



## Students' Perceptions on Using Vocabulary Journal for Mastering Vocabulary: A Descriptive Study at SMAN 12 Padang

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### Abstract

This study aimed to examine students' perceptions on using vocabulary journal for mastering vocabulary. There were five aspects investigated, namely the attractiveness, effectiveness, relevance, perceived motivation, and vocabulary aspects. The participants were 65 students of grade XII at Science Program SMAN 12 Padang to whom a questionnaire was given. The data of this research were analyzed using descriptive quantitative method. The results from questionnaire revealed that students had relatively positive perceptions on the use of vocabulary journal for mastering vocabulary. This is shown by the average mean of the questionnaire responses, it was 3.03 out of 4.00. Thus, the findings show that the majority of the students viewed that learning new vocabulary using vocabulary journal was fun and could help them retain the new vocabulary they have learned. Students thought that vocabulary journal is so appropriate to be used in English class and motivated them in learning new words. Most of the students also felt that vocabulary journal helps them in comprehending the use of a certain words and spell the words correctly. It can be inferred that the use of vocabulary journal for vocabulary learning is attractive, effective, relevance, perceived motivation, and promote all the vocabulary aspects.

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## INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is one of the essential aspects that must be mastered by the students in learning English. Vocabulary is a fundamental ability when learning a language and has an important role in how students communicate, write, listen, and read in English. Pikulski (2004) defines vocabulary as a group of terms that are understood, employed, or prescribed by a particular person or group of people. It suggests that all word humans use in any given context is a part of their vocabulary. Moreover, Lehr (2004)

stated that the term vocabulary refers to the understanding of words and their meanings in both spoken and written language, as well as in productive and receptive forms utilized in speaking, reading, listening, and writing.

However, according to Susanto (2021) there are still many students who have difficulty in mastering vocabulary. Most of the time, the students struggled to retain the words they had learned from one lesson to the next. Some students were able to recognize the phrase in its written or spoken form, but they were unable to translate its meaning without the teacher's assistance. One of the factors that causes this problem is the fact that the word or phrase they hear differs from how it is spelled. Another factor is that students rarely read English-language text or material, which results in their relatively limited vocabulary. In addition, strategy used by the teacher also becomes the factor that causes this problem. Uninteresting learning strategy cause students to do not enjoy the learning process, making it difficult for them to learn new vocabulary in English. As a result, the teaching and learning processes become ineffective.

Thus, an effective option to solve the problems above is to learn vocabulary in the classroom through interactive strategy. If the teachers employ interactive strategy in teaching vocabulary, it will make studying more enjoyable for students and information can be readily transformed. In line with this, one of the suitable strategies is by using vocabulary journal. Schmitt (2002) stated that vocabulary is most effectively maintained through repeated exposures to words, and vocabulary journals fulfill this purpose because students have to return to the words which they previously wrote in order to add a few additional details. Moreover, Schutz (2005) in Nin and Dhamotharan (2019) added that the usage of a vocabulary journal is a practical and effective strategy because it is effective and gives students who demand autonomy and independence the freedom to customize their journal by adding any information that they think necessary.

There were several previous research about vocabulary journal. Turnuk (2018) conducted case study research that aims to investigate the impact of using vocabulary journals on pupil achievement and learner autonomy in vocabulary learning. Next, Sa'adatuddaroen (2019) found that daily journal vocabulary can help students increase their vocabulary. Students' vocabulary proficiency as well as their motivation and enthusiasm for learning English vocabulary both significantly improved. Furthermore, Kee, Li. and Ting, J. (2019) conducted a study with action research design that aims to look into the effects of using a vocabulary journal on students' vocabulary learning as well as the effects of vocabulary journals on students' involvement in vocabulary learning. Then, Widiyanti (2022) conducted experimental research that aims to know the significant influence of using vocabulary journal strategy in students' vocabulary mastery. The results of this study revealed that there is significant influence of the use of vocabulary journal on students' vocabulary mastery.

Furthermore, there were some gaps from these four previous studies. Most of them only focused on the effect of vocabulary journal towards students' vocabulary mastery. They did not discuss how the students perceive the use of vocabulary journal for mastering vocabulary. Furthermore, the researcher had an observation in SMAN 12 Padang, and based on this observation the researcher found that one of English teacher uses vocabulary journal strategy in teaching English. Additionally, based on

the observation, the teacher stated that she has been implementing this strategy in teaching for about six years and she claimed that the student's vocabulary understanding increases when she implements this strategy in the classroom. Thus, the researcher was interested in verifying this by finding out students' opinions while studying by using vocabulary journal.

