastery of Students at SMPN 2 Pasaman

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Abstract

English vocabulary mastery requires learning activities that address word forms, meanings, and contextual use. This study examined whether Scrabble improved vocabulary outcomes compared with regular instruction among students at SMPN 2 Pasaman. A quantitative approach employing a quasi-experimental post-test-only control group design was used. Participants comprised 64 students selected through cluster random sampling, with 32 students in the experimental class and 32 in the control class. Vocabulary mastery was assessed using a 20-item multiple-choice test, and data were analysed using descriptive statistics and an independent-samples t-test. The experimental class achieved a higher mean score (58.13) than the control class (53.44), but the difference was not statistically significant ($t = 0.987$, $p = .327$). The study therefore did not demonstrate a statistically significant advantage of Scrabble over regular instruction in this setting. Scrabble may be considered a supplementary learning medium when integrated with contextual vocabulary practice, although the present findings do not establish its effectiveness. Future research should incorporate baseline assessments and delayed retention measures to clarify its contribution to vocabulary development and retention.

Keywords: Scrabble; Vocabulary Mastery; English Language Learning; Game-Based Learning; Quasi-Experimental Design.

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary mastery is one of the fundamental aspects of English language learning, as it is closely associated with students' ability to understand and use language in both spoken

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and written communication. Vocabulary is not merely a collection of words to be memorized; rather, it serves as an essential resource for understanding information, expressing ideas, and establishing meaningful communication. Nation (2022) explains that vocabulary learning involves knowledge of word form, meaning, and use, which needs to be developed through continuous learning experiences. Such knowledge plays a significant role in supporting listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, all of which are interconnected in the process of language acquisition. Farich & Wahyuni (2025) emphasize the importance of vocabulary mastery in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, particularly because limited vocabulary knowledge may hinder students' comprehension and engagement in learning activities. Similarly, Qatrunnada & Zuhriyah (2024) highlight the need to give greater attention to vocabulary development to enable students to use English more effectively.

Vocabulary instruction in English language classrooms continues to face various challenges, particularly among students who have limited opportunities to use the language outside the school environment. The difficulties encountered by students are not restricted to remembering word meanings but also involve recognizing written forms, producing accurate spelling, and using vocabulary appropriately in different communicative contexts. Mardianawati (2012) indicates that vocabulary instruction at the junior high school level requires a variety of teaching strategies to provide learning experiences that correspond to students' needs. Another important concern is students' ability to retain previously learned vocabulary. Although students may recognize certain words during classroom activities, they often struggle to recall them after some time has passed. Taheri (2014) found that language games had a more pronounced effect on vocabulary retention in delayed assessments than in immediate assessments. This finding highlights the importance of learning experiences that encourage students to recall, practice, and actively use vocabulary rather than simply memorize words.

The English language learning situation at SMP Negeri 2 Pasaman reflects similar challenges, particularly in vocabulary mastery among eighth-grade students. Preliminary observations conducted by the researcher indicated that several students experienced difficulties understanding unfamiliar words when reading texts, completing exercises, and following classroom instructions. Some students tended to rely heavily on dictionaries or direct translations provided by the teacher whenever they encountered new vocabulary. Difficulties were also apparent when students were asked to recall previously learned words or use them to express simple ideas. Classroom activities that primarily emphasized

memorizing word lists, copying vocabulary, and translating words had not fully provided students with opportunities to use vocabulary independently. This situation deserves particular attention because students' engagement in the learning process influences the opportunities available to them to practice the language. Tuti & Ilinawati (2022) identified low participation and motivation as potential barriers to effective vocabulary learning. Likewise, Novasyari et al. (2025) emphasize the importance of adopting interactive instructional strategies that respond to students' learning needs.

Challenges in vocabulary mastery should not be attributed solely to students' limited ability to memorize words. The ways in which learning materials are presented, opportunities for practice, classroom atmosphere, and differences in students' learning characteristics also shape their experiences of learning English. Instructional activities involving explanation, note-taking, and translation remain valuable, particularly for introducing the forms and meanings of unfamiliar words. However, these activities need to be complemented by learning experiences that encourage students to explore, interact, and apply their existing knowledge. Mardianawati (2012) identifies the use of instructional media, games, exercises, and contextual learning as strategies employed by teachers to support vocabulary development. Reyes-Chua & Lidawan (2019) also demonstrate that educational games can foster student engagement, collaboration, and positive attitudes toward language learning. Creating learning environments in which students feel comfortable participating and making mistakes is particularly important as they gradually develop confidence in using a foreign language.

