**THE IMPACT OF GAMIFICATION ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT: A STUDY OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA**

# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the Study

Assessment has long been recognised as a fundamental pillar of education, playing a central role in shaping both teaching practices and learning outcomes. In the context of English Language Teaching (ELT), assessment is not merely a tool for measuring learners’ recall of vocabulary, grammar, or reading comprehension; it serves multiple interconnected purposes that are essential for effective teaching. For teachers, assessment provides a lens through which they can diagnose learners’ strengths and weaknesses, monitor ongoing progress, and make informed instructional decisions that tailor learning experiences to the needs of their students. Moreover, assessment acts as a reflective tool for learners, helping them to understand their learning trajectories, identify gaps in knowledge, and develop strategies for improvement. Essentially, assessment functions as both a compass and a mirror within the educational process, guiding the direction of instruction while reflecting the efficacy of learning (Brown, 2004).

Historically, English language assessment has been rooted in traditional, teacher-centred approaches that emphasise standardised testing methods. These include written examinations, multiple-choice quizzes, dictations, oral interviews, timed grammar drills, comprehension exercises, and essays. Such methods have traditionally been valued for their objectivity, reliability, and ease of administration, particularly in classrooms with large student populations. Teachers often appreciate the clear criteria and structured format these assessments provide, as they allow for straightforward grading and benchmarking across learners. However, while these conventional assessments have served as practical tools for evaluating discrete language skills, they have also attracted criticism from both educators and researchers. Many teachers observe that these methods encourage surface-level learning, with students memorising facts and language rules without truly understanding or internalising the language. Furthermore, high-stakes, time-limited assessments frequently induce stress and anxiety among students, leading to behaviours such as avoidance, risk aversion, and diminished participation in class activities. These psychological effects directly impact learners’ motivation, engagement, and willingness to experiment with the language, thereby limiting the efficacy of instructional strategies (Prensky, 2001).

Over the decades, the nature of language teaching has evolved considerably, yet assessment practices have not always kept pace. The Grammar-Translation Method of the 19th century prioritised written translation exercises and formal accuracy, while the mid-20th-century Audiolingual Method focused on habit formation through repetitive drills and mimicry. These earlier approaches emphasised teacher control, mechanical repetition, and structured performance rather than authentic communication. With the emergence of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the 1970s and 1980s, the focus shifted toward learners’ functional and communicative competence, encouraging interaction, negotiation of meaning, and real-life application of language. Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), popularised in the 1990s, further prioritised authentic tasks, collaborative problem-solving, and performance-based assessment. Despite these pedagogical advances, many classrooms continue to rely on traditional, summative assessments that do not fully reflect learners’ communicative abilities or the interactive nature of modern instruction (Seaborn & Fels, 2015). Teachers often find themselves caught between progressive instructional practices and assessment methods that remain rigid, high-stakes, and disconnected from actual language use.

In recent years, technology has begun to reshape both instruction and assessment in English language classrooms. Computer-based testing, adaptive online quizzes, language learning applications, and interactive platforms have introduced novel opportunities for formative assessment, immediate feedback, and personalised learning. Within this context, gamification has emerged as an innovative and promising strategy to align assessment with contemporary pedagogical goals. Gamification is defined as the integration of game design elements—such as points, badges, levels, leaderboards, challenges, storytelling, and progress tracking—into non-game contexts, including education (Deterding et al., 2011). Unlike turning the classroom into a literal video game, gamification strategically leverages specific game mechanics to enhance motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes. For teachers, gamification provides a practical tool to transform traditional assessments from anxiety-inducing, static exercises into interactive, dynamic experiences that foster persistence, enjoyment, and self-regulated learning.

One of the key benefits of gamification is its ability to address the motivational needs of learners, a central concern for teachers who observe disengagement or passive learning behaviours. Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) posits that individuals are most motivated when their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled. Gamified assessments respond directly to these needs. Autonomy is supported when learners are given choices within tasks or pathways to progress. Competence is reinforced through immediate feedback, visible achievements, and incremental challenges that allow learners to experience mastery. Relatedness is fostered through collaborative or competitive interactions with peers, such as team challenges or leaderboards. Teachers report that these mechanisms not only sustain attention but also reduce fear of failure, as errors become part of the learning journey rather than punitive events. Flow Theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) further explains the appeal of gamification: learners can enter a state of deep engagement when challenges are optimally matched to their skill levels. Gamified assessments can facilitate this flow by structuring tasks with gradually increasing difficulty, maintaining learners’ focus while fostering resilience and persistence.

Gamification also aligns with broader educational and pedagogical frameworks, such as constructivism and experiential learning. From a constructivist perspective, gamified assessments allow learners to actively construct knowledge through experimentation, reflection, and problem-solving rather than passive reception. Experiential learning theories highlight the importance of authentic, meaningful experiences in promoting deep learning, suggesting that gamified tasks—such as simulated real-life language scenarios or interactive storytelling—can provide learners with practical contexts in which to apply language skills. For teachers, these approaches represent a shift from merely evaluating students to actively guiding their experiential learning, providing scaffolding, and observing behaviours that reflect true competence rather than memorised knowledge.

In practical terms, gamification has been adopted in a variety of educational settings worldwide, and English language classrooms have benefited from multiple platforms that facilitate interactive assessment. Applications such as Kahoot, Wayground, Quizlet, Socrative, Classcraft, and Duolingo have introduced game-inspired mechanics into both instruction and evaluation. For example, Kahoot and Wayground allow teachers to conduct real-time quizzes where learners earn points for correct answers, view their rankings on leaderboards, and participate in collaborative challenges, transforming ordinary tests into engaging competitions. Duolingo incorporates streaks, levels, badges, and progress bars, providing learners with ongoing motivation to practice consistently. Teachers report that these platforms make it easier to track progress, deliver immediate feedback, and engage even reluctant learners who may otherwise be disengaged in traditional assessment formats. These tools also support differentiated instruction, as teachers can adjust the difficulty of tasks based on learners’ performance, ensuring that challenges remain meaningful and achievable for all students.

Empirical studies support teachers’ observations regarding the benefits of gamified assessment. Nah et al. (2014) found that gamified vocabulary learning significantly enhanced learners’ motivation, task persistence, and long-term retention. Domínguez et al. (2013) reported that students participating in gamified assessments spent more time on tasks, exhibited higher engagement, and displayed increased confidence in their language use. De-Marcos et al. (2017) demonstrated that gamified language modules improved persistence and performance compared to conventional approaches. Importantly, teachers have noted that gamification can reduce classroom monotony, maintain learners’ attention, and encourage active participation, even among students who may be considered low-performing or less confident. These findings suggest that gamified assessments can support the dual goals of measuring proficiency accurately and fostering a positive, motivating learning environment.

Despite these promising outcomes, gamification is not without debate, and teachers must exercise careful judgment in its implementation. Some studies indicate that motivational benefits may be short-lived, with students’ initial excitement declining over time if extrinsic rewards overshadow intrinsic learning goals (Hanus & Fox, 2015). Kohn (1999) warns that over-reliance on points, badges, and prizes can diminish students’ internal drive to master content. Teachers also face practical challenges, including time constraints, lack of professional development, and curriculum requirements that prioritise conventional assessments. Improperly implemented gamification may result in superficial engagement, where students focus on rewards rather than developing genuine skills. These concerns underscore the need for empirical research that addresses the teacher perspective: understanding how educators observe, interpret, and manage gamified assessments is essential for creating strategies that are both effective and sustainable.

Another critical gap identified by teachers and researchers alike is the scarcity of studies examining gamification specifically in assessment contexts, as opposed to general instruction or learning platforms. While gamified classroom activities have been widely studied, fewer investigations explore how formal assessment—where stakes are higher and learning behaviours are more observable—is affected by gamification. Teachers, as **implementers, observers, and evaluators of assessment**, are uniquely positioned to provide insight into how gamified tasks influence student engagement, performance, motivation, and classroom dynamics. Their perspectives can illuminate practical challenges, such as aligning gamified tasks with curriculum objectives, maintaining fairness, and integrating technology effectively, which are not captured in purely student-focused studies.