## **METHOD**

The research design of this study was descriptive quantitative research. The population of this research was 12th grade students of Science Program at SMAN 12 Padang. Purposive sampling was used in this study to choose the sample. This study used purposive sampling because the researcher was limited to use two of the five classes of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students of Science Program at SMAN 12 Padang. The sample for this research were the classes of XII Science 2 and XII Science 3 with a total of 65 students. These two classes were chosen because they had previously used vocabulary journal in learning English. Thus, the sample of this research were two classes with a total of 65 students.

A questionnaire was used by the researcher to collect data regarding students' perceptions about the use of vocabulary journal for mastering vocabulary at SMAN 12 Padang. Moreover, a closed-ended questionnaire with 30 statements was used to examine the students' perceptions. A Likert scale with four interval scales was used to produce all of the questions the respondents had to respond to: "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly Disagree." A four-point Likert scale was used to score the questionnaire.

Furthermore, content validity was employed in this study. The validity of the content was validated by a lecturer in English Language and Literature Department of UNP. In addition, the researcher used Cronbach's Alpha and SPSS version 20 to evaluate the reliability of the questionnaire. The Cronbach's Alpha for the questionnaire of this study was .705, it means that the questionnaire has high reliability. In short, the questionnaire in this study can be employed as an instrument.

Moreover, the researcher created questionnaire in form of Google form about students' perceptions on the use of vocabulary journal for mastering vocabulary. Then, the sample classes were given the questionnaire, with each student receiving the same questions. The students completed the questions in about 30 minutes. After that, the researcher collected the questionnaire. To analyze the data, the researcher used descriptive analysis. The researcher calculated the frequencies, percentages, and mean scores of the questionnaire.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Research Finding***

The researcher gathered data for this study from questionnaire filled out by the 12<sup>th</sup> grade students of Science program at SMAN 12 Padang who had previously studied by using vocabulary journal in learning English. The respondents of this research were two classes with total 65 students. The questionnaire consists of 30 statements with a Likert Scale with four scales, they are "Strongly Disagree",

“Disagree”, “Agree”, and “Strongly Agree”. Furthermore, the responses that the students gave to each indicator were described as follows:

### *Finding 1*

The first indicator was about students’ perceptions on the attractiveness of vocabulary journal for mastering vocabulary. There were five statements in this indicator and the results can be seen on the table below.

**Table 1.** Students’ Perceptions on the Attractiveness of Vocabulary Journal for Mastering Vocabulary

No	Statements	N (%)				Mean	Category
		SD	D	A	SA		
1	I enjoy learning new words with a vocabulary journal because I can design my own journal.	3 (4.6%)	8 (12.3%)	43 (66.2%)	11 (16.9%)	2.95	Positive
2	Learning with a vocabulary journal is very interesting because I can add detailed information about the vocabulary I have just learned.	5 (7.7%)	8 (12.3%)	34 (52.3%)	18 (27.7%)	3.00	Positive
3	Learning with a vocabulary journal is very fun because there are pictures to help me memorize the new vocabulary.	3 (4.6%)	4 (6.2%)	41 (63.1%)	17 (26.2%)	3.11	Positive
4	I prefer to learn English by using	3	7	37	18	3.07	Positive

	a vocabulary journal because it is interesting and easy to use.	(4.6%)	(10.8%)	(56.9%)	(27.7%)		
5	Learning new vocabulary with a vocabulary journal is not fun and quickly makes me feel bored	27 (41.5%)	21 (32.3%)	13 (20%)	4 (6.2%)	3.10	Positive
<b>Total Mean</b>						3.05	Positive

The table 1 showed the students’ responses for the first indicator, which about students’ perceptions on the attractiveness of vocabulary journal for mastering vocabulary. From the data we can see that of the five statements, statement number three had the highest positive responses from the students (89.3%). It indicates that the majority of the students thought that the use of picture in their vocabulary journal makes the learning process more fun and really help them in memorizing the new words. Moreover, statements 1 and 4 had almost similar percentage values. It can be seen that in the statement number four 84.6% students agreed with the statement, while 83.1% students chose agree in the first statement. Based on the data, it can be seen that the average mean scores of the attractiveness aspect was 3.05. Although there were some students who disagreed, but the majority of the students perceive vocabulary journal as an interactive learning strategy. They felt that the use of vocabulary journal is very enjoyable and fun.

