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STUDENTS' LIVED EXPERIENCES OF POSITIVE MOOD IN ENGLISH VOCABULARY ACQUISITION: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Vocabulary acquisition is influenced by cognitive, instructional, and affective factors. However, limited research has explored how learners experience the role of positive mood in vocabulary learning, particularly among Indonesian junior high school EFL learners. This study explored students' lived experiences of positive mood during English vocabulary learning at SMP Negeri Model Terpadu Madani, Palu, Indonesia. Using a qualitative phenomenological design, data were collected from 25 Grade VIII students through classroom observations and open-ended questionnaires, while four students participated in semi-structured interviews. The data were analyzed using phenomenological procedures adapted from Moustakas (1994). Five themes emerged: positive mood and student engagement, vocabulary retention and recall, confidence in vocabulary use, supportive classroom activities, and the challenges posed by negative emotions. The findings indicate that students perceived positive emotional experiences as supporting concentration, participation, memory, and willingness to use English vocabulary. Games, storytelling, collaborative activities, and supportive teacher behavior were identified as important features of an emotionally supportive learning environment. By focusing on students' lived experiences, this study extends the discussion of positive psychology in second language acquisition to the emotional dimensions of vocabulary learning in an Indonesian junior high school context. The findings suggest that teachers should consider students' emotional experiences when designing vocabulary learning activities.

Keywords: EFL Learners, English Language Learning, Phenomenology, Positive Psychology, Vocabulary Acquisition.

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary acquisition is a fundamental component of second and foreign language learning because it enables learners to comprehend texts, communicate effectively, and develop overall language proficiency. Adequate vocabulary knowledge supports listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, whereas limited vocabulary often constrains learners' ability to express ideas and understand language input (Nation, 2018; Webb & Nation, 2017). Previous studies have consistently shown that vocabulary knowledge contributes

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significantly to academic achievement and language performance. For example, vocabulary depth has been found to predict reading comprehension and academic success among English language learners (Alsahafi, 2023; Hasan et al., 2020; Tong et al., 2023). Consequently, vocabulary acquisition remains a central concern in English language teaching and learning.

Research on vocabulary acquisition has traditionally focused on cognitive and instructional factors, including learning strategies, exposure, repetition, and task involvement. Studies have demonstrated that meaningful engagement with vocabulary learning activities promotes vocabulary retention and development (Ayana et al., 2024; Yanagisawa & Webb, 2022). Furthermore, technological innovations such as digital storytelling and mobile-assisted learning have been reported to enhance vocabulary acquisition by increasing learners' involvement and motivation (Behforouz & Al Ghaithi, 2025; Sabila & Salmiah, 2025). While these studies have contributed substantially to understanding how vocabulary is learned, affective factors influencing vocabulary acquisition have received comparatively less attention.

In recent years, the emergence of positive psychology has encouraged second language acquisition (SLA) researchers to investigate the role of positive emotions in language learning. Rather than focusing solely on anxiety and learning difficulties, positive psychology emphasizes learners' strengths, well-being, and positive emotional experiences (Dewaele et al., 2019; MacIntyre et al., 2019). Within language learning contexts, positive emotions such as enjoyment, enthusiasm, and confidence have been associated with greater engagement, motivation, and achievement (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012). According to the Broaden-and-Build Theory, positive emotions broaden learners' cognitive and behavioral repertoires, enabling them to explore learning opportunities, participate actively, and build personal resources over time (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012).

One of the most extensively investigated constructs within positive psychology is Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE), which refers to the positive emotional experiences learners encounter during language learning. Research has consistently demonstrated that enjoyment positively influences language learning outcomes. Dewaele and Alfawzan (2018) found that enjoyment may exert a stronger influence on language performance than anxiety, while Li and Dewaele (2021) reported that supportive classroom environments contribute to higher levels of enjoyment and lower levels of anxiety. Likewise, Zheng and Zhou (2022) and Wu and Kabilan (2025) showed that positive emotional experiences enhance learner engagement, participation, and achievement. These findings suggest that emotions play an important role in shaping language learning processes.

Positive emotional experiences may be particularly relevant to vocabulary acquisition because vocabulary learning requires sustained attention, active engagement, and repeated exposure to lexical items. Learners who experience positive emotions are more likely to participate in learning activities, focus on instructional input, and persist in learning tasks. Positive emotions may therefore facilitate vocabulary acquisition by enhancing concentration, memory retention, and willingness to communicate. Moreover, positive emotional experiences are closely associated with motivation, which is widely recognized as a key determinant of language learning success (Al-Hoorie, 2017; Dörnyei et al., 2015).

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Learners who enjoy learning activities are generally more motivated to engage with language tasks and expand their vocabulary knowledge.