Globally, there is a growing recognition of the potential of gamification to enhance 21st-century skills such as collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and digital literacy—competencies that traditional assessment often fails to measure. Teachers in English language classrooms are increasingly required to prepare learners not only for exams but also for authentic communication and problem-solving in real-world contexts. Gamified assessment, by providing interactive, task-orientated, and feedback-rich experiences, aligns well with these educational imperatives. Teachers have observed that when students engage in gamified assessments, they are more willing to experiment with language, take calculated risks, and demonstrate creativity in problem-solving, outcomes that are difficult to capture through traditional tests.

In light of these considerations, this study seeks to examine the impact of gamification on English language assessment from the teacher’s perspective, focusing on motivation, engagement, performance, and perceptions. By investigating the role of gamification in shaping classroom practices and influencing learner behaviour, the study aims to provide evidence that supports informed, practical, and pedagogically sound implementation strategies. Teachers’ insights are critical, as they are both the designers and observers of assessment practices; their perspectives allow for a nuanced understanding of the benefits, challenges, and potential limitations of gamified assessment in ELT contexts.

Assessment in English language teaching has historically relied on traditional, teacher-centred methods that, while practical and reliable, often fail to foster meaningful learning, motivation, and engagement. The evolution of language pedagogy toward learner-centred, interactive, and technology-enhanced methods has highlighted a disconnect between instructional practices and assessment strategies. Gamification represents an innovative approach to bridging this gap, offering a framework for designing assessments that are motivating, interactive, and aligned with both pedagogical objectives and learner needs. Teachers’ observations and experiences provide crucial evidence on the practical impact of gamified assessment, including benefits such as increased engagement, motivation, and persistence, as well as challenges related to extrinsic rewards, sustainability, and curriculum alignment. By focusing on teachers’ perspectives, this study addresses a critical gap in the literature and seeks to inform the development of effective, research-based assessment practices that are both meaningful and aligned with the demands of contemporary English language education.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Assessment is an indispensable element of English Language Teaching (ELT), performing multiple critical functions that extend beyond mere measurement of learner knowledge and skills. For teachers, assessment serves as a diagnostic tool, helping to identify students’ strengths, weaknesses, and learning needs, while guiding instructional planning and pedagogical decision-making. For learners, assessment provides feedback that informs self-reflection, goal-setting, and development of effective study strategies. Ideally, assessment should support learning by encouraging engagement, promoting intrinsic motivation, and helping learners develop confidence and competence in the target language. However, in many educational contexts, English language assessment remains dominated by traditional, teacher-centred methods such as written tests, multiple-choice quizzes, oral examinations, timed grammar drills, dictations, and comprehension exercises. While these conventional methods are valued for their perceived objectivity, ease of administration, and capacity for standardised evaluation, they often fail to foster deep, meaningful learning or to support learners’ motivation and engagement (Brown, 2004).

Teachers frequently observe that these traditional assessments can be sources of anxiety and stress for students. High-stakes examinations, time constraints, and rigid grading structures often create environments where learners feel pressured to perform rather than to explore or experiment with language. Such conditions encourage surface-level learning strategies, where the primary goal becomes passing the test rather than understanding and internalising the language. Rote memorisation and repetitive practice, common responses to traditional assessment, may improve short-term performance but do not necessarily translate into long-term retention, communicative competence, or real-world application. Consequently, learners’ performance in assessments may not accurately reflect their true language abilities, and students may develop negative attitudes toward English learning that persist over time (Prensky, 2001).

The limitations of traditional assessment methods are compounded by the significant evolution of language teaching methodologies. Contemporary pedagogy increasingly emphasises learner-centred, interactive, and technology-enhanced strategies. Approaches such as Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), project-based learning, and collaborative digital activities are designed to engage students actively, promote problem-solving, and develop authentic communicative skills. These strategies encourage exploration, risk-taking, creativity, and critical thinking—competencies that traditional assessments are not designed to measure. Teachers often report a disconnect between the engaging, interactive learning activities implemented in the classroom and the rigid, exam-oriented assessments that follow. This misalignment can undermine students’ motivation, reduce classroom participation, and compromise the overall effectiveness of instructional strategies. Learners may perceive classroom tasks as enjoyable or meaningful, yet fail to see a clear connection between these activities and their formal assessment outcomes. Such discrepancies create a motivational gap, where the pedagogical benefits of learner-centred instruction are diminished by assessment practices that fail to recognise or reward engagement, effort, or creativity (Seaborn & Fels, 2015).

Teachers also recognise that traditional assessments tend to be anxiety-inducing, which can have both immediate and long-term consequences. In addition to reducing learners’ willingness to participate actively, high-stakes exams can negatively impact self-efficacy and confidence, particularly among students who struggle with test-taking or who are less confident in their English abilities. Repeated exposure to stressful assessment environments can lead to avoidance behaviours, disengagement, and decreased motivation over time. Teachers note that even highly motivated learners may experience performance anxiety, resulting in scores that do not accurately reflect their abilities. This creates a fundamental challenge for educators: how to design assessment strategies that reliably measure proficiency while simultaneously supporting learners’ emotional well-being, motivation, and willingness to take risks in using English.

The introduction of technology in education has provided opportunities to address some of these challenges, yet its integration in assessment remains uneven. Computer-based testing, online quizzes, interactive simulations, and adaptive learning platforms offer tools for providing immediate feedback, tracking progress, and personalising learning experiences. However, many of these technological applications remain limited to practice exercises or formative tasks and do not fully transform the nature of formal assessment. Teachers often face practical constraints, including curriculum requirements, administrative policies, and limited access to resources, which restrict their ability to implement innovative assessment strategies at scale. Moreover, technology alone does not guarantee enhanced motivation or engagement; the design and pedagogical integration of assessment tasks are critical determinants of their effectiveness (Domínguez et al., 2013).

It is within this context that gamification has emerged as a promising solution to the challenges posed by traditional assessment practices. By integrating game design elements such as points, badges, levels, leaderboards, challenges, and progress tracking into assessment, gamification seeks to create experiences that are intrinsically motivating, engaging, and rewarding for learners (Deterding et al., 2011). For teachers, gamification offers an opportunity to transform assessment from a source of stress into a constructive, interactive, and enjoyable activity. Gamified assessments can help learners experience a sense of progress, competence, and accomplishment, while providing educators with real-time data on student performance and engagement. Teachers have reported that gamified assessments can foster persistence, encourage risk-taking, and reduce fear of failure, as mistakes are reframed as part of the learning process rather than as final judgments.

Despite the growing popularity of gamification, its application in formal assessment contexts remains underexplored. While numerous studies have examined gamification in instructional activities or learning platforms, fewer investigations focus specifically on its impact when integrated into assessments with measurable stakes. Teachers, as the designers and evaluators of assessment, occupy a unique vantage point to observe how gamified assessment strategies influence student behaviour, motivation, engagement, and performance outcomes. Understanding the teacher perspective is critical for identifying both the practical benefits and the potential challenges of gamified assessment. Teachers must balance curriculum requirements, fairness, and pedagogical goals, ensuring that gamified tasks align with learning objectives while also promoting intrinsic motivation and sustained engagement. Without empirical evidence examining teachers’ experiences, insights, and reflections, the implementation of gamified assessment risks being superficial or inconsistent, potentially prioritising extrinsic rewards over meaningful learning (Kohn, 1999; Hanus & Fox, 2015).