*Finding 2*

The next finding is students’ perceptions on the effectiveness of vocabulary journal for mastering vocabulary. There were eight statements in this indicator that students had to respond. The results on the effectiveness aspect can be seen on the following table.

**Table 2.** Students’ Perceptions on the Effectiveness of Vocabulary Journal for Mastering Vocabulary

No	Statements	N (%)				Mean	Category
		SD	D	A	SA		
6	My understanding of the given text	5	7	35	18	3.01	Positive

	is improved when learning with a vocabulary journal.	(7.7%)	(10.8%)	(53.8%)	(27.7%)		
7	Using a vocabulary journal makes me easily review the words I have learned before.	5 (7.7%)	10 (15.4%)	32 (49.2%)	18 (27.7%)	2.97	Positive
8	I have gained many new words after learning using a vocabulary journal.	5 (7.7%)	5 (7.7%)	43 (66.2%)	12 (18.5%)	2.95	Positive
9	I have difficulties remembering new words when I learn using a vocabulary journal.	23 (35.4%)	26 (40%)	11 (16.9%)	5 (7.7%)	3.03	Positive
10	I am more skillful at using a dictionary after learning using a vocabulary journal.	7 (10.8%)	5 (7.7%)	38 (58.5%)	15 (23.1%)	2.94	Positive
11	It is easier for me to remember new vocabulary that has been learned by using	5 (7.7%)	5 (7.7%)	35 (53.8%)	20 (30.8%)	3.08	Positive

	a vocabulary journal than before using it.						
12	I feel that a vocabulary journal was not helpful in comprehending the context of the text.	25 (38.5%)	25 (38.5%)	13 (20%)	2 (3.1%)	3.23	Positive
13	I easily forget the new words that I have learned by using a vocabulary journal.	27 (41.5%)	21 (32.3%)	13 (20%)	4 (6.2%)	3.09	Positive
<b>Total Mean</b>						3.00	Positive

The table 2 showed the results of the students’ responses about the effectiveness of vocabulary journal for mastering vocabulary. Of the eight statements, four statements (statement number 6, 8, 10, and 11) had the high percentage (above 80%) of positive responses. The percentage of students’ responses for statement number 8 and statement number 11 were similar, which is 84.6% students agree with the statements. In addition, 81.5% students agreed with the effectiveness of vocabulary journal in the sixth and tenth statements. Furthermore, the majority of the students chose disagree for the statement number nine and statement number thirteen. These two statements indicates that most of the students felt that vocabulary journal is effective to help them memorize the new words. They also thought that they can retain the words that they have learned by using vocabulary journal easily.

Based on the data, it can be seen that the average mean scores of the effectiveness aspect was 3.00. The majority of the students thought that the use of vocabulary journal is very effective to enrich their vocabulary. Many students felt that vocabulary journal also can help them to comprehend the context of the text that they have learned.

*Finding 3*

The next finding is students’ perceptions on the relevance of vocabulary journal for mastering vocabulary. There were five statements that the students had to

respond. The table below was the data of the students' responses for the relevance aspect

**Table 3.** Students' Perceptions on the Relevance of Vocabulary Journal for Mastering Vocabulary

No	Statements	N (%)				Mean	Category
		SD	D	A	SA		
14	Learning by using a vocabulary journal is very suitable with my learning style.	4 (6.2%)	11 (16.9%)	37 (56.9%)	13 (20%)	2.91	Positive
15	I feel vocabulary journal is a learning strategy that is suitable to be applied to enrich students' vocabulary	4 (6.2%)	7 (10.8%)	36 (55.4%)	18 (27.7%)	3.05	Positive
16	I think that a vocabulary journal is not appropriate for all English learning skills.	32 (49.2%)	19 (29.2%)	11 (16.9%)	3 (4.6%)	3.23	Positive
17	I feel that using a vocabulary journal is a waste of time and not appropriate for being used in the classroom.	26 (40%)	25 (38.5%)	11 (16.9%)	3 (4.6%)	3.14	Positive



18	My teacher never evaluated the progress of my vocabulary journal.	22 (33.8%)	26 (40%)	15 (23.1%)	2 (3.1%)	3.05	Positive
<b>Total Mean</b>						3.08	Positive

From the table above, it can be seen that of the five statements, statement number fifteen had the highest positive responses from the students. 83.1% students agreed that vocabulary journal is suitable to be applied in learning English. Furthermore, 76.9% students agreed that the use of vocabulary journal is suitable with their learning style in statement number fourteen. In addition, for eighteenth statement, 73.8% students disagreed with the statement. It indicates that the majority of the students stated that their teacher monitored the progress of their journal. Since students will write a lot of data on their own into their journal, teachers should review what they have written for correctness on a regular basis.

