



A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF ENHANCING ENGLISH LEARNING MOTIVATION THROUGH MOBILE LEARNING AND GAMIFIED ACTIVITIES

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ABSTRACT. *This study aims to systematically review the role of mobile learning and gamification in enhancing English learning motivation within the ASEAN context. Using the PRISMA 2020 framework, fourteen journal articles published in 2025 were analyzed. The findings reveal that gamification elements such as points, badges, leaderboards, and interactive platforms like Quizizz, Blooket, Kuartet, and gamified MOOCs consistently foster learners' engagement, confidence, and participation. Mobile learning was also found to support autonomy and flexibility, while its effectiveness strongly depends on students' ICT competence and perceived usefulness. Despite these positive outcomes, challenges remain, including limited digital literacy, teacher readiness, and infrastructure barriers, particularly in under-resourced areas. Moreover, although motivation increased significantly, measurable academic performance improvements were less consistent, emphasizing the need for robust pedagogical integration. Overall, this review highlights that mobile learning and gamification are promising strategies to address motivational issues in English learning, but their long-term success requires teacher training, adequate infrastructure, and culturally responsive instructional design.*

Keywords: *Digital English Learning Assessment, Educational Technology, English learning Motivation, Gamification, Mobile Learning*

ABSTRAK. Studi ini bertujuan untuk meninjau secara sistematis peran pembelajaran seluler dan gamifikasi dalam meningkatkan motivasi belajar bahasa Inggris dalam konteks ASEAN. Menggunakan kerangka kerja PRISMA 2020, empat belas artikel jurnal yang diterbitkan pada tahun 2025 dianalisis. Temuan ini mengungkapkan bahwa elemen gamifikasi seperti poin, lencana, papan peringkat, dan platform interaktif seperti Quizizz, Blooket, Kuartet, dan MOOC gamifikasi secara konsisten mendorong keterlibatan, kepercayaan diri, dan partisipasi pelajar. Pembelajaran seluler juga ditemukan mendukung otonomi dan fleksibilitas, sementara efektivitasnya sangat bergantung pada kompetensi TIK dan persepsi kegunaan siswa. Terlepas dari hasil positif ini, tantangan tetap ada, termasuk keterbatasan literasi digital, kesiapan guru, dan hambatan infrastruktur, terutama di wilayah dengan sumber daya terbatas. Lebih lanjut, meskipun motivasi meningkat secara signifikan, peningkatan kinerja akademik yang terukur kurang konsisten, yang menekankan perlunya integrasi pedagogis yang kuat. Secara keseluruhan, tinjauan ini menyoroti bahwa pembelajaran seluler dan gamifikasi merupakan strategi yang menjanjikan untuk mengatasi masalah motivasi dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, tetapi keberhasilan jangka panjangnya membutuhkan pelatihan guru, infrastruktur yang memadai, dan desain instruksional yang responsif terhadap budaya.

Kata Kunci: *Penilaian Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris Digital, Teknologi Pendidikan, Motivasi Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, Gamifikasi, Pembelajaran Seluler*

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INTRODUCTION

Motivation is one of the most important factors in English language learning. Students who are motivated are more active, keep trying when they face challenges, and usually achieve better results. However, many English learners still experience low motivation, especially when classes use traditional methods and lack interactive activities. This situation makes motivation a serious challenge in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. Because of this, it is important to look for new strategies, and one way is to conduct a systematic review that collects and organizes findings from many recent studies.

In recent years, researchers have given attention to mobile learning and gamification as two promising approaches. Mobile learning gives flexibility and supports independent learning because students can use smartphones or tablets to study anytime and anywhere (Jayanta et al., 2025; Chulerk et al., 2025). In addition, several studies show that mobile platforms can influence student acceptance and digital skills in learning English (Loi & Thoa, 2025; De Vega et al., 2025). On the other hand, gamification applies elements like points, badges, or challenges in the classroom. It has been shown to improve engagement, ownership, and motivation when applied through tools such as MOOCs, Quizizz, or Blooket (Slamet et al., 2025; Suhartoyo et al., 2025; Quyen & Nguyen, 2025).