Furthermore, there are concerns regarding the sustainability and long-term effectiveness of gamified assessment. Research indicates that students’ initial enthusiasm for gamified tasks may wane over time if novelty alone drives engagement. Teachers have expressed apprehension that an overemphasis on points, badges, or leaderboards might inadvertently shift learners’ focus from mastering language skills to earning rewards. This highlights the need for carefully designed gamified assessments that integrate both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational elements, scaffolded challenges, and alignment with learning objectives. Teachers’ observations of student engagement, risk-taking, and persistence are crucial for evaluating whether gamification produces meaningful learning outcomes rather than temporary excitement or superficial participation (Hamari, Koivisto & Sarsa, 2014).

Another critical dimension is the alignment of gamified assessment with 21st-century skills. English language education increasingly emphasises collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, and digital literacy. Traditional assessments rarely capture these competencies, focusing instead on isolated language knowledge. Teachers report that gamified assessments, when thoughtfully designed, provide authentic, task-based experiences that mirror real-world communication and encourage learners to apply language skills in meaningful contexts. By observing learners in gamified assessment environments, educators can identify not only language proficiency but also behaviours such as cooperation, strategic thinking, and adaptive problem-solving, offering a richer, more holistic picture of student ability.

In summary, the persistent reliance on traditional assessment methods in English language classrooms constitutes a significant problem for teachers, learners, and the broader educational system. While conventional assessments offer reliability and ease of administration, they often fail to promote deep learning, intrinsic motivation, and engagement. The mismatch between learner-centred, interactive pedagogy and static, high-stakes assessment creates a motivational disconnect that can hinder both instructional effectiveness and long-term language development. Gamification represents a potential solution, offering innovative ways to make assessment engaging, motivating, and reflective of real-world language use. However, its application in formal assessment contexts remains insufficiently researched, particularly from the teacher’s perspective, which is critical for understanding practical implementation, benefits, and limitations.

This study addresses these gaps by investigating how gamification in English language assessment impacts motivation, engagement, performance, and teacher perceptions compared with traditional assessment methods. By focusing on teachers as primary observers and implementers of assessment strategies, the research seeks to provide empirical evidence on the effectiveness, challenges, and pedagogical implications of gamified assessment. Addressing this problem is essential for developing assessment practices that not only measure language proficiency accurately but also support learners’ motivation, engagement, and holistic development. Ultimately, understanding teachers’ experiences and perspectives will inform the design of effective, research-based, and sustainable assessment strategies that align with contemporary pedagogical goals and the needs of 21st-century learners.

## 1.3 Research Questions

In line with the purpose of the study, the following research questions are formulated to guide the investigation:

1. How do teachers perceive the impact of gamified assessments on learner motivation compared to traditional assessments?
2. How do teachers observe differences in student engagement between gamified and traditional assessments?
3. How do gamified assessments influence learners’ performance outcomes, as observed by teachers?

## 1.4 Research Hypotheses

Based on the questions and review of existing literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H₁: Gamified assessments positively influence learners’ motivation compared to traditional assessments, as observed by teachers.

H₂: Gamified assessments increase learner engagement more effectively than traditional assessments, as observed by teachers.

H₃: Gamified assessments lead to higher learner performance outcomes than traditional assessments, as observed by teachers.

## 1.5 Purpose of the Study

This study examines the impact of gamification on English language assessment from teachers’ perspectives, compared with traditional methods. Specifically, it aims to;

1. Determine how teachers perceive the impact of gamified assessments on learner motivation compared to traditional assessments.
2. Determine how teachers observe differences in student engagement between gamified and traditional assessments.
3. Identify how gamified assessments influence learners’ performance outcomes, as observed by teachers.

## 1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it highlights the potential of gamification to transform the way English language assessment is conducted, particularly from the perspective of teachers who design, implement, and observe assessments. In traditional classrooms, assessments often evoke anxiety, stress, and rote learning, limiting students’ motivation and engagement. By investigating gamified assessment strategies, this research provides insight into how teachers can create assessment experiences that are not only evaluative but also stimulating, rewarding, and supportive of learners’ growth.

For teachers, the study offers practical value by demonstrating ways to make assessments more interactive and motivating. It shows how elements like points, badges, levels, and challenges can be integrated thoughtfully to foster persistence, risk-taking, and confidence in learners, while still maintaining fairness and alignment with curricular objectives. Teachers can use these insights to redesign assessment tasks in ways that encourage students to approach learning with curiosity and enthusiasm rather than fear or anxiety.

For learners, the implications are equally important. Gamified assessments can transform the perception of evaluation from a stressful judgement to an enjoyable, goal-orientated activity. This shift can enhance learners’ intrinsic motivation, engagement, and self-efficacy, allowing them to experiment with language use, learn from mistakes, and persist through challenging tasks. In this way, assessment becomes a tool not only for measurement but also for meaningful learning and personal development.

For curriculum designers and policymakers, the study provides evidence on the effectiveness of gamified assessments, offering guidance on how to incorporate innovative, technology-driven approaches into formal educational frameworks. By aligning assessment strategies with contemporary pedagogical goals and 21st-century skills such as collaboration, critical thinking, and digital literacy, gamified assessments can help prepare learners for real-world communication while supporting holistic development.

Finally, from an academic perspective, the study fills a notable gap in the literature, which has predominantly examined gamification in instructional contexts rather than in assessment. By focusing on teachers’ observations of learner motivation, engagement, and performance, the research offers valuable empirical evidence on both the benefits and challenges of gamified assessment. This contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how gamification can enhance teaching and learning, guiding educators toward practices that are effective, sustainable, and responsive to the needs of modern learners.

## 1.7 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the impact of gamification in English language assessment in secondary school classrooms, specifically from the perspective of teachers who design, administer, and evaluate assessments. It examines how gamified assessment strategies—such as points, badges, leaderboards, progress tracking, and interactive challenges—affect learners’ motivation, engagement, and performance compared with traditional, non-gamified assessment methods.

The research is confined to formal English assessments conducted by secondary school teachers, with a focus on core language skills including reading, writing, listening, and speaking, and vocabulary. Teachers’ observations serve as the primary source of data, providing insights into the practical and pedagogical effectiveness of gamified assessment in real classroom settings.

This study does not extend to primary schools, tertiary institutions, or gamified instructional activities outside assessment. Its geographic focus is limited to selected secondary schools, allowing for a concentrated examination of classroom practices where English is taught as a second language.

## 1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

To ensure clarity and avoid ambiguity, the following terms are defined as they are used in this study:

**Gamification:** The integration of game mechanics—such as points, badges, leaderboards, challenges, and narratives—into non-game contexts to increase engagement and motivation (Deterding et al., 2011; Kapp, 2012).

**English Language Teaching (ELT):** The instructional practice of teaching English to learners, focusing on reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills (Brown, 2004).

**Assessment:** The systematic evaluation of learners’ knowledge, skills, and competencies, traditionally through tests, quizzes, essays, and oral examinations (Gronlund, 2006).

**Motivation:** The internal drive or external incentives that prompt learners to engage with a task. Motivation is considered intrinsic when it arises from personal interest or enjoyment and extrinsic when it is driven by rewards or recognition (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

**Engagement:** The degree of attention, interest, and participation a learner demonstrates in learning activities, including cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions (Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004).

**Learning Outcomes:** Measurable results of educational interventions, including knowledge acquisition, skill development, and retention over time (Bloom, 1956).

**Traditional Assessment:** Conventional forms of evaluating learners, including written tests, essays, oral exams, and quizzes, without the integration of game-based or interactive elements (Brown, 2004).

**Leaderboards:** A gamification feature that ranks learners based on performance, fostering competition and social comparison (Kapp, 2012).

**Badges and Points:** Digital or symbolic rewards that acknowledge achievement, progress, or mastery in gamified learning systems (Hamari, Koivisto & Sarsa, 2014).