Based on the data, it can be seen that the average mean scores of the relevance aspect was 3.08. Most of the students perceive vocabulary journal as a suitable learning strategy and appropriate to be applied in the classroom. It can be interpreted that students' perceptions on the relevance of vocabulary journal for mastering vocabulary at SMAN 12 Padang was positive.

*Finding 4*

The next finding is students' perceptions on perceived motivation of vocabulary journal for mastering vocabulary. There were six statements for this indicator that students had to answer. The results can be seen in the table provided below.

**Table 4.** Students' Perceptions on Perceived Motivation of Vocabulary Journal for Mastering Vocabulary

No	Statements	N (%)				Mean	Category
		SD	D	A	SA		
19	I am more enthusiastic to learn new words when learning by using a	5 (7.7%)	11 (16.9%)	37 (56.9%)	12 (18.5%)	2.86	Positive

	vocabulary journal.						
20	I am not afraid to ask the teacher when I find new words that I don't understand when learning by using a vocabulary journal.	5 (7.7%)	8 (12.3%)	33 (50.8%)	19 (29.2%)	3.02	Positive
21	I am more confident speaking English when learning by using a vocabulary journal.	1 (1.5%)	11 (16.9%)	38 (58.5%)	15 (23.1%)	3.03	Positive
22	Learning by using a vocabulary journal can stimulate my interest in learning English.	4 (6.2%)	6 (9.2%)	41 (63.1%)	14 (21.5%)	3.00	Positive
23	I am more confident in reading English texts without looking up a dictionary after studying by using a	8 (12.3%)	3 (4.6%)	38 (58.5%)	16 (24.6%)	2.95	Positive

	vocabulary journal.						
24	I am not really motivated to learn English when learning by using a vocabulary journal.	25 (38.5%)	26 (40%)	10 (15.4%)	4 (6.2%)	3.11	Positive
<b>Total Mean</b>						2.96	Positive

The table above showed the result of students' perceptions on the use of vocabulary journal toward motivation aspect. From the six statements, two statements (statement number 22 & 23) had the highest positive responses from the students. 84.6% students in twenty-second statement agreed that learning by using vocabulary journal can stimulate their interest in learning English. Following that, 83.1% students agreed that they are more confident in reading the text without looking up to a dictionary. Based on the data, it can be seen that the average mean scores of the attractiveness aspect was 2.96. Although there were some students who disagreed, the majority of the students believed that the use of vocabulary journal can stimulate and motivated the students in learning the new words. The use of vocabulary journal also makes the students become more confident and active in the learning process.

*Finding 5*

The last finding is students' perceptions on the vocabulary aspects of vocabulary journal for mastering vocabulary. According to Kucan (2012), there are four aspects of vocabulary. They are the use, spelling, meaning, and pronunciation. There were six statements for this indicator that the respondents had to answer. The results for the vocabulary aspects can be seen in the table below.

**Table 5.** Students' Perceptions on Vocabulary Aspects of Vocabulary Journal for Mastering Vocabulary

No	Statements	N (%)				Mean	Category
		SD	D	A	SA		
25	I can easily understand the use of a certain word or phrase	5 (7.7%)	6 (9.2%)	36 (55.4%)	18 (27.7%)	3.03	Positive

	after learning with a vocabulary journal.						
26	I have difficulty making sentences from the new words when learning using a vocabulary journal.	21 (32.3%)	25 (38.5%)	16 (25.6%)	3 (4.6%)	3.23	Positive
27	Using a vocabulary journal can help me recall the meaning of new words because I can write my own phrases to define terms.	3 (4.6%)	8 (12.3%)	40 (61.5%)	14 (21.5%)	3.00	Positive
28	Vocabulary journal helps me in pronouncing new vocabulary because I can add how to pronounce it in my vocabulary journal.	5 (7.7%)	9 (13.8%)	32 (49.2%)	19 (29.2%)	3.00	Positive
29	Using a vocabulary journal in class help me write the spelling of English words correctly.	6 (9.2%)	9 (13.8%)	32 (49.2%)	18 (27.7%)	2.95	Positive

30	I have difficulty pronouncing new vocabulary that has been learned when using a vocabulary journal.	21 (32.3%)	29 (44.6%)	13 (20%)	2 (3.1%)	3.06	
<b>Total Mean</b>						3.04	Positive

The table above revealed the results for students’ perceptions on the vocabulary aspects of the vocabulary journal for mastering vocabulary. Of the six statements, two statements (statement number 25 and 27) got the high responses from the students. 83.1% students agreed with both of these statements. In the twenty-fifth statement, only 16.9% students disagreed while the rest of them agreed with the statement. Based on the data, it can be seen that the average mean scores of the vocabulary aspects was 3.04. The majority of the students felt that the use of vocabulary journal can help them in pronouncing the words, spelling, comprehending the meaning and the use of the words.

