



ENGLISH TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES IN UTILIZING GAMIFICATION TO ENHANCE LANGUAGE LEARNERS' ENGAGEMENT AND MOTIVATION: BASES FOR PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research aimed to formulate a program recommendation from the experiences of teachers in utilizing gamification to enhance language learners' engagement and motivation in the Schools District of Nueva Valencia North, Division of Guimaras. The findings revealed that English teachers viewed gamification as a learning tool that transformed lessons into interactive classroom, promoted collaboration, and created a positive learning environment. They had positive views about utilizing gamification considering that it fostered sense of achievement, made learning enjoyable, and boosted active participation. English teachers experienced challenges such as limited resources, lack of time in planning gamified activities, problems in classroom management, and misalignment of objectives to the lesson. The practices that they employed were incorporating rewards system, immediate giving of feedback, encouraging collaboration, integrating various game designs, and setting clear goals and challenges. Thus, the study recommended information and communications technology-supported gamified English instruction program.

Keywords: *Gamification, English Teachers, Learners' Engagement, Learners' Motivation, Program Recommendation*

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INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary educational landscape, young learners are increasingly exposed to the internet and online games. These digital technologies play a major role in facilitating learning, as learners easily captivate content presented through videos and interactive games. In this context, the integration of gamification as a teaching strategy in schools, particularly in language instruction, may boost learners' ability to comprehend and retain lessons. Moreover, the use of gamified approaches can support teachers by making the teaching process more meaningful and effective while simultaneously increasing learners' interests and engagement in their learning activities.

Educational games are developed to achieve practical learning outcomes and instructional objectives. Through active participation in gameplay, learners are able to understand the concepts being taught while accomplishing the tasks embedded within the game. In this sense, the teaching-learning process is completed through the successful fulfillment of the game's objectives (Chen, 2022).

Gamification has emerged as a prominent trend in mobile technology and education, utilizing game elements to encourage desired behaviors and promote shared learning outcomes. This approach is grounded in constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of experiential learning through social interaction with the environment. Regardless of the extent of game-based technology applied in a learning context, organizational learning remains associated with strategic goals and purposeful outcomes. For example, word games enhance semantic and phonological skills by enabling learners to

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INSTABRIGHT e-GAZETTE

ISSN: 2704-3010

Volume VII, Issue III

February 2026

Available online at <https://www.instabrightgazette.com>



establish meaningful relationships among words, while also expanding vocabulary and improving language proficiency (Zainuddin, 2020).

As a result, gamification is increasingly recognized as an effective instructional strategy due to its ability to create highly engaging classroom experiences. Digital games in education have sought to demonstrate the positive effects of gamification, particularly in enhancing learner engagement, motivation, and social interaction, while allowing students to immerse themselves in experiential learning. In recent years, gamification has generated widespread interest among scholars and research communities, prompting continuous exploration of its significance in the educational design process and its potential to create more engaging and effective learning programs (Smiderle, 2020).

However, despite technological advancements and the significant contributions of gamification to teaching and learning, sustaining engagement through gamified pedagogies remains a challenge for many English teachers in the District of Nueva Valencia, Guimaras, particularly in terms of effectively integrating gamification into the teaching-learning process. Furthermore, as gamification is still considered a relatively novel concept in the field of education, English teachers continue to encounter challenges and difficulties that must be addressed in order to create a more meaningful, enjoyable, and productive learning environment.

In view of these circumstances, the researcher was inspired to undertake a study aimed at exploring the lived experiences of elementary English teachers in employing gamification to enhance learner engagement and motivation in language learning.

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Moreover, through a comprehensive critical review, evaluation, synthesis, and analysis of the significance of gamification, this study establishes an agenda for future discussions on addressing inconsistencies, strengthening relevant theoretical foundations, and advancing the practice of gamification in educational settings.

In addition, this research provides a broad perspective on empirical studies that represent current trends in the field. It also offers valuable guidance for present and future researchers in formulating theoretical propositions based on existing evaluation practices, particularly in addressing the theoretical foundations of gamification research.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research method, research design, participants of the study, sampling design, research instrument, validity of the research instrument, data gathering procedure, and data analysis used in this study. The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of elementary English teachers in utilizing gamification to enhance language learners' engagement and motivation.

Research Method

This study utilized a qualitative research method employing a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of elementary English teachers in using gamification to enhance learners' engagement and motivation in language learning.