# CHAPTER TWO

# LITERATURE REVIEW

**2.1 Introduction**

Assessment has always played a central role in education, acting as both a mirror and a guide for teaching and learning processes. In secondary school English language classrooms, assessment does not only measure learners’ linguistic competence but also provides a framework for teachers to understand learners’ needs, monitor their progress, and make informed instructional decisions. Teachers are at the forefront of observing how students respond to different assessment formats, noting both engagement and challenges, which positions them uniquely to evaluate the effectiveness of new approaches like gamification. Over the years, traditional assessment methods—including written tests, oral examinations, essays, and timed quizzes—have dominated classroom practice. These methods have been valued for their objectivity, standardisation, and ease of administration, particularly in large classrooms. However, they are often high-stakes and summative in nature, focusing on grading rather than the process of learning itself.

While traditional assessments can effectively measure discrete knowledge, they have been criticised for promoting rote memorisation, superficial learning, and anxiety among learners. Students frequently perceive examinations as stressful, intimidating events, which can suppress risk-taking, experimentation, and genuine engagement with the English language. Teachers, observing these behaviours, often notice that highly capable students underperform due to exam anxiety, while some students focus on memorising answers instead of developing communicative competence. This mismatch between learners’ potential and performance underlines the critical role of assessment design in shaping both motivation and achievement in the classroom.

The evolution of language teaching has increasingly emphasised learner-centred approaches. From the Grammar-Translation Method, which prioritised memorisation and translation, through the Audiolingual Method’s repetitive drills, to Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Learning, secondary school classrooms have gradually shifted toward methods that encourage interaction, collaboration, and authentic use of English. However, assessment has often lagged behind these pedagogical innovations. Even as classrooms become more interactive, technology-driven, and learner-focused, teachers continue to face the challenge of aligning assessment methods with modern instructional practices. This disconnect can hinder student motivation, reduce the perceived relevance of learning activities, and weaken the overall effectiveness of teaching strategies.

Gamification has emerged as a potential solution to these challenges, offering a framework in which elements of game design—points, levels, badges, leaderboards, narratives, and challenges—are integrated into educational contexts. Importantly, gamification does not equate to turning classrooms into video games; rather, it strategically utilises selected game mechanics to enhance learner engagement, motivation, and feedback. For teachers, gamified assessments provide tools to monitor progress, identify learning gaps, and foster a supportive and motivating classroom environment. For example, awarding points for correct grammar usage, enabling students to unlock badges for completed tasks, or incorporating narrative-based quests in speaking exercises can transform routine assessments into dynamic experiences.

Teacher observations suggest that gamified assessments may encourage persistence, reduce fear of failure, and stimulate intrinsic motivation. As learners interact with gamified tasks, they often display higher levels of engagement, enthusiasm, and willingness to take risks. Additionally, gamification aligns with established motivational theories. Self-Determination Theory posits that learners are most engaged when their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are satisfied. Gamified assessment mechanisms—choice in task selection, immediate feedback, visible progress, and collaborative or competitive activities—directly support these needs, making learning experiences more meaningful. Flow Theory further explains the appeal of gamification, as learners often achieve a state of deep focus and satisfaction when they encounter appropriately challenging tasks, an effect teachers can observe and facilitate in the classroom.

Globally, the adoption of gamified strategies in education is growing. Platforms like Kahoot, Wayground, Quizlet, Classcraft, and Duolingo are increasingly used to support classroom assessment, enabling teachers to transform traditional testing into interactive, motivating experiences. These platforms allow teachers to provide instant feedback, monitor student participation, and encourage healthy competition, all while maintaining rigorous assessment standards. Empirical studies show that gamified approaches can improve learner motivation, engagement, retention, and performance. However, most research has focused on students’ experiences, with less attention to the teacher perspective—how teachers perceive, implement, and adapt gamified assessments in real classroom contexts.

Despite promising results, challenges remain. Teachers note potential issues such as overemphasis on extrinsic rewards, the novelty effect wearing off over time, and the need for careful alignment between gamified tasks and learning objectives. Nonetheless, the teacher’s role remains central: they design, implement, and monitor gamified assessments, ensuring that the motivational and pedagogical goals are met. Understanding teachers’ perspectives, strategies, and challenges in using gamification is therefore critical to evaluating its effectiveness and sustainability in secondary school English classrooms.

This chapter will review the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of gamification in education, examine empirical evidence of its impact on teaching and assessment, and identify research gaps. It provides the foundation for investigating how gamified assessments can enhance motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes from a teacher-centred perspective, particularly in secondary school English language classrooms.

**2.2 Conceptual Review**

**2.2.1 Assessment in English Language Teaching**

The concept of gamification has gained significant attention in educational research, particularly in English Language Teaching (ELT). At its core, gamification refers to the integration of game design elements into non-game contexts to enhance engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes (Deterding et al., 2011). In secondary school classrooms, gamification is not simply about adding entertainment to learning; rather, it involves strategically embedding mechanisms such as points, levels, badges, leaderboards, progress tracking, storytelling, and challenges into instructional and assessment processes. Teachers, as the primary implementers of educational strategies, play a crucial role in selecting which game elements to incorporate, how to integrate them with learning objectives, and how to monitor their effectiveness in promoting student motivation and achievement.

Assessment, as a central concept in this study, serves multiple functions. Traditionally, assessment has been understood as a method of measuring learners’ knowledge and performance against predetermined standards. In secondary school English classrooms, assessment often includes written examinations, oral presentations, comprehension exercises, essays, grammar quizzes, and dictations. These conventional assessments are valued for their objectivity and ease of administration, particularly in contexts with large class sizes. However, they frequently fail to foster sustained motivation, deep learning, or meaningful engagement. Students often perceive them as rigid, anxiety-inducing tasks, while teachers observe patterns of disengagement, surface-level learning, and resistance to risk-taking. These observations underscore the need for innovative assessment strategies that align with contemporary pedagogical approaches.

Gamification addresses these challenges by reimagining assessment as a dynamic and interactive experience. For example, in a vocabulary test, a teacher might design a system where students earn points for each correct answer, unlock badges upon reaching milestones, or compete in small groups to achieve a leaderboard ranking. A teacher conducting a speaking assessment might frame it as a narrative “mission”, in which students complete tasks such as dialogues, role-plays, or presentations to advance through levels. Listening comprehension exercises could incorporate progressive challenges, where students solve puzzles or decode information to “unlock” subsequent levels of the assessment. In these contexts, the teacher’s role shifts from a mere evaluator to a facilitator who guides learners through a motivational and structured learning journey.

A critical concept linked to gamification is motivation. Motivation in education can be broadly categorised into intrinsic and extrinsic forms. Intrinsic motivation refers to engaging in an activity for the inherent satisfaction it provides, such as the joy of learning new vocabulary or mastering a grammatical structure. Extrinsic motivation, by contrast, arises from external incentives, such as earning points, badges, or recognition from peers. Gamification strategically leverages both forms of motivation. Teachers can encourage intrinsic motivation by designing tasks that are challenging, meaningful, and connected to students’ real-world experiences. At the same time, extrinsic motivators, such as badges and leaderboards, can provide immediate feedback and recognition that reinforce engagement, particularly for students who may struggle to find intrinsic interest initially. Observing students, teachers often notice that gamified tasks promote persistence, reduce fear of failure, and stimulate active participation, even among learners who are typically disengaged.

Another central concept is engagement, which encompasses behavioural, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. Behavioural engagement refers to students’ active participation in classroom activities; emotional engagement captures their affective responses such as interest, enjoyment, and enthusiasm; cognitive engagement involves investment in learning, strategy use, and deep processing of content. Gamification has the potential to positively influence all three dimensions. Teachers implementing gamified assessments often report that students are more likely to participate actively (behavioural engagement), express excitement and anticipation for challenges (emotional engagement), and adopt effective learning strategies to overcome obstacles (cognitive engagement). Importantly, engagement is not uniform; teachers must differentiate tasks to accommodate diverse learner profiles, ensuring that all students experience challenges that are appropriately matched to their abilities.