However, although these studies report positive results, most of them only focus on one side, either mobile learning or gamification. For example, Basthomi et al. (2025) studied gamification in course design, while Nguyen et al. (2025) studied social media and learner agency, and Mayuroh et al. (2025) focused on online group collaboration. Each study gives useful insights, but there is still no comprehensive review that explains how mobile learning and gamification together can improve motivation in English learning. This is the research gap that needs to be addressed.

Therefore, this systematic review analyzes fifteen recent articles published in 2025 that discuss mobile learning and gamified activities in English education. The aim is to provide a clear picture of how these two approaches influence student motivation, to identify the platforms and game strategies most commonly used, and to give recommendations for the effective use of technology in English learning.



The argument of this review is supported by Self-Determination Theory, which explains that students feel more motivated when their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Mobile learning supports autonomy by giving freedom and flexibility in learning, while gamification supports competence and relatedness through interactive challenges, rewards, and peer engagement. Moreover, when these two approaches are combined, they are likely to give stronger support for motivation compared to using them separately. For this reason, the main research question of this systematic review is “What is the role of mobile learning and gamified activities in enhancing students’ motivation to learn English? ”.

METHODS

The study uses Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 as a reference in conducting systematic literature reviews. A PRISMA checklist of 38 criteria is used to ensure transparency and traceability at each stage of systematic review. The research approach used is descriptive comparison as presented by Check & Schutt (2012), Creswell (2014) and Sharp (2003). Since this study aims to describe and explain the use of mobile learning and gamification activities in enhancing English-learning motivation, it serves as a systematic attempt to show how these two approaches can contribute differently than conventional methods. The sources of information used in this study came from electronic journals accessed through the main database ERIC, with articles selected according to established inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Phase 1 : Identification Phases

This early stage of systematic review is done by identifying the relevant works. This process includes the collection of articles based on established inclusion and exclusion criteria. The criteria include articles published in 2025, journal articles, from ASEAN countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and Vietnam, and available in full text form on the ERIC database. Based on these criteria, a total of 38 articles were obtained. Next, the articles are sorted according to their research focus, Mobile Learning, so 14 relevant papers were selected for further analysis.



Table 1. Source of Journals

Journal Source	Quantity	Keywords
ERIC	130 articles	Digital English learning assessment

Phase 2 : Screening Phase

At this stage, the articles obtained from the identification process are further selected based on the title, abstract and content of the article. This process aims to ensure that each article is in line with the research focus, namely the use of mobile learning in English learning. In this study, no duplicate articles were found. thus, all the articles that have been identified remain for analysis at a later stage.

Phase 3 : Eligibility Phase

Collected articles are then reviewed in the third phase (Eligibility) to ensure that each article meets a set inclusion criteria. This stage is a very important step for the data being analyzed to be truly relevant and quality.

Table 2. Inclusion Criteria

Inclusion
Gamification, mobile learning
Research methodologies quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method
Sample or respondent various levels of education
Research conducted in ASEAN countries (Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam)
Journal articles published in 2025

The selected articles focus on research that leverages mobile learning, to support vocabulary and improve the motivation of students to learn English. All articles are certified according to criteria in the table above.