Within the Indonesian EFL context, studies have increasingly explored emotional and motivational dimensions of language learning. Saputra and Abdullah (2023) emphasized the importance of emotional engagement in sustaining students' participation in English learning. Similarly, Wardani and Aridah (2024) found that positive classroom experiences contribute to foreign language enjoyment among Indonesian junior high school learners, while Listiani and Sutrisno (2024) reported that enjoyment and anxiety coexist in students' English learning experiences. Other studies have examined vocabulary learning and motivation, showing that motivation contributes significantly to vocabulary achievement and language performance (Kainta & Rombot, 2020; Puspitasari et al., 2024). Research has also highlighted the importance of vocabulary learning strategies in facilitating vocabulary development among Indonesian EFL learners (Nur & Jusoh, 2022).

Although positive emotions have received increasing attention in second language acquisition research, positive mood and Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE) should not be treated as identical concepts. Positive mood refers broadly to a favorable emotional state that may shape learners' attention, participation, and learning experiences. FLE, in contrast, refers more specifically to enjoyment experienced in the process of learning or using a foreign language. Although these concepts may overlap, examining positive mood allows attention to a broader range of learners' emotional experiences, including happiness, relaxation, enthusiasm, and emotional comfort during vocabulary activities.

Previous studies in Indonesian EFL contexts have examined foreign language enjoyment, anxiety, motivation, and vocabulary learning strategies (Kainta & Rombot, 2020; Listiani & Sutrisno, 2024; Nur & Jusoh, 2022; Wardani & Aridah, 2024). However, less attention has been given to how learners themselves describe the ways positive emotional experiences relate to vocabulary learning, particularly at the junior high school level. More specifically, students' perceptions of how mood relates to engagement, vocabulary recall, confidence, and classroom interaction remain insufficiently explored in this context.

To address this gap, the present study adopts a phenomenological approach to explore Grade VIII students' lived experiences of positive mood during English vocabulary learning at SMP Negeri Model Terpadu Madani, Palu, Indonesia. Rather than measuring the causal effect of mood on vocabulary achievement, the study examines how students perceive and describe the relationship between their emotional experiences and vocabulary learning. Its contribution lies in bringing together these experiential dimensions within a specific Indonesian junior high school context. The findings may help teachers better understand students' emotional experiences and consider them when designing supportive vocabulary learning activities.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach using a phenomenological design to explore students' lived experiences regarding the influence of positive mood on English

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vocabulary acquisition. Phenomenology seeks to understand how individuals perceive and make meaning of a particular phenomenon based on their experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). The design was considered appropriate because the study aimed to investigate how students experienced positive emotional states during English learning activities and how these experiences influenced their vocabulary learning processes. By focusing on participants' subjective perspectives, the study sought to uncover the essence of the relationship between positive mood and vocabulary acquisition in an authentic educational context.

Research Setting and Participants

The study involved 25 Grade VIII students at SMP Negeri Model Terpadu Madani, Palu, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia. Participants were selected through purposive sampling because they could provide relevant information about their experiences of English vocabulary learning. The 25 students participated in classroom observations and completed open-ended questionnaires. Four students were selected for in-depth interviews to provide more detailed accounts of their emotional experiences during vocabulary learning. The selection considered students' participation in English classroom activities and variations in their motivation and engagement. The interviews complemented the broader observations and questionnaire responses by providing more detailed descriptions of students' perspectives.

Data Collection

Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and open-ended questionnaires. The use of multiple sources of evidence enabled data triangulation and enhanced the credibility of the findings.

Classroom Observation

Classroom observations were conducted during English vocabulary learning activities to capture students' emotional expressions, participation patterns, and engagement with learning tasks. Particular attention was given to observable indicators of positive mood, including smiling, enthusiasm, relaxed behavior, active participation, and willingness to interact with peers and teachers. Observation data were recorded using observation sheets and field notes.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected participants following the classroom observations. The interviews explored students' perceptions of positive mood, emotional comfort, classroom engagement, motivation, and experiences of learning vocabulary in English classes. An interview guide consisting of open-ended questions was used to encourage participants to describe their experiences in depth while allowing

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flexibility for follow-up questions. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Open-Ended Questionnaire

The questionnaire served as a complementary data source rather than a quantitative measurement instrument. It provided written reflections from the participating students and helped identify recurring experiences that could be compared with the interview accounts and classroom observation notes. The comparison of these sources supported the identification and interpretation of themes related to positive mood and vocabulary learning.