Progress tracking is another key concept within gamification. Traditional assessments often provide limited feedback, typically after the task is completed, which delays opportunities for corrective action. Gamified assessments, in contrast, incorporate immediate feedback mechanisms that allow students to monitor their performance in real time. Teachers can observe patterns of achievement, identify areas where learners struggle, and adjust instruction accordingly. For example, a teacher may notice that students consistently fail to recognise past tense verbs in a gamified quiz. Using this information, the teacher can provide targeted mini-lessons, offer scaffolding, or modify subsequent challenges to address the gap. This continuous feedback loop empowers both teachers and students, creating a dynamic and responsive learning environment.

Collaboration and competition are also central to gamified assessment. Cooperative elements, such as group challenges, paired problem-solving, or team quests, foster peer interaction, collective problem-solving, and social connectedness. Teachers often observe that collaborative gamified tasks enhance communication, promote shared responsibility, and develop interpersonal skills, all of which are crucial for language learning. Conversely, competitive elements, such as leaderboards or individual point accumulation, can motivate students to strive for excellence, although teachers must carefully manage competition to avoid excessive stress or negative social comparisons. Balancing collaboration and competition allows teachers to create inclusive environments where learners are motivated to participate while feeling supported.

The concept of progressive challenge is equally important. Gamification relies on tasks that increase in complexity as learners advance, which promotes skill development and mastery. Teachers observe that students respond positively when challenges are neither too easy nor excessively difficult, as optimal challenge fosters a sense of competence and achievement. Adaptive gamified assessments allow teachers to adjust difficulty levels according to student performance, providing scaffolding for those who struggle and advanced tasks for high-achievers. This differentiation ensures that all learners remain engaged and experience success, reinforcing both motivation and self-efficacy.

Narrative and storytelling are additional elements that can transform assessment. Embedding assessments within a narrative context—such as a quest, mission, or story—can make tasks more relatable and engaging. Teachers report that students often become emotionally invested in narrative-based assessments, which encourages sustained effort and creative problem-solving. For example, a teacher might design a speaking assessment framed as a “travel adventure”, where learners must complete communication tasks to progress through different countries or scenarios. The narrative context provides meaning, promotes contextualised language use, and transforms routine assessment into an immersive experience.

Challenges and rewards form the backbone of gamification. Immediate feedback, points, badges, and levels provide tangible recognition of achievement, which can enhance learners’ self-efficacy. Teachers observe that when students see visible indicators of progress, they are more likely to persist through difficult tasks, take risks, and strive for improvement. Rewards can be intrinsic, such as satisfaction from mastering a complex grammar rule, or extrinsic, such as earning badges or advancing on a leaderboard. Effective gamification requires thoughtful design: rewards must reinforce learning objectives rather than distract from them. Teachers play a critical role in ensuring that gamified assessments are meaningful, motivating, and aligned with curriculum standards.

While gamification has many potential benefits, teachers must be aware of possible limitations. Overreliance on extrinsic rewards may diminish intrinsic motivation over time, and poorly designed challenges can lead to frustration or disengagement. Teachers must also consider issues of equity, ensuring that all students have equal access to resources, technology, and support. Monitoring student behaviour, motivation, and outcomes is essential to maintaining a balance between challenge and support, competition and collaboration, and extrinsic and intrinsic motivation.

In secondary school contexts, gamification is particularly relevant due to the developmental characteristics of adolescents. Learners at this stage are highly social, responsive to feedback, and motivated by achievement and recognition. Teachers have observed that gamified assessments leverage these characteristics effectively, providing structured environments where students can experiment, take risks, and receive recognition in a safe and motivating context. Additionally, the integration of technology in gamified assessments aligns with students’ digital literacy skills, making learning more relevant and engaging.

Empirical evidence supports these conceptual understandings. Studies have shown that gamified vocabulary exercises increase retention and task persistence, gamified quizzes enhance engagement and enjoyment, and gamified collaborative tasks improve both linguistic and interpersonal skills. Teachers are uniquely positioned to observe and document these outcomes, providing insights that are often absent in student-centred research. Their experiences highlight the practical applications, challenges, and adaptations required to implement gamification effectively in secondary school English classrooms.

The conceptual review demonstrates that gamification in assessment is more than a novelty; it is a structured, theory-informed approach that has the potential to transform secondary school English classrooms. Teachers serve as both implementers and observers, shaping gamified tasks, monitoring progress, and adjusting strategies to meet diverse learner needs. Concepts such as motivation, engagement, progress tracking, collaboration, competition, narrative, challenge, and reward all intersect to create an interactive and meaningful assessment environment. Understanding these concepts from a teacher-centred perspective provides the foundation for exploring theoretical frameworks, empirical evidence, and research gaps in subsequent sections of this chapter.

**2.3 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study provides the conceptual lens through which the impact of gamification in English language teaching and assessment is examined. It establishes the foundational principles that inform the design, implementation, and evaluation of gamified assessments in secondary school classrooms. Understanding how gamification influences learner motivation, engagement, and performance requires integrating well-established theories of human motivation, learning, and cognitive engagement. The key theories guiding this study are Self-Determination Theory (SDT), Flow Theory, and Constructivist Learning Theory, each offering insights into why gamified strategies may be effective and how teachers can implement them to maximise learning outcomes.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Deci and Ryan (2000), is central to understanding how gamification impacts learner motivation. SDT posits that humans are inherently motivated to grow and develop when three basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—are satisfied. In the context of secondary school English classrooms, gamified assessments can address these needs in multiple ways. Teachers, for example, can offer students choices in how they demonstrate learning—whether through a quiz, a mini-project, or a role-play scenario—thereby supporting autonomy. Competence is fostered when learners receive immediate feedback through points, badges, or progress indicators, allowing them to monitor improvement and achieve mastery. Relatedness is nurtured through collaborative or competitive interactions with peers, such as team challenges or leaderboards.

Teachers play a crucial role in leveraging SDT in gamified assessment. By designing tasks that provide meaningful choices, structured challenges, and opportunities for collaboration, teachers can create learning environments that support intrinsic motivation. Observing classrooms where gamification has been implemented, teachers often note increased student engagement, persistence in challenging tasks, and willingness to take risks. These outcomes are consistent with SDT, which emphasises that motivation is most sustainable when students experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Importantly, SDT also warns against overreliance on extrinsic rewards, as excessive focus on points, badges, or rankings can undermine intrinsic motivation. Teachers must therefore balance gamified incentives with meaningful learning experiences that foster genuine interest and mastery of English language skills.

Flow Theory, introduced by Csikszentmihalyi (1990), complements SDT by explaining how gamification can create states of optimal engagement and deep focus. Flow occurs when an individual is fully immersed in a task that is appropriately challenging relative to their skill level, leading to a sense of enjoyment, concentration, and intrinsic reward. In secondary school English classrooms, gamified assessments can be designed to facilitate flow by progressively increasing task difficulty, providing immediate feedback, and structuring challenges that match students’ abilities. For example, a teacher may design a tiered quiz system in which students start with basic grammar questions and progress to complex sentence construction or narrative tasks as they demonstrate mastery. This incremental design ensures that learners are neither bored by tasks that are too easy nor overwhelmed by tasks that are too difficult, thereby maintaining engagement and promoting skill development.

Teachers’ observations align closely with Flow Theory. When students are in flow, they exhibit sustained attention, reduced distractibility, and heightened enjoyment of learning activities. Gamified assessments that incorporate adaptive difficulty levels, real-time feedback, and clear progression paths can help students enter flow states, enhancing both performance and learning satisfaction. Flow theory also highlights the importance of intrinsic reward and personal challenge; teachers can encourage this by framing tasks as meaningful “missions” or “quests” rather than routine exercises. Such approaches transform assessment into an immersive experience that is engaging, motivating, and developmentally appropriate for adolescents.