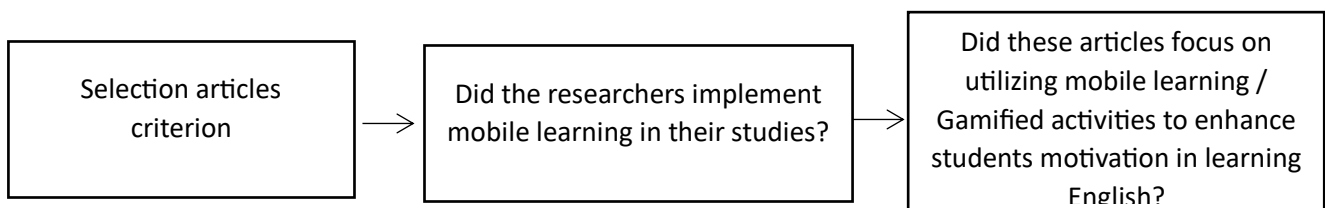


Figure 1. Assessment criterion in choosing articles



Phase 4 : Exclusion Phase

After checking the qualifying articles in phase three, other articles have been excluded from systematic literary reviews. The exemption criteria for the article are set out in Table 3, exemptions such as feasibility measures, which is essential to ensure that researchers collect high-quality data.

Table 3. Exclusion Criteria

Exclusion
Mobile learning was not implemented in English language learning The studies did not focus on motivation or gamified activities Teaching and learning that did not use Mobile Learning platforms Articles not published in 2025 Studies not conducted in ASEAN countries (Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam)

There are 14 articles that provide information about the role of mobile learning and Gamified Activities in enhancing English learning motivation. Most of the articles analysed using both qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Quantity of Journals based on Research Design

Research Design	Quantity
Quantitative Design	6
Qualitative Design	1
Mixed-Method Design	7

Figure 2 describes the complete procedure from phase one to phase four more clearly based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) 2020 checklist used in the systematic literature review.