**Discussion**

Vocabulary journal is one learning strategy that can persist beyond the classroom and serve as an ongoing source if teachers encourage students to continue keeping them on their own (Schmitt and Schmitt, 1995). According to Bozkurt (2007), vocabulary journal resembles to a personal dictionary; where the students write the new words they found, as well as the associated meanings and any other relevant information. Additionally, some studies had been conducted regarding vocabulary journal. However, this study more focused on students’ perception on using vocabulary journal for mastering vocabulary.

After collecting data from two classes of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students at SMAN 12 Padang, the researcher discovered that the students had mainly positive perceptions on the use of vocabulary journal for mastering vocabulary in English class. However, there were some students disagreed with a few statements. The average value of the finding data was mainly positive. The majority of students agreed that vocabulary journal is an attractive learning strategy to learn new words. When students learning with vocabulary journal, they are allowed to design their own journal. This is not only making learning more enjoyable, but it can also help students enhance their creativity. Moreover, the use of picture in vocabulary journal made the learning process more fun and help students in memorizing new words. This in accordance with the study that conducted by Sovia (2013) that the usage of pictures significantly enhances students’ vocabularies and help them recall the language and increased their ability to memorize it.

Furthermore, most of the students reacted positively to the effectiveness aspect of vocabulary journal. Many students agreed that learning by using vocabulary journal has made their understanding of the given text improved and help them in comprehending the context of the text. This is in accordance with Nikijuluw (2020) that vocabulary journals assist students in remembering new words and can be useful for students not just in evaluating their development but also in developing their comprehension of reading.

In addition, the majority of the students agreed that vocabulary journal is a relevance strategy to learn new words and can be applied to enrich their vocabulary. From the data, many students felt that learning by using a vocabulary journal is really suitable with their learning style. According to DePorter (2014), each student has a unique learning style, which teachers can identify and adapt to. This is also in accordance with the study that conducted by Hanifia (2013) who found that since students are individuals with unique learning styles, an effective teaching strategy might be to allow students to learn with a variety of learning styles.

Moreover, the results showed that most of the students responded positively to the fourth research question, which is about students' perceptions on perceived motivation of the vocabulary journal for mastering vocabulary. Although some students disagreed, the majority of the students agreed that learning by using vocabulary journal can stimulate their interest in learning new words. They also felt more confident in speaking and reading in English without looking up a dictionary. They also felt more confident in speaking and reading in English without looking up a dictionary.

The last research question of this study focused on students' perceptions on the vocabulary aspects of vocabulary journal for mastering vocabulary. From the data, most of the students agreed that learning by using vocabulary journal promote all the vocabulary aspects. There were four vocabulary aspects, namely the use, the meaning, spelling, and pronunciation (Kucan, 2012). The majority of the students stated that learning by using vocabulary journal help them to understand the use of a certain words. This is in line with Kucan (2012), who stated that if students wanted to use words effectively in speech and writing, they must first comprehend how they are used. In addition, many students also believed that vocabulary journal can help them in pronouncing the words since they can add how to pronounce them in their vocabulary journal.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings and discussion above, students had relatively positive perceptions on the use of vocabulary journal for mastering vocabulary. The students thought that the use of vocabulary journal help them in gaining more vocabulary. Many of the students also felt that vocabulary journal is an interesting learning strategy and can be helpful to enhance their creativity. Furthermore, most of the students felt that learning by using vocabulary journal really suitable to be applied in the classroom and it is appropriate for all English learning skills. . Learning by using vocabulary journal also made students more enthusiastic in learning new words and made them confident in reading and speaking in English. In addition, students agreed that learning by using

vocabulary journal help them to pronounce the words correctly and made them understand the use of a certain words easily.

Teachers should employ an interactive learning strategies to teach vocabulary so that the learning process become more fun and not monotonous for the students. Thus, it is suggested for English teachers to employ vocabulary journal in English class. Moreover, the future researcher is suggested to conduct further research on the issue of this research, such as considering the perspective of the teachers, the problem face by the learners, etc.

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