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The phenomenological process began with identifying and defining the phenomenon to be investigated. Data were collected through in-depth phenomenological interviews with participants who shared their personal experiences related to the use of gamification in the teaching and learning process. Thereafter, the gathered data were analyzed following Moustakas' phenomenological data analysis procedure (Younas et al., 2025).

The analysis began with epoché or bracketing, during which the researcher consciously set aside personal assumptions, biases, and preconceived understandings about the phenomenon. This was done to ensure that the analysis remained grounded in the participants' accounts.

Subsequently, the researcher reflected on his own description and understanding of the phenomenon as observed over the years in order to recognize personal viewpoints while remaining attentive to the essential meanings derived from the participants' lived experiences.

Research Design

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of elementary English teachers in utilizing gamification to enhance language learners' engagement and motivation.

According to Creswell and Creswell (2021), the phenomenological study examines human experiences through the detailed descriptions of the people being studied and understands the experiences as well as the commonality of experience within a particular group being studied. The fundamental goal of the approach is to construct a description of the nature of a particular phenomenon.

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In this study, a phenomenological method was used to build a deeper understanding of experiences of elementary English teachers in utilizing gamification to enhance language learners' engagement and motivation.

Participants of the Study

The participants in the study were the purposively selected eighteen (18) elementary English teachers at the Schools District of Nueva Valencia North in the Division of Guimaras, of whom three (3) were Grade 2 teachers, three (3) were Grade 3 teachers, four (4) were Grade 4 teachers, four (4) were Grade 5 teachers, and four (4) were Grade 6 teachers.

Sampling Design

Purposive sampling was utilized in the selection of the study participants.

Nikolopoulou (2023) defined purposive sampling as a group of non-probability sampling techniques in which participants are intentionally selected based on specific characteristics that are essential to the research. This means that the researcher deliberately chooses individuals who are considered most suitable for providing the information needed in the study.

Also known as judgmental sampling, purposive sampling relies on the researcher's judgment in identifying and selecting individuals, cases, or events that can best contribute to the attainment of the study's objectives.

Research Instrument

The research instrument used in the study was a researcher-made interview guide schedule.

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The validated interview guide schedule consisted of five (5) questions. The questions focused on the views, challenges encountered, and the practices of elementary English teachers in utilizing gamification to enhance language learners' engagement and motivation.

Validity of the Research Instrument

Before determining the validity of the researcher-made interview schedule, the adviser, the dean of the graduate school, and a panel of jurors selected for their expertise in research, testing and assessment, and English were asked to evaluate each question for possible review and revision.

Validity pertains to the appropriateness, meaningfulness, accuracy, and usefulness of the inferences made by a researcher. In relation to content-related evidence of validity, it is important that the content and format of a research instrument are aligned with the definitions of the variables and the characteristics of the participants to be measured. Such alignment is essential in establishing the validity of questionnaire items and in ensuring that the instrument effectively measures the intended constructs (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

The comments, corrections, and suggestions provided by the panel of validators regarding the interview schedule were carefully considered using the appropriate form developed by Good and Scates.

Data Gathering Procedures

Permission to conduct the study was secured from the adviser, the dean of the graduate school, the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent, and the Office of the District Supervisors.

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Upon receiving approval, the researcher prepared and submitted a letter requesting permission to conduct the research study. A schedule convenient for the participants was then arranged to ensure that the conduct of the study would not disrupt regular classes. The participants were requested to respond to the questions contained in the validated interview guide. The researcher assured them that their responses would be treated with utmost confidentiality. All comprehensive and in-depth information gathered during the interviews was subsequently transcribed, interpreted, and analyzed.

Prior to the conduct of the interviews, the participants were provided with detailed information regarding the objectives of the study, the procedures involved, the possible risks, and the expected benefits.

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and the participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty.

The researcher also ensured the confidentiality of the participants' personal information. Identifying details were either removed or replaced with codes in order to preserve anonymity, and all sensitive data were securely stored to prevent unauthorized access.

Data Analyses

All the information gathered in the study was analyzed using the thematic approach.

Thematic analysis is a method of examining qualitative data in a systematic manner in order to identify recurring patterns or themes. As a widely used approach in qualitative research, it allows researchers to interpret and understand the underlying meanings

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embedded in data collected from interviews, focus group discussions, and other qualitative sources (Braun & Clarke, 2023).

The primary purpose of thematic analysis is to identify themes or patterns within the data that are considered significant or meaningful and to use these themes in addressing the research questions or in explaining a particular issue.