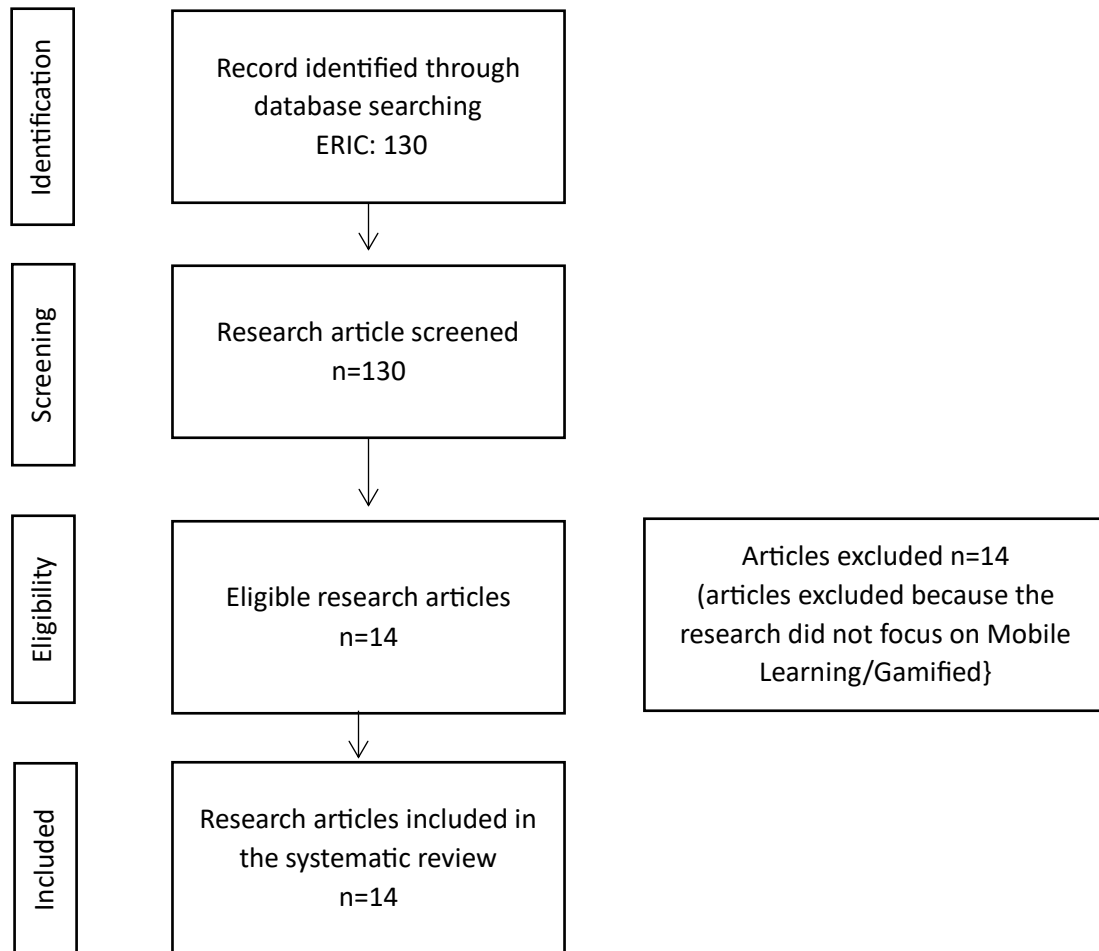


Figure 2. Stream Chart of the Research Article Selection Process

RESULTS

The findings of the selected research papers are reviewed in this section. Following the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 14 articles were identified as appropriate for this systematic review. These studies examined the role of mobile learning and gamified activities in enhancing students' motivation in English language learning. The main characteristics of these studies are summarized in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Main Characteristics, Perspectives, and Perceptions of Using Mobile Learning and Gamified Activities in Enhancing English Learning Motivation.

Authors	Territory	Study Purpose	Participants	Discussion (Findings)
EJ1479003	Indonesia	To analyze the need for Smart System Adaptive Mobile Learning (SSAML) with gamification in English learning	Elementary students and teachers	Found low digital competence and resilience; SSAML with gamification was recommended to improve feedback, engagement, and motivation.
EJ1464027	Indonesia	To examine ICT competence and its influence on mobile learning adoption	275 ESP university students	More than 60% were competent in ICT; mobile learning acceptance was high but pedagogical and digital literacy challenges reduced motivational outcomes.
EJ1470552	Indonesia	To promote autonomous learning through a gamified MOOC platform	27 ESP learners	The gamified MOOC improved self-management and motivation, though sustaining motivation and providing quality feedback remained challenges.
EJ1458615	Indonesia	To assess the use of Quizziz as a gamified reading assessment tool	High school EFL students	Quizziz increased engagement and reading practice; competitive and interactive elements motivated learners.
EJ1480719	Indonesia	To test a game-based application in literacy and cognitive learning	Junior high school students	The Kuartet app enhanced learning ownership, digital literacy, and motivation to learn English.
EJ1474273	Indonesia	To analyze students' needs in designing gamified English proficiency courses	Senior high school students	Students preferred gamification features (points, badges, leaderboards), showing potential for boosting engagement and motivation.
EJ1475803	Vietnam	To evaluate the effectiveness of Blooket for non-English majors	University students	Blooket increased engagement and enjoyment, but limitations included time, internet stability, and goal alignment.



EJ1479174	Indonesia	To explore the influence of social media on students' attitudes and agency	University students	EFL	Social media supported learner autonomy and agency, indirectly improving motivation in English learning.
EJ1473964	Malaysia	To identify factors affecting LMS acceptance in English learning	University students		Perceived usefulness and ease of use influenced LMS adoption; adoption correlated with sustained motivation.
EJ1480014	Indonesia	To improve MIL skills through experiential game-based learning	Secondary school students		Experiential learning activities enhanced literacy, engagement, and motivation in EFL classrooms.
EJ1478002	Malaysia	To integrate active learning and smart classroom features in hybrid English courses	University students		Hybrid courses with active learning improved student participation and motivation.
EJ1479825	Indonesia (rural)	To examine online collaboration on rural students' learning motivation	Rural high school students		International small-group collaboration increased confidence, intercultural competence, and motivation in English.
EJ1471164	Indonesia	To use Quizziz (MALL) as a formative assessment for CEFR B1	University learners	EFL	Quizziz supported formative assessment, improved English competence, and motivated learners toward CEFR B1.
EJ1473655	Indonesia	To investigate gamified distance learning in higher education	University students		Gamified distance learning improved creativity, participation, and motivation.