Scrabble is one of the instructional games that can be utilized to create a more active and enjoyable vocabulary learning experience. The game requires players to arrange letters into meaningful words according to specific rules, thereby engaging their ability to recognize, recall, and construct vocabulary. Hinebaugh (2009) explains that board games offer educational potential because they can promote language skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving through play-based activities. Hargreaves et al. (2012) found that competitive Scrabble experience was associated with particular characteristics of visual word recognition and processing. Their findings provide insight into the cognitive processes involved in recognizing and manipulating letters and words, although they do not directly establish the effectiveness of Scrabble as an instructional medium in school settings. Godwin-Jones (2014) emphasizes that integrating games into language instruction requires consideration of both the opportunities for interaction and the pedagogical challenges

involved. Harahap et al. (2023) report that the use of Scrabble in vocabulary learning can stimulate students' interest while supporting spelling practice and word recognition. These characteristics make Scrabble a relevant instructional medium that combines language practice, social interaction, and more participatory learning activities.

Several previous studies have provided empirical evidence regarding the benefits of games for improving English vocabulary mastery. Taheri (2014) found that language games could help learners retain acquired vocabulary, particularly when their ability to recall words was assessed after a certain period. A study conducted by Aisyah (2017) among third-grade elementary school students reported an increase in the mean vocabulary mastery score from 43.25 to 70.75 following the implementation of Scrabble. Similar findings were reported by Somantri & Nurhayati (2017), who investigated the use of Scrabble among fifth-grade elementary school students and identified a statistically significant difference between pre-intervention and post-intervention learning outcomes, with a calculated t-value of 12.65. Hadi (2021) also reported improvements in students' vocabulary learning outcomes through the implementation of Scrabble in classroom action research at the senior high school level. Collectively, these findings suggest that Scrabble has considerable potential as a supplementary medium for vocabulary instruction, although the studies involved different student populations and research designs.

More recent studies have further contributed to the growing evidence concerning the use of Scrabble in English language learning. Tuti & Ilinawati (2022) reported improvements in students' classroom participation and vocabulary mastery following the implementation of Scrabble through classroom action research. Fitriya & Fajarina (2023) identified a statistically significant difference between pretest and posttest vocabulary mastery scores among seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Gudo Jombang after participating in Scrabble-based learning activities. Consistent findings were presented by Qatrunnada and Zuhriyah (2024), who demonstrated that the use of Scrabble had a positive effect on vocabulary mastery among seventh-grade junior high school students. Mahendra et al. (2024) also reported improvements in vocabulary learning outcomes among 21 ninth-grade students in an educational setting serving the children of Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia following the implementation of Scrabble. Furthermore, a systematic review conducted by Farich & Wahyuni (2025), which examined 30 studies in Indonesia, provided additional evidence of Scrabble's potential to improve vocabulary mastery, learning motivation, student engagement, and vocabulary retention.

Investigating the use of Scrabble at SMP Negeri 2 Pasaman is therefore relevant to efforts to identify alternative vocabulary teaching approaches that better address students' learning needs. The selection of this game is based on its characteristics, which allow students to connect their vocabulary knowledge with letter arrangement, word recall, and interaction with classmates. The conceptual framework of this study draws on Nation (2024) perspective on vocabulary knowledge, encompassing word form, meaning, and use, alongside the pedagogical potential of games as learning activities that encourage active student participation. The implementation of Scrabble is expected to provide learning experiences that go beyond test performance by recognizing the importance of students' efforts to explore, recall, and progressively develop their vocabulary knowledge. The empirical findings of this study are also expected to provide useful considerations for teachers in selecting instructional media that are appropriate to their students' learning conditions. Specifically, this study aims to examine the effect of using the Scrabble game on improving English vocabulary mastery among eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Pasaman.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental research method to examine the effect of the Scrabble game on students' English vocabulary mastery. The research design involved two groups: an experimental group that received vocabulary instruction through the Scrabble game and a control group that participated in vocabulary instruction without using the game. Students' vocabulary mastery was assessed through a post-test administered to both groups after the treatment. The population consisted of all 215 eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Pasaman, distributed across seven classes. The sample was selected using cluster random sampling through a class lottery, following the principles of group-based sampling described by (Bhardwaj, 2019). The lottery results determined class VIII.3 as the experimental group and class VIII.2 as the control group. Each class consisted of 32 students, resulting in a total sample of 64 students.