Constructivist Learning Theory provides an additional lens for understanding the pedagogical value of gamification. Constructivism, grounded in the work of Piaget and Vygotsky, posits that learners actively construct knowledge through interaction with their environment, prior experiences, and social context. Learning is viewed as an active, participatory process, and knowledge is co-constructed rather than passively received. In secondary school English classrooms, gamified assessments support constructivist principles by allowing students to engage in meaningful tasks, collaborate with peers, and experiment with language in authentic contexts. For example, a speaking assessment framed as a collaborative storytelling challenge encourages learners to negotiate meaning, develop ideas, and communicate effectively, rather than merely reciting memorised content.

Teachers facilitate constructivist learning in gamified assessments by designing tasks that require problem-solving, critical thinking, and reflection. By providing scaffolding, feedback, and opportunities for peer interaction, teachers ensure that students are guided through the learning process while retaining agency and autonomy. Gamified assessments also encourage reflection, as learners can track their progress, analyse errors, and plan strategies for improvement. This reflective component aligns with constructivist principles and promotes deeper cognitive engagement, moving beyond surface-level memorisation toward meaningful mastery of English language skills.

Integrating SDT, Flow Theory, and Constructivist Learning Theory provides a robust theoretical framework for understanding gamification in secondary school English assessment. SDT explains the motivational mechanisms, Flow Theory elucidates the conditions for optimal engagement, and Constructivist Theory highlights the importance of active, learner-centred experiences. Together, these theories inform practical strategies for teachers, including designing assessments that provide choice, feedback, collaboration, challenge, and relevance. For instance, a teacher might implement a gamified writing assessment where students select a topic of personal interest (autonomy), receive points for each successfully structured paragraph (competence), collaborate in peer review (relatedness), progress through increasingly challenging writing tasks (flow), and reflect on improvements over time (constructivism).

Empirical studies support this theoretical integration. Research indicates that gamified assessments aligned with SDT, Flow, and constructivist principles improve learner motivation, engagement, and achievement. Nah et al. (2014) found that gamified vocabulary tasks enhanced task persistence and intrinsic motivation, consistent with SDT. Domínguez et al. (2013) reported that students experienced heightened engagement and enjoyment in gamified learning environments, reflecting Flow Theory principles. De-Marcos et al. (2017) emphasised the importance of collaborative and problem-solving tasks in gamified modules, reinforcing constructivist learning outcomes. Teachers implementing these approaches observe similar benefits, noting increased participation, risk-taking, and language use in authentic communicative contexts.

It is also important to acknowledge potential challenges from a theoretical perspective. Overemphasis on extrinsic rewards may compromise intrinsic motivation, inconsistent challenge levels may prevent flow, and poorly structured collaborative tasks may limit constructivist benefits. Teachers must therefore carefully plan gamified assessments, balancing motivational, cognitive, and social elements to optimise outcomes. Professional judgement, classroom experience, and continuous monitoring are essential in implementing these theoretical principles effectively.

The theoretical framework for this study integrates SDT, Flow Theory, and Constructivist Learning Theory to provide a comprehensive lens for examining gamification in secondary school English assessment. These theories collectively explain why gamified assessments can enhance motivation, engagement, and performance and how teachers can implement them effectively. By grounding gamified assessment in theory, this study ensures that strategies are purposeful, pedagogically sound, and aligned with contemporary understandings of learning and motivation, offering teachers actionable insights for practice.

# CHAPTER THREE

# METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a **descriptive survey research design**. This approach is well-suited for collecting data on a large scale to describe the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences of a specific population—in this case, secondary school English teachers.

## 3.2 Population of the Study

The population for this study comprised secondary school English teachers who are currently teaching in urban and semi-urban schools in **Lagos State, Nigeria**.

## 3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

The study employed a **purposive sampling technique** to select 103 participants who met specific inclusion criteria: teachers must have at least two years of experience in English language teaching and must have administered or observed both traditional and gamified assessments in their classrooms. This sampling method ensure that respondents have sufficient practical knowledge to provide informed insights.

The researcher will obtain permission from the Lagos State Ministry of Education and from the principals of the selected schools to conduct the study. Teachers will be recruited through heads of department and school-wide announcements, with their voluntary participation and anonymity guaranteed.

## 3.4 Research Instrument

The primary instrument for data collection was a **structured questionnaire**, developed specifically for this study. The questionnaire is divided into three main sections:

* **Section A:** Demographic information, including age, gender, teaching experience, educational background, and familiarity with gamified tools or technology in teaching. This section provides context for interpreting teachers’ responses and allows for analysis of trends across different subgroups.
* **Section B:** Teachers’ perceptions of traditional assessment methods, including written tests, oral examinations, comprehension exercises, and grammar drills. This section explores teachers’ views on the advantages, limitations, and observed student responses to these methods, highlighting challenges such as student anxiety, rote memorization, and low engagement.
* **Section C:** Teachers’ perceptions of gamified assessment methods, including the use of points, badges, leaderboards, levels, and interactive challenges. Items in this section assess teachers’ observations regarding student motivation, engagement, performance outcomes, and the feasibility of implementing gamification in the classroom.

A five-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree = 5 to Strongly Disagree = 1) was used for Sections B and C to capture the intensity of teachers’ perceptions. The scale allows for nuanced responses and facilitates quantitative analysis while maintaining simplicity for respondents.

## 3.5 Method of Data Collection

Data were collected using self-administered questionnaires, distributed both physically and electronically to accommodate teachers’ availability and technological access. Physical questionnaires were delivered to schools with prior approval from school authorities, while electronic copies were shared via email or messaging platforms. Teachers were requested to complete the questionnaires independently and return them within one week, ensuring timely data collection.

## 3.6 Validity of the Instrument

The research instrument was given to the supervisor and other experts in the field of research for face and content validity. The observations and corrections (recommendations) made by the supervisor and experts will be considered for the research instruments.

## 3.7 Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was established through a pilot study. The pilot study consisted of twenty respondents who were not part of the sample. The questionnaires answered during the pilot study was analyzed using **Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC)** and a reliability coefficient of 0,81 was obtained.

## 3.8 Ethical Considerations

Academic research, particularly that involving human participants, requires strict adherence to ethical guidelines to ensure the safety, privacy, and well-being of all involved. This study, which collects data from teachers, will be conducted in full compliance with the ethical standards of the **University of Lagos** and international research principles.

* **Informed Consent:** Prior to data collection, all participants will be provided with a detailed information sheet outlining the study’s purpose, methodology, and the expected duration of their involvement. They will be informed that their participation is entirely voluntary and that they have the right to withdraw at any point without penalty. A written consent form will be signed by each participant before they complete the questionnaire.
* **Anonymity and Confidentiality:** To protect participants' identities, all data collected will be anonymized. Questionnaires will not include names, and any potentially identifying information will be removed to ensure confidentiality. A unique participant code will be assigned to each questionnaire to track the data while maintaining anonymity. The collected data will be stored securely on a password-protected computer, accessible only to the researcher.
* **Data Security:** All personal information provided will be used exclusively for the purpose of this research. The data will be kept for a period of [e.g., three years] after the study is completed, after which it will be permanently deleted to ensure long-term privacy.
* **Minimizing Harm:** The questions in the questionnaire are designed to be non-intrusive and respectful. There is no anticipated risk of physical or psychological harm to participants. The research will be conducted in a way that minimizes disruption to school activities and the teachers’ professional duties.

This ethical framework ensures that the study is conducted responsibly, ethically, and with the utmost respect for the rights and dignity of the participants.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter seeks to discuss the data that was collected by the researcher. Statically, in order to have a greater focus of understanding and brevity, the gathered data was analyzed by making use of statistical tools on Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS).

**4.1 Presentation of Data**

**Table 4.1: Gender of Respondents**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | Frequency | Percent (%) |
| Valid | Female | 45 | 44 |
| Male | 58 | 56 |
| Total | 103 | 100 |

The Table 4.1 reveals the number of respondents according to the gender. The total number of participants was 103; 45 of the participants are female accounting to 44% of the whole sample; 58 participants are male making up the majority (56%) of the percentage on this sample. This shows that there was more male representation in the study as compared to women.