DISCUSSIONS

From the 14 studies, several consistent findings were identified. Most of the research emphasized that gamified elements (e.g., points, badges, leaderboards, game apps like Blooket, Quizziz, Kuartet, and gamified MOOCs) significantly enhanced students' motivation and engagement in English learning. For example, Quizziz-based studies (Nguyen et al., 2025; Andayani et al., 2025) highlighted how competitive and immediate-feedback features increased student participation and confidence.

Another important finding was that mobile learning acceptance depends on ICT competence and perceived usefulness. Studies from Indonesia and Malaysia (De Vega et al., 2025; Lim et al., 2025) revealed that students with higher digital skills and positive attitudes toward LMS and mobile tools were more motivated to sustain their learning. Conversely, limited digital literacy and insufficient teacher preparation reduced the potential motivational effects.

Studies also showed that formative and experiential learning approaches within gamified platforms supported both literacy and language outcomes. For instance, Rizal et al. (2025) demonstrated that experiential game-based activities improved media literacy alongside engagement, while hybrid and collaborative learning contexts (Ahmad et al., 2025; Prasetyo et al., 2025) promoted participation, intercultural awareness, and motivation.

Despite these positive outcomes, challenges remained. Several studies noted issues with the sustainability of motivation (Slamet et al., 2025), infrastructure and connectivity limitations (Pham et al., 2025), and the need for teacher ICT training (Jayanta et al., 2025). Furthermore, while motivation was consistently improved, the evidence of direct and measurable gains in academic performance was less uniform, depending heavily on instructional design and duration of intervention.

In summary, the synthesis of these studies shows that mobile learning and gamified activities play a crucial role in fostering English learning motivation across ASEAN contexts. However, their success relies on adequate digital infrastructure, teacher readiness, and thoughtful integration of gamification into pedagogical design.

CONCLUSIONS



This systematic review synthesized the findings of fourteen research articles focusing on the integration of mobile learning and gamified activities in English language education across ASEAN contexts. The analysis revealed that gamification elements such as points, badges, leaderboards, interactive applications like Quizziz, Blooket, and Kuartet, as well as gamified MOOCs and distance learning systems consistently enhanced learners' motivation and engagement. These tools provided opportunities for interactive practice, immediate feedback, and competitive yet enjoyable learning experiences, which helped foster greater student confidence and participation.

At the same time, the review identified several challenges that may limit the long-term effectiveness of these approaches. Issues of digital literacy, inadequate teacher preparation, and technological infrastructure, particularly in rural or under-resourced areas, remain significant barriers. Moreover, while most studies confirmed positive outcomes in terms of motivation, the evidence of direct and measurable improvements in academic performance was less consistent. This suggests that motivation alone is not sufficient without a solid pedagogical framework and meaningful integration of gamified tasks into the learning process.

In light of these findings, this review concludes that mobile learning and gamification represent promising and innovative strategies for enhancing English learning motivation, especially in regions where traditional classroom methods often fail to fully engage learners. However, the successful implementation of these strategies requires more than simply adopting new technologies. It also demands systematic teacher training, investment in digital infrastructure, and carefully designed instructional models that align gamification with authentic language learning objectives.

For future directions, more longitudinal and experimental studies are recommended to examine the sustainability of motivational gains and their translation into long-term academic achievement. Researchers are also encouraged to explore the comparative effectiveness of different gamification elements, as well as the role of contextual moderators such as age, proficiency level, and cultural learning environments. By addressing these aspects, future work can provide more concrete guidelines for maximizing the pedagogical value of mobile and gamified learning in English language education.

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