The study was conducted over seven instructional sessions, each lasting 50 minutes. In the experimental group, the Scrabble game was integrated into vocabulary instruction focusing on recount texts and narrative texts. Students were organized into small groups and encouraged to arrange letters into English words, discuss their meanings, spelling,

pronunciation, and appropriate use within the learning context. Throughout the activities, the researcher provided guidance and feedback to facilitate vocabulary development through interaction and direct practice. Meanwhile, the control group received vocabulary instruction using textbooks and worksheets without incorporating the Scrabble game. Research data were collected using a vocabulary mastery test consisting of 20 multiple-choice questions, each with four answer options. The test assessed three aspects of vocabulary knowledge: meaning, form, and use. Each correct answer was assigned one point, while incorrect answers received zero points. The total scores were subsequently converted to a scale of 0–100. Students were given 45 minutes to complete the post-test. Before the main study, the instrument was piloted with 27 students from class VIII.6 using an initial set of 40 test items. Item validity was examined using the Pearson Product–Moment correlation, which identified 13 items that met the established validity criteria. Seven additional items were included to complete the final 20-item instrument. Reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha yielded a coefficient of 0.669, exceeding the minimum reliability threshold of 0.60 established for this study.

The test results were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the assistance of IBM SPSS Statistics version 25. Descriptive analysis was conducted to summarize students' vocabulary mastery scores based on the mean, median, mode, maximum score, minimum score, and standard deviation. Inferential analysis began with a normality assessment using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, followed by a homogeneity of variance test to determine whether the assumptions required for parametric statistical analysis were satisfied. Hypothesis testing was performed using an independent-samples t-test to compare the mean post-test scores of the experimental and control groups. The significance level was set at 0.05, with a p-value below 0.05 indicating a statistically significant difference in mean scores between the two groups. The results of these analyses were used to evaluate the effect of the Scrabble game on English vocabulary mastery among eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Pasaman.

RESULTS

1. Students' Vocabulary Mastery Test Results

This study involved 64 eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Pasaman during the 2026/2027 academic year, divided into two groups: 32 students from class VIII.3 as the experimental group and 32 students from class VIII.2 as the control group. The experimental group received English vocabulary instruction using the Scrabble game, whereas the control group participated in vocabulary instruction without incorporating the game. Students' vocabulary mastery was assessed through a post-test consisting of 20 multiple-choice questions covering three aspects of vocabulary knowledge: meaning, form, and use. The collected data were subsequently analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to examine differences in learning outcomes between the two groups.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Vocabulary Mastery Post-Test Scores

Statistics	Experimental Group	Control Group
Number of students (N)	32	32
Total score	1,860	1,710
Minimum score	25	25
Maximum score	100	85
Mean	58.13	53.44
Median	60.00	50.00
Standard deviation	20.86	16.92

Table 1 shows that the experimental group obtained a mean score of 58.13, whereas the control group achieved a mean score of 53.44, indicating a difference of 4.69 points between the two groups. The highest score in the experimental group was 100, while the lowest was 25. In comparison, the control group recorded a maximum score of 85 and a minimum score of 25. A difference was also observed in the median scores, with the experimental group achieving 60.00 and the control group obtaining 50.00. The standard deviation of the experimental group was 20.86, higher than that of the control group, which was 16.92. These results indicate greater variability in students' scores within the experimental group. Although the experimental group demonstrated a higher mean score, some students in both groups continued to obtain relatively low scores. Therefore, further inferential statistical analysis was conducted to determine whether the observed difference in mean scores was statistically significant.