**Table 4.2: Qualification of Respondents**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | Frequency | Percent (%) |
| Valid | Bachelors | 74 | 72 |
| Masters | 29 | 28 |
| Total | 103 | 100 |

Table 4.2 shows academic qualification of the respondents. Out of the 103 participants, 74, and 29 had a Masters and PhD respectively equivalent to 72% and 28%.

**Table 4.3: Years of Experience of Respondents**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | Frequency | Percent (%) |
| Valid | 1-5 | 16 | 16 |
| 6-10 | 25 | 24 |
| 11-15 | 43 | 42 |
| 16+ | 19 | 18 |
| Total | 103 | 100 |

Table 4.3 indicates the years of experience of the respondents. Among 103 participants, 16 (16%) of them possessed between 1 and 5 years of experience, 25 (24%) had between 6 to 10 years, 43 (42%) had between 11 and 15 years, and 19 (18%) had over 16 years’ experience. This shows that the highest number of respondents followed the range: 11-15 years of work experience, rest of them were quite homogenous.

## 4.2 Analysis of Data

### 4.2.1 Research Question One

How do teachers perceive the impact of gamified assessments on learner motivation compared to traditional assessments?

**Table 4.4: Perception of Teacher of the Impact of Assessment Type on Motivation**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Assessment Type | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| Traditional | 103 | 3.26 | 0.60 |
| Gamified | 103 | 3.88 | 0.59 |

According to the results of Table 4.4, teachers believe that gamified assessment can be more positively attributed to the motivation of learners than a traditional assessment. The average score of gamified assessment (M = 3.88, SD = 0.59) was quite high in comparison with the average score of traditional assessment (M = 3.26, SD = 0.60) which means that the majority of teachers tend to believe that the use of the game-like features like points, rewards and interactive tasks contributes greatly to the interest and motivation of the student to learn. This implies that gamification creates a more interactive and challenging learning experience that will encourage learners to be active and maintain their attention during tests in contrast to traditional approaches that can be seen as a less involving and more conventional one.

### 4.2.2 Research Question Two

How do teachers observe differences in student engagement between gamified and traditional assessments?

**Table 4.5: Perception of Teacher of the Differences observed Assessment Type on Student Engagement**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Assessment Type | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| Traditional | 103 | 3.27 | 0.60 |
| Gamified | 103 | 3.68 | 0.61 |

According to the findings provided in Table 4.5, the teacher notes that there is an apparent difference in student engagement during gamified and traditional test. Compared to traditional assessments, the mean score of gamified assessments is larger (M = 3.68, SD = 0.61), which means that teachers believe that students are more actively engaged and focused on the assessment process when the latter uses gamified forms. It means that the elements of gamified assessments, including instant feedback, rewards, and competitiveness, are useful to keep learners interested and engaged. Therefore, educators think that gamified tests allow a more engaging and entertaining experience that helps students become more engaged than relatively inactive traditional tests.

### 4.2.3 Research Question Three

How do gamified assessments influence learners’ performance outcomes, as observed by teachers?

**Table 4.6: Perception of Teachers on Assessment Type on Learners’ Performance**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Assessment Type | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| Traditional | 103 | 3.13 | 0.62 |
| Gamified | 103 | 3.51 | 0.60 |

According to Table 4.6, the teachers indicated that gamified assessment affected the outcomes of performance of learners positively as compared to traditional assessment. The average of gamified assessment (M = 3.51, SD = 0.60) scores is higher compared to the traditional assessment (M = 3.13, SD = 0.62), which shows that teachers consider gamification to increase understanding, retention, and overall academic performance of students. This implies that the inclusion of game-based elements like rewards, progression, and interactive feedback could enable learners to perform better because of the increased interest and long-lasting motivation. Generally speaking, the results suggest that gamified tests can not only make the learning process more entertaining but also help to achieve higher performance results according to the perception of the teachers.

## 4.3 Research Hypothesis

### 4.3.1 Research Hypothesis One

H₁: Gamified assessments positively influence learners’ motivation compared to traditional assessments, as observed by teachers.

**Table 4.7: Assessments and Learners’ Motivation**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Variable | t | df | p-value | Decision |
| Motivation (Gamified vs Traditional) | 7.268 | 100 | < .001 | Significant |

Table 4.7 indicates that there is a significant difference between how teachers view gamified and traditional assessment in terms of their ability to affect learners motivation with t(100) = 7.268 and p <.001. This implies that gamified assessments have a stronger effect of increasing the motivation of learners than the traditional assessments. The t-value and extremely low p-value prove that the difference does not occur by chance, and the elements of the game, which include rewards, levels, and feedback systems, have a positive impact and stimulate the interest and enthusiasm to learn in students. This means that Hypothesis one is accepted and this means that the teachers find gamified assessments to be a more effective motivating tool among the learners compared to conventional assessment methods.

### 4.3.2 Research Hypothesis Two

H₂: Gamified assessments increase learner engagement more effectively than traditional assessments, as observed by teachers.

**Table 4.8: Assessments and Learners’ Engagement**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Variable | t | df | p-value | Decision |
| Engagement (Gamified vs Traditional) | 4.797 | 102 | < .001 | Significant |

The results of the Hypothesis Two that Table 4.8 reported demonstrate that the learner engagement between the gamified and traditional assessments is statistically significant, t(102) = 4.797, p =.001. This finding indicates that educators report that there are increased rates of student engagement in gamified tests. The large difference suggests that the elements of competition, interactive features, and quick feedback, which are introduced in gamified assessments, attract the attention of learners and make them participate actively. As a result, Hypothesis two is accepted and it proves that gamified assessments tend to be more efficient to enhance engagement among learners than the traditional assessment methods.

### 4.3.3 Research Hypothesis Three

H₃: Gamified assessments lead to higher learner performance outcomes than traditional assessments, as observed by teachers.

**Table 4.9: Assessments and Students’ Performance**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Variable | t | df | p-value | Decision |
| Performance (Gamified vs Traditional) | 3.183 | 102 | .0019 | Significant |

The outcome of the t-test of Hypothesis Three is available in Table 4.9 where it was noted that there is a significant difference between gamified and conventional assessments in terms of performance outcomes among learners, t(102) = 3.183 p =. 0019. The outcome shows that gamified assessments could help to improve the student performance according to the perceived indicators of teachers. The p-value is significant, which implies that the use of game-like features has been proven to boost the level of students understanding, effort, and achievement rates as opposed to traditional forms of assessment. Thus, the Hypothesis three is accepted which means that the positive impact of gamified assessments on the performance outcomes of learners can be measured and supports the role of educational gamification in assessment practices.

## 4.4 Discussion of Findings

This study has provided very few findings that do not correlate well with the conceptual and theoretical viewpoints of Chapter Two, especially the empirical evidence that indicates gamification is effective in increasing motivation, engagement, and performance. The findings showed that the gamified assessment was associated with a high level of learner motivation than the traditional assessment (t (100) = 7.268, p = 0.001). This validates the claims by Deterding et al. (2011) and Deci and Ryan (2000), when they postulated under Self-Determination Theory (SDT) that incorporating aspects of autonomy, competence and relatedness in instruction activities promote intrinsic motivation. This research found that gamified assessments (in the form of points, badges, and progress indicators) enabled teachers to see students as more motivated and capable of their achievement and purpose in educational activities. This fact correlates with the results of Nah et al. (2014), who discovered that gamified vocabulary activities enhanced the persistence of the tasks and intrinsic motivation of learners, which demonstrates that gamification can be used to make assessment more interesting and self-rewarding.