This process involves summarizing, analyzing, and interpreting the data gathered in order to derive meaningful insights from them.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the findings of the study. It presents the descriptive-qualitative analyses of the experiences of elementary English teachers in utilizing gamification to enhance language learners' engagement and motivation for school year 2025-2026.

Specifically, this study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the views of English teachers in utilizing gamification to enhance language learners' engagement?
2. What are the views of English teachers in utilizing gamification to enhance language learners' motivation?
3. What are the challenges encountered by English teachers in utilizing gamification to enhance language learners' engagement and motivation?
4. What are the practices of English teachers in utilizing gamification to enhance language learners' engagement?

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5. What are the practices of English teachers in utilizing gamification to enhance language learners' motivation?

6. What program recommendation can be proposed based on the results of the study?

The findings of the study revealed that elementary English teachers hold positive views on the use of gamification to enhance language learners' engagement, as they believe that gamification could transform lessons into interactive classroom experiences, promote collaboration, and create a positive learning environment in which these qualities are not usually seen in traditional classroom setting.

Elementary English teachers had positive views about utilizing gamification to enhance language learners' motivation because they believed that gamification fostered sense of achievement, made learning enjoyable, and boosted active participation of learners.

By turning learning into a more engaging and rewarding experience, gamification helps learners feel more competent and confident, which in turn stimulates intrinsic motivation and sustains involvement in classroom activities.

Teachers who utilized gamification experienced challenges like limited resources, limited time to plan gamified activities, problems in classroom management, and misalignment of objectives with the lesson.

Utilized gamification to enhance language learners' engagement, teachers incorporated rewards system, integrated various game designs, and encouraged collaboration among learners.

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Teachers applied gamification in to enhance language learners’ motivation as they set clear goals and challenges, utilized challenging games, and implemented reward systems and immediate giving of feedback.

While gamification enhances engagement and motivation, its effective use requires careful planning, sufficient resources, and classroom management skills. These challenges highlight the need for professional development, resource support, and strategic lesson design.

When combined, these strategies create a positive and dynamic learning environment where learners are more engaged, motivated, and empowered to take ownership of their learning.

Based on the mentioned results of the interview, elementary English teachers generally hold positive views on utilizing gamification as a strategy to engage and motivate language learners.

The results indicated that gamification contributed to more effective language instruction which explained why teachers integrated it into their classroom practices. To enhance learners’ engagement and motivation, teachers utilized a variety of gamified learning practices and elements.

However, despite the positive perceptions, English teachers encountered several challenges that hindered the consistent and effective implementation of gamification. Challenges included limited resources, insufficient time to plan gamified activities, difficulties

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in classroom management, and the misalignment of instructional objectives with lesson content. In response to the challenges, the researcher proposed a program recommendation.

TeachPlay: An ICT-Supported Gamified English Instruction

Program for Elementary Learners

Rationale

The integration of gamification supported by Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in English instruction offers a promising approach to address learners' engagement and motivation in Philippine elementary schools.

Based on the study, English teachers viewed gamification positively as it transformed traditional lessons into interactive experiences, promoted collaboration, and nurtured positive classroom atmosphere. When combined with ICT tools, gamification became more accessible, visually engaging, and responsive to learners' needs.

However, teachers also encountered challenges such as limited resources, insufficient time for planning, classroom management concerns, and difficulty in aligning gamified activities with lesson objectives.

Considering the views and challenges, this program is designed to maximize the benefits of gamification while addressing the challenges through structured planning, appropriate ICT tools, and capacity-building activities for teachers.

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General Objective

This program aims to enhance English language learners' engagement and motivation in Philippine elementary schools through effective integration of gamification strategies supported by ICT.

Program Description

"TeachPlay" focuses on the use of accessible ICT tools such as tablets, computers, smartphones (where allowed), projectors, and internet-based or offline educational applications.

Teachers will integrate gamified elements—such as points, badges, levels, and challenges—into English lessons while ensuring alignment with curriculum competencies. The program emphasizes collaboration, goal setting, and feedback to sustain learners' engagement and motivation.