2. Distribution of Students' Vocabulary Mastery Categories

The post-test results were further classified into five vocabulary mastery categories based on the score ranges established in the study. This classification was intended to provide a more comprehensive description of students' learning outcomes in each group, allowing differences in vocabulary achievement to be examined beyond the comparison of mean scores. The frequency and percentage distributions of students' vocabulary mastery are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Students' Vocabulary Mastery

Category	Score Range	Experimental Group n (%)	Control Group n (%)
Excellent	81–100	6 (18.75%)	2 (6.25%)
Very Good	61–80	7 (21.88%)	7 (21.88%)
Average	41–60	9 (28.13%)	14 (43.75%)
Fair	21–40	10 (31.25%)	9 (28.13%)
Poor	0–20	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total		32 (100%)	32 (100%)

Table 2 reveals differences in the distribution of vocabulary mastery between the experimental and control groups. Six students (18.75%) in the experimental group were classified in the excellent category, compared with only two students (6.25%) in the control group. Both groups had the same number of students in the very good category, with seven students (21.88%) in each group. Meanwhile, the control group had a larger proportion of students in the average category, comprising 14 students (43.75%), compared with nine students (28.13%) in the experimental group. In the fair category, ten students (31.25%) were identified in the experimental group, slightly more than the nine students (28.13%) in the control group. No students in either group were classified in the poor category.

These distributions indicate that a greater proportion of students in the experimental group achieved the excellent category. Nevertheless, ten students in the experimental group remained in the fair category, representing a slightly higher number than in the control group. Overall, 19 students (59.38%) in the experimental group were classified in the average and fair categories, compared with 23 students (71.88%) in the control group. These findings illustrate the variation in vocabulary mastery across both groups, reflecting the presence of students with relatively high achievement as well as those who continued to demonstrate lower levels of vocabulary knowledge.

3. Normality Test Results

Normality testing was conducted on the post-test scores of the experimental and control groups as part of the preliminary assessment of statistical assumptions. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk tests were employed using a significance level of 0.05. The results of the normality tests for both groups are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Normality Test Results of Post-Test Scores

Group	Statistical Test	Statistic	df	Sig.
Experimental	Kolmogorov–Smirnov	0.142	32	0.102
Control	Kolmogorov–Smirnov	0.160	32	0.037
Experimental	Shapiro–Wilk	0.943	32	0.092
Control	Shapiro–Wilk	0.936	32	0.059

As presented in Table 3, the Shapiro–Wilk test yielded significance values of 0.092 for the experimental group and 0.059 for the control group. Both values exceeded the predetermined significance level of 0.05, indicating that neither group showed a statistically significant departure from normality based on the Shapiro–Wilk test. However, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test produced significance values of 0.102 for the experimental group and 0.037 for the control group. These findings reveal a discrepancy in the normality assessment of the control group, as the Kolmogorov–Smirnov significance value was below 0.05, while the Shapiro–Wilk significance value remained above this threshold. The difference between the results of the two tests was therefore acknowledged as part of the statistical assumption assessment.

4. Homogeneity of Variance Test Results

The homogeneity of variance test was conducted to determine whether the variability of post-test scores was comparable between the experimental and control groups. Levene's Test was employed at a significance level of 0.05. The results of the homogeneity test are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Homogeneity of Variance Test Results

Statistics	Value
Levene Statistic (F)	2.416
df1	1
df2	62
Sig.	0.125

Table 4 indicates that Levene's Test produced a statistic of 2.416 with a significance value of 0.125. Since this value exceeded the predetermined significance level of 0.05, no statistically significant difference in variance was identified between the experimental and control groups. Accordingly, the assumption of equal variances was considered satisfied based on Levene's Test. Therefore, the results reported under the equal variances assumed condition were used to examine the difference in mean post-test scores between the two groups.

5. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis testing was performed using an independent-samples t-test to determine whether the difference in mean vocabulary mastery post-test scores between the experimental and control groups was statistically significant. The analysis was conducted at a significance level of 0.05. The null hypothesis (H_0) stated that there was no statistically significant difference in vocabulary mastery between the two groups, whereas the alternative hypothesis (H_a) proposed that a statistically significant difference existed. The results of the hypothesis test are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Independent-Samples t-Test Results of Students' Vocabulary Mastery

Test Component	Result
Experimental group (N)	32
Control group (N)	32
Experimental group mean	58.13
Control group mean	53.44
Mean difference	4.69
t-value	0.987
Degrees of freedom (df)	62
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.327
Significance level (α)	0.05

As shown in Table 5, the independent-samples t-test produced a calculated t-value of 0.987 with 62 degrees of freedom and a two-tailed significance value of 0.327. Since the obtained p-value was greater than the predetermined significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) could not be rejected. This result indicates that the difference in mean vocabulary mastery scores between the experimental and control groups was not statistically significant. The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) reported in the original thesis also yielded a result of $F(1, 62) = 0.975$, $p = 0.327$, which was consistent with the findings of the independent-samples t-test.