Concerning the engagement of learners, the research discovered there was a significant difference in the gamified and traditional assessment (t(102) = 4.797, p < .001) with gamified assessment resulting to a higher engagement level. This is corroborated by the Flow Theory made by Csikszentmihalyi (1990) according to which the optimum engagement is experienced when both the tasks and the immediate feedback make the tasks challenging, yet not so difficult that they are not achievable by the learners. Teachers indicated that gamified tests kept students focused and engaged with them through interactive and increasingly harder tasks which fostered concentration and fun. This finding is comparable to other studies that found that gamified learning environments led to improved student engagement and satisfaction because it allowed learners to feel a sense of flow when undertaking learning tasks (Dominguez et al., 2013). The current paper supports these results, and the demonstration of the fact that gamified assessment settings offer the optimal balance of difficulty, feedback, and motivation, which would support student engagement in English language learning.

With respect to the performance outcomes, the findings revealed that the performance of learners in a gamified assessment environment markedly improved in comparison with the traditional techniques (t (102) = 3.183, p =.0019). This confirms the results of De-Marcos et al. (2017), who have stressed that group and problem tasks in the gamified learning setting enhance the academic achievements of learners as they help them better comprehend and master the skills. The educators of this paper found that gamified tests enhanced participation, critical thinking, and effort, resulting in improved grades. This observation is also indicative of the Constructivist Learning Theory which emphasizes the fact that learners create knowledge better through meaningful, interactive and social experiences. Through the gamified activities, the students managed to use the language skills in real and contextually relevant context, thus enhancing their retention and achievement in the English language tests.

The findings of this research also echo with the conceptual framework of gamification addressed in Chapter Two where the author has underscored particular factors like challenge, feedback, rewards, and collaboration as being important in the effective gamified learning experiences. Not only do the findings of teachers about increased motivation, engagement and performance support the previous studies indicating that the gamification of assessment makes the learning process more interactive and learner-centred, the findings are also more general as it applies to the motivations of learners. Competitive and cooperative aspects, when incorporated, contributed to extrinsic motivation of the students as postulated by Deci and Ryan (2000) and Deterding et al. (2011), as well as created more intrinsic motivation in learning. Furthermore, the immediate feedback and tracking of the progress contributed to maintaining persistence among learners and thus enabled students to observe their progress and define the aspects that could be improved, which aligns with the principles of continuous assessment and formative evaluation.

Summing up, the results of the current research are an empirical confirmation of theoretical premises of gamification as presented in Chapter Two. In line with Self-Determination Theory, Flow Theory, and Constructivist Learning Theory, it was found that gamified learning assessment increased their motivation, engagement and performance through the use of autonomy, instant feedback and real-life learning experience. The research supports the ideas of other researchers, including Nah et al. (2014), Dominguez et al. (2013), and De-Marcos et al. (2017), proving that gamification is not just a motivational factor but a pedagogically reasonable method that helps to turn the traditional assessment into an engaging, thought-provoking, and performance-based learning experience. These results highlight the fact that incorporating gamification into English language teaching and assessment has a practical significance in the fact that it facilitates long-term motivation in a learner and enhances academic achievements in addition to being consistent with contemporary educational theories and practices.

# CHAPTER FIVE

# SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5.1 Summary

In this paper, the authors have examined the perception of the secondary school teachers in the Lagos State with respect to the effectiveness of gamification on English Language assessment in relation to its effect on learner motivation, engagement and performance outcome. In the problem statement, it was confirmed that though conventional assessment methods are still predominant in Nigerian classrooms, they do not usually help to maintain the interest of students and their active involvement in the learning process. The modern pedagogical innovation of gamified assessment (the use of points, badges, levels, leaderboards, and interactive tasks) has the potential to transform the attitude of learners about assessment. Nonetheless, even in this context of an increasing world familiarity, even among teachers in Lagos State, there is a lack of exposure to gamified methods, challenges include lack of digital equipment and they are not confident in the pedagogical usefulness of gamification. The research thus attempted to gauge the attitude of teachers towards gamified assessments alongside the traditional assessment, and also to identify whether such innovations are relevant in improving motivation, engagement and performance among English Language learners.

The study examined three research questions based on which the impact of gamified assessment on the motivation of learners, the way teachers notice any distinction in student engagement in gamified and traditional assessment, and the way gamified assessment affects the performance outcomes of the learners were examined. The study hypothesized three hypotheses which assumed that there was no significant difference in the use of traditional and gamified assessment methods in the three constructs. The research was also restricted to the secondary school English Language teachers in Lagos State to give context-specific understanding of classroom assessment in the Nigerian secondary education.

The study was based on the descriptive survey design as it was the most appropriate in gathering quantitative measurements of how the teachers perceive, experience, and observe. One hundred and thirty-three English Language teachers were chosen through simple random sampling method and data was gathered through a structured questionnaire which was developed based on major constructs of motivation, engagement, and performance. The data analysis and the hypothesis testing were conducted by both descriptive and inferential statistics including t-tests.

The research finds that, although the conventional assessment methods are still useful in the measurement of achievement, a combination of gamified assessment, can make English Language learning participatory, learner-oriented, and motivating. It also highlights the importance of teacher training, infrastructure and curriculum integration to keep the gamified practices sustainable in the Nigerian secondary schools. The study adds to the discussion of innovation in education by pointing out how the perceptions of teachers can be used to facilitate successful implementation of gamification in English Language assessment.

## 5.2 Major Implications

According to the results of this research, some of the principal implications about assessment and learning can be made:

1. Pedagogical Implication: The research suggests that by applying gamification to the English Language assessment, you can pay a lot of attention to the motivation, engagement, and performance of a student. Gamification methods ought to thus be embraced by teachers as an addition to regular assessment to help in deepening learning and long-term interest.
2. Implication of the Curriculum Development: The results indicate that gamified assessment frameworks need to be included in the English Language-based national and school-level curriculum planning by curriculum planners and policymakers. This will see to it that there is congruence between the practice of instructional design, assessment and contemporary learner needs.
3. Technological Implication: Gamified assessment may demand the use of digital tools and platforms, thus schools must either have sufficient technological infrastructure and training in place to allow teachers to create and successfully deliver gamified learning environments.

**5.3 Conclusion**

The results of this paper have revealed clearly that gamified assessments are highly effective in motivating, engaging, and improving the performance of learners in English Language classrooms than the traditional mode of assessment. The educators noted that the use of gaming features like points, levels, badge, and leaderboards turned assessment into a dismissive but exciting activity. It goes in line with the postulates of the Self-Determination Theory that focus on autonomy, competence, and relatedness as elements of maintaining intrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Likewise, these results would be supported by Flow Theory since students showed more concentration, fun, and perseverance when exposed to properly challenging, gamified assignments (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). All these are a validation that gamification does not just serve the purpose of intrinsically motivating learners by providing them with a sense of enjoyment and mastery but also extrinsically motivating them by means of rewards in order to enhance their overall learning outcomes.

Moreover, the correlation between gamified tests and learner achievement is positive and thus, it is relevant to Constructivist Learning Theory which emphasizes on active engagement and learner-centred learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Using gamified methods, educators noted that learners would become more collaborative, reflective, and proactive when it comes to their learning activities. These empirical results of the study, thus, lend support to the previous research, by Dominguez et al. (2013) and De-Marcos et al. (2017), which indicated better engagement, motivation and academic results in gamified settings. To sum up, gamified assessments are pedagogically valid as opposed to conventional methods and promote deeper learning processes, longer-term motivation, and meaningful interactions. In order to ensure the continued effectiveness of education in the long term, however, teachers need to balance extrinsic rewards with intrinsic learning objectives.

## 5.4 Recommendations

Below includes workable recommendations on how to make lecturers more effective and student engagement more effective in institutions of higher learning:

1. The teachers are to be trained on how to create, deliver, and assess gamified assessments that are motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes balanced.
2. The administrators and the formulating curriculum developers in the school environment should apply gamification approach in assessment instructions to ensure interactive and student-oriented learning.
3. Educational policy makers ought to offer access to digital tools and resources that can promote gamified assessment, which is equitable and sustainable throughout the schools.

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