Matrix of Activities

Activity	Description	ICT Tools/ Resources	Persons Involved	Expected Output
Teacher Orientation and Training	Conduct a workshop on ICT-supported gamification strategies, lesson alignment, and classroom management	Laptop, projector, presentation slides, sample gamified apps (e.g., quiz platforms, digital flashcards)	School head, ICT coordinator, English teachers	Trained teachers with basic gamification and ICT skills
Conduct Learning Action Cell (LAC) on Lesson	Teachers design English lesson plans integrating game	Computers, lesson plan templates,	English teachers	Gamified ICT-based lesson plans

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Activity	Description	ICT Tools/ Resources	Persons Involved	Expected Output
Preparation with Integration of Gamification	elements aligned with MELCs	internet/ offline resources		
Implementation of Gamified English Lessons	Teachers implement gamified activities focusing on rewards, collaboration, and challenges	Tablets, smartphones, projector, interactive games	Teachers and learners	Increased learner participation and engagement
Use of Digital Reward and Feedback System	Apply points, badges, and instant feedback through ICT tools during lessons	Gamified platforms, digital scoreboards	Teachers and learners	Motivated learners and improved classroom interaction
Classroom Management Support	Apply structured rules and group-based gamified activities to manage behavior	Timer apps, group tracking tools	Teachers	Improved classroom management
Monitoring and Reflection	Conduct regular reflection meetings to discuss challenges and improvements	Online/ offline reflection forms	Teachers, school head	Improved strategies and refined implementation
Program Evaluation	Assess learners' engagement and motivation after implementation	Surveys, observation checklists	Teachers, school administrators	Evaluation report and recommendations

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Program Framework

INPUT

The following are the foundational elements needed for the successful implementation of the program:

1. Human Resources
 - o Elementary English teachers
 - o School head and ICT coordinator
 - o Learners
2. Instructional Resources
 - o ICT tools (computers, tablets, projectors, smartphones where applicable)
 - o Gamified digital platforms and applications (online and offline)
 - o Learning modules aligned with MELCs
3. Teacher Competencies
 - o Knowledge of gamification strategies
 - o Basic ICT skills
 - o Classroom management strategies
4. Support Systems
 - o School administrative support
 - o Time allotment for lesson planning
 - o Available school ICT infrastructure

PROCESS

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Activities and strategies to be undertaken when implementing the program are the following:

1. Capacity Building
 - o Teacher training on ICT integration and gamification strategies
 - o Orientation on lesson alignment and classroom management
2. Instructional Design
 - o Development of ICT-based gamified English lesson plans
 - o Integration of rewards, challenges, collaboration, and clear goals
3. Implementation
 - o Delivery of gamified English lessons using ICT tools
 - o Application of digital reward systems and immediate feedback
4. Monitoring and Support
 - o Classroom observation and mentoring
 - o Regular reflection and sharing of best practices
5. Evaluation
 - o Assessment of learners' engagement and motivation
 - o Review of challenges and program effectiveness

OUTPUTS

The following are the direct results of the program implementation:

1. ICT-integrated gamified English lesson plans
2. Teachers competent in applying gamification strategies

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- 3. Increased learner participation and collaboration
- 4. Organized classroom activities using gamified systems

OUTCOMES / IMPACT

These are the long-term effects of the program:

- 1. Enhanced learners' engagement in English classes
- 2. Improved learners' motivation and enjoyment in language learning
- 3. Positive classroom learning environment
- 4. Sustainable integration of ICT and gamification in English instruction
- 5. Improved teaching practices aligned with 21st-century learning skills

CONCLUSION

In view of the findings and insights obtained from the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

Learners are encouraged to actively participate in gamified activities with enthusiasm and a growth mindset. They should engage fully in collaborative tasks, communicate effectively with peers, and embrace challenges as opportunities to develop new skills.

English teachers are encouraged to thoughtfully integrate gamification into their lessons to enhance learners' engagement and motivation. They should design activities that balance fun with meaningful learning objectives, incorporating reward systems, immediate giving of feedback, and game elements such as levels, challenges, and narratives. Facilitating

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collaborative tasks can promote teamwork and social interaction. Clearly defining goals ensures that learners understand the purpose of each activity.

School heads are encouraged to support and promote the integration of gamification within the school's teaching and learning practices. They should provide teachers with access to resources, training, and professional development opportunities to effectively design and implement gamified activities.

DepEd officials are encouraged to provide policy support and guidance for the effective integration of gamification in schools to enhance learners' engagement and motivation. They should allocate resources for teachers' training, digital tools, reliable internet connectivity, and other materials necessary for implementing gamified learning strategies.

Parents are encouraged to support their children's learning by understanding and engaging with gamified activities used in the classroom. They can motivate their children to participate actively, celebrate their achievements, and encourage positive attitude toward challenges and learning tasks.

Future researchers should conduct further research about gamification in a wider scope.

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INSTABRIGHT e-GAZETTE

ISSN: 2704-3010

Volume VII, Issue III

February 2026

Available online at <https://www.instabrightgazette.com>



research

review,

30,

100326.

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2020.100326>.



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