Despite the absence of a statistically significant difference, variations in students' learning outcomes were evident in the descriptive statistics, particularly in the mean scores, maximum scores, median scores, and the number of students classified in the excellent category. The experimental group achieved a mean score that was 4.69 points higher than that of the control group. However, the hypothesis test did not provide sufficient statistical evidence to establish a significant difference in vocabulary mastery following the treatment. Therefore, the findings suggest that the use of the Scrabble game was associated with a descriptively higher mean post-test score, but its statistically significant effect on English vocabulary mastery among eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Pasaman could not be demonstrated based on the statistical analyses conducted.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the use of the Scrabble game did not produce a statistically significant effect on English vocabulary mastery among eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Pasaman. Hypothesis testing using an independent-samples t-test yielded a significance value of 0.327, which exceeded the predetermined significance level of 0.05. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_0) could not be rejected. Nevertheless, the descriptive analysis revealed differences in vocabulary achievement between the two groups. The experimental group obtained a mean score of 58.13, whereas the control group achieved 53.44, representing a difference of 4.69 points. The highest score in the experimental group reached 100, compared with 85 in the control group. Furthermore, six students (18.75%) in the experimental group achieved the excellent category, while only two students (6.25%) in the control group reached the same level. These differences suggest that students who received Scrabble-based instruction demonstrated higher average vocabulary achievement at the descriptive level. However, the observed advantage was not supported by sufficient statistical evidence to conclude that Scrabble resulted in better vocabulary mastery than regular classroom instruction.

The discrepancy between descriptive achievement and statistical significance needs to be understood in relation to the variability in students' abilities. The experimental group recorded a standard deviation of 20.86, higher than the control group's standard deviation of 16.92, indicating greater variation in students' scores within the experimental group. Although some students achieved relatively high scores, ten students (31.25%) in the

experimental group remained in the fair category. This finding suggests that exposure to the same instructional game does not necessarily lead to uniform learning outcomes among students. Differences in prior knowledge, word recognition abilities, and previous learning experiences may have contributed to this variation, although the individual effects of these factors were not specifically measured in the present study. Ellis (2010) explains that research findings should not be interpreted solely on the basis of statistical significance but should also consider the magnitude of observed differences and the characteristics of the data. Similarly, Sullivan & Feinn (2012) emphasize the importance of examining the practical significance of research findings alongside their statistical significance. Therefore, the results of the present study are more appropriately interpreted as indicating a tendency toward different learning outcomes that did not reach statistical significance, rather than as evidence that Scrabble offers no potential benefits for vocabulary instruction.

Vocabulary mastery encompasses several dimensions of linguistic knowledge, and its successful development cannot be determined solely by students' ability to recognize or arrange letters into words. Nation (2022) explains that vocabulary knowledge consists of three fundamental aspects: form, meaning, and use. These dimensions are interconnected and collectively contribute to an individual's ability to understand and employ words appropriately. Schmitt (2014) further distinguishes between vocabulary size, which refers to the number of words a learner knows, and vocabulary depth, which reflects the extent of a learner's understanding of word characteristics and relationships. The Scrabble game provides opportunities for students to recognize letter combinations, recall previously learned words, and construct English vocabulary. However, the ability to form words does not necessarily indicate an adequate understanding of their meanings or appropriate use in sentences. The research instrument employed in this study assessed all three dimensions of vocabulary mastery, whereas the Scrabble activities primarily emphasized word formation, supplemented by teacher explanations and group discussions. This difference between the cognitive demands of the game and the broader dimensions assessed in the vocabulary test may offer one possible explanation for the findings, although the present study did not separately examine the contribution of each vocabulary component.

Students' engagement in game-based activities also needs to be considered in terms of the quality of cognitive processing that occurs during learning. Through the Involvement Load Hypothesis, Laufer & Hulstijn (2001) explain that vocabulary acquisition is associated with cognitive and motivational involvement comprising three components: need, search,

and evaluation. Scrabble activities may encourage students to search for words using available letters and evaluate the accuracy of the words they construct. Nevertheless, these activities do not always require deeper semantic processing, particularly when students focus primarily on completing the game or obtaining higher scores. P. Nation (2024) emphasizes that successful vocabulary learning depends on appropriate attention, repetition, time devoted to learning, elaboration, analysis, and motivation. This perspective suggests that simply incorporating games into classroom instruction does not automatically ensure better vocabulary mastery. Scrabble may offer broader educational benefits when word formation is accompanied by explanations of meaning, sentence construction, recognition of relationships between words, and opportunities to use vocabulary in meaningful contexts. Such activities enable students not only to participate in an enjoyable game but also to develop a deeper understanding of the words they encounter and use.

The findings of the present study differ from those of several previous studies that reported positive outcomes from incorporating Scrabble into vocabulary instruction. Aisyah (2017) identified improvements in elementary school students' English vocabulary mastery following the implementation of Scrabble as an instructional medium. Somantri and Nurhayati (2017) also reported improvements in vocabulary learning outcomes among fifth-grade elementary school students using a pre-experimental research design, with a calculated t-value of 12.65 exceeding the critical t-value of 2.042. Similarly, Fitriya & Fajarina (2023) obtained significant differences between pretest and post-test scores among seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Gudo Jombang through a one-group pretest-posttest design. Hadi (2021) also reported improvements in vocabulary learning outcomes at the senior high school level, with the mean score increasing from 77.9 in the first cycle to 78.9 in the second cycle. These differences in findings should be interpreted by considering the research designs employed in each study. Previous studies generally examined changes in students' abilities within a single group or across instructional cycles, whereas the present study at SMP Negeri 2 Pasaman compared post-test outcomes between an experimental group and a control group. These methodological differences limit the extent to which the findings can be directly compared, particularly when evaluating whether Scrabble-based instruction offers advantages over vocabulary instruction without the game.

Studies conducted by Mahendra et al. (2024) and Qatrunnada & Zuhriyah (2024) provide further insights into the implementation of Scrabble at the junior high school level. Mahendra et al. (2024) involved 21 ninth-grade students in an educational setting serving

children of Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia and identified a statistically significant difference between vocabulary test scores obtained before and after the implementation of Scrabble. Qatrunnada & Zuhriyah (2024) similarly reported improvements in vocabulary mastery among seventh-grade students following the application of the game. Furthermore, a systematic review conducted by Farich & Wahyuni (2025), which examined 30 studies on the use of Scrabble in English vocabulary instruction in Indonesia, found that the game generally had the potential to support vocabulary mastery, learning motivation, student engagement, and vocabulary retention. However, the review also identified several challenges, including students' understanding of game rules, classroom management, and the need for structured instructional guidance. The findings of the present study suggest that the positive outcomes reported in earlier research may not necessarily be reproduced with comparable levels of statistical significance when Scrabble is implemented among different student populations and under different instructional conditions. Variations in student characteristics, instructional treatments, assessment instruments, and research designs may be associated with these differences, although such relationships require further empirical investigation.

The instructional conditions experienced by the control group also deserve consideration when interpreting the relatively small difference in mean post-test scores between the two groups. Students in the control group continued to receive vocabulary instruction through textbooks, worksheets, teacher explanations, comprehension exercises, and instructional feedback. These activities provided opportunities for students to recognize, understand, and use English vocabulary in accordance with the intended learning objectives. Meanwhile, Scrabble-based instruction in the experimental group introduced a different form of vocabulary practice through word construction, group discussions, and collaborative evaluation of word accuracy. Thus, both groups participated in learning experiences designed to develop vocabulary mastery, although the instructional media and activities differed. The mean difference of 4.69 points indicates that these instructional variations did not produce a statistically significant difference in learning achievement. The duration of the treatment, which consisted of seven instructional sessions, should also be taken into consideration. Taheri (2014) demonstrated that the benefits of language games for vocabulary retention may become more apparent through delayed assessments. Since the present study employed only a post-test administered immediately after the treatment, it could not determine the extent to which students retained their vocabulary knowledge over a longer period. The

duration of instruction and opportunities for repeated practice may therefore warrant greater attention in future investigations, without assuming that these factors were the definitive causes of the nonsignificant findings.

The pedagogical implications of this study highlight the importance of positioning Scrabble as part of an instructional strategy that is carefully designed around students' learning needs and vocabulary development objectives. Teachers may incorporate Scrabble to diversify learning experiences, particularly when developing students' word recognition, spelling accuracy, and ability to recall previously learned vocabulary. However, its implementation should be accompanied by follow-up activities that help students understand word meanings and apply vocabulary appropriately in sentences and texts. Teacher explanations, collaborative discussions, contextualized vocabulary exercises, and constructive feedback can be integrated into game-based instruction to provide more structured and meaningful learning opportunities. Such an approach is consistent with P. Nation (2024) perspective on the importance of developing multiple dimensions of vocabulary knowledge, as well as Nation (2024) emphasis on repetition and meaningful information processing in vocabulary learning. The findings also offer a methodological contribution by demonstrating that higher mean achievement does not necessarily indicate a statistically significant instructional advantage. Evaluations of instructional media should therefore be grounded in objective learning outcomes rather than relying solely on the assumption that engaging activities will automatically improve students' abilities. Enjoyable learning experiences remain valuable, but their effectiveness needs to be assessed in relation to the specific competencies that students are expected to develop.

Several limitations should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings of this study. The quasi-experimental design involved two previously established classes without assessing students' initial vocabulary mastery through a pretest. Consequently, the equivalence of the two groups before the treatment could not be established, and differences in post-test scores cannot be attributed entirely to the use of Scrabble. Furthermore, data collection relied on a single post-test, which did not provide information about students' vocabulary development throughout the instructional process or their ability to retain vocabulary after the treatment had ended. Future research is therefore recommended to employ a pretest-posttest control group design, involve a larger number of classes or schools, provide more extensive opportunities for vocabulary practice, and assess word form, meaning, and use in greater detail. Incorporating a delayed post-test could also help

determine the extent to which students are able to retain the vocabulary acquired during game-based instruction.

Overall, the findings reveal that students who received Scrabble-based vocabulary instruction achieved a higher mean score than those in the control group, although the difference was not statistically significant. This result underscores the importance of distinguishing between the pedagogical potential of instructional media and empirical evidence of their effectiveness. Scrabble may still be considered an alternative medium for English vocabulary instruction because its characteristics allow students to practice constructing and recognizing words through collaborative activities. However, the findings of this study do not provide sufficient evidence to conclude that Scrabble-based instruction is more effective than regular vocabulary instruction among eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Pasaman. Effective vocabulary learning requires careful consideration of instructional media, the depth of learning activities, opportunities for practice, and students' individual characteristics. These findings provide a basis for developing game-based vocabulary instruction that not only encourages active student participation but also ensures that each learning activity is meaningfully aligned with the linguistic competencies students are expected to achieve.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, the use of the Scrabble game did not demonstrate a statistically significant effect on English vocabulary mastery among eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Pasaman. The independent-samples t-test yielded a significance value of 0.327, which exceeded the predetermined significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) could not be rejected. Nevertheless, the experimental group that received vocabulary instruction using Scrabble achieved a mean post-test score of 58.13, higher than the control group's mean score of 53.44. This difference of 4.69 points indicates a descriptive advantage in vocabulary achievement, although it does not provide sufficient statistical evidence to establish the effectiveness of Scrabble compared with regular classroom instruction. These findings suggest that incorporating games into language instruction does not necessarily result in statistically significant differences in learning outcomes, even when the activities provide students with opportunities to practice recognizing, constructing, and recalling vocabulary.

This study contributes empirical evidence to the existing literature on game-based vocabulary instruction by demonstrating that Scrabble did not produce a statistically significant advantage in the specific context of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Pasaman. The findings offer practical considerations for teachers in positioning Scrabble as a supplementary instructional medium that can be integrated with explicit explanations of word meanings, contextualized vocabulary practice, and systematic repetition. Future research is recommended to employ experimental designs incorporating both pretest and post-test measurements to provide a more accurate understanding of changes in students' vocabulary mastery. Expanding the sample size, extending the duration of the instructional treatment, conducting more comprehensive instrument validation, and incorporating delayed post-tests to assess vocabulary retention should also be considered. Further investigations addressing these aspects are expected to provide deeper insights into the instructional conditions under which Scrabble may contribute to the sustained development of English vocabulary mastery.

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