Research Instruments

The primary instrument in this study was the researcher, consistent with qualitative inquiry principles (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Supporting instruments included an observation protocol, a semi-structured interview guide, and an open-ended questionnaire. The observation protocol focused on indicators of positive mood, classroom engagement, peer interaction, and vocabulary learning behaviors. The interview guide explored students' emotional experiences, confidence, motivation, and vocabulary acquisition, while the questionnaire gathered written reflections regarding the influence of positive mood on learning.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using phenomenological procedures adapted from Moustakas (1994). First, all interview transcripts, observation notes, and questionnaire responses were read repeatedly to achieve familiarity with the data. Second, significant statements related to students' experiences of positive mood and vocabulary acquisition were identified through a process of horizonalization. Third, similar statements were grouped into thematic clusters representing common patterns of experience. These themes were then used to develop textural descriptions of what participants experienced and structural descriptions of how those experiences occurred. Finally, the textural and structural descriptions were synthesized to capture the essence of students' experiences regarding the influence of positive mood on English vocabulary acquisition.

To support the analytical process, the study also adopted the qualitative data analysis procedures proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. These procedures facilitated systematic organization and interpretation of the data throughout the analysis process.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical procedures were considered throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, and students were informed about the purpose of the research and the use of their responses. Because

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the participants were minors, parental or guardian consent and students' assent were obtained where required by the applicable institutional procedures. Participants' identities were protected through the use of codes in reporting interview excerpts. The collected data were used for research purposes and handled with attention to confidentiality.

Trustworthiness

To enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, methodological triangulation was employed through the use of observations, interviews, and questionnaires. Data from these sources were compared and cross-checked to identify converging patterns and ensure consistency in interpretation. In addition, participants' responses were carefully reviewed throughout the analysis process to maintain the authenticity of their perspectives and experiences.

RESULTS

Positive Mood Enhances Students' Engagement in Vocabulary Learning

The findings consistently revealed that positive mood played an important role in increasing students' engagement during English vocabulary learning activities. Evidence from classroom observations, interviews, and questionnaires indicated that students who experienced positive emotions were more actively involved in learning tasks and classroom interactions.

Classroom observations showed that students who appeared happy, relaxed, and enthusiastic participated more actively in vocabulary-learning activities. They frequently volunteered answers, responded to teachers' questions, engaged in group discussions, and demonstrated enthusiasm when completing learning tasks. Students also appeared more attentive and responsive during interactive activities such as games, storytelling, and quizzes. Conversely, students who appeared less enthusiastic tended to participate less frequently and showed lower levels of attention.

The interview data further supported these observations. Participants consistently described positive emotions as encouraging greater involvement in learning activities. One participant explained:

> "I feel happier when the teacher uses games because learning English becomes more interesting. When I enjoy the lesson, I want to answer questions and join the activities." (S01)

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Another student stated:

"If the class is fun, I pay more attention to the lesson. I am not afraid to participate because everyone is enjoying the activity." (S02)

Similarly, another participant reported:

"When I am in a good mood, I become more active. I like answering questions and trying to learn new words." (S03)

Questionnaire responses reinforced these findings. Most students associated positive mood with feelings of happiness, enthusiasm, motivation, and comfort. Many respondents explicitly reported that these feelings increased their willingness to participate in classroom activities and encouraged them to engage more actively in English learning.

Taken together, the findings indicate that positive mood functions as a facilitating factor that promotes behavioral engagement, participation, and active involvement in vocabulary learning.

Positive Mood Facilitates Vocabulary Retention and Recall

A second major theme concerned the influence of positive mood on students' ability to remember and retain vocabulary. Participants consistently perceived positive emotional experiences as contributing to improved concentration and memory during English lessons.

Interview participants frequently described positive mood as helping them remember vocabulary more effectively. One student explained:

"When I am happy, I can focus more on the lesson. Because I pay attention, it is easier for me to remember the new words that the teacher explains." (S01)

Another participant stated:

"If I enjoy the lesson, I usually remember the vocabulary even after the class ends. But when I feel bored, I forget the words quickly." (S03)

Similarly, another student commented:

"When I feel relaxed, I can remember vocabulary better because my mind is not distracted." (S04)

Students also emphasized that enjoyable learning activities strengthened memory. One participant explained:

"I remember vocabulary better when we learn through games because the activity is fun and I can remember the words together with the game." (S02)

Observation data supported these perceptions. Students appeared more attentive during enjoyable learning activities and demonstrated stronger recall of vocabulary introduced through interactive tasks compared with routine instructional activities.

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Repetition, peer interaction, and meaningful use of vocabulary during games and discussions appeared to support retention.

Questionnaire responses revealed similar patterns. Many students reported that positive mood helped them concentrate better, understand vocabulary more easily, and retain newly learned words for longer periods. Students frequently associated happiness, enthusiasm, and comfort with successful vocabulary learning experiences.

These findings suggest that positive mood facilitates vocabulary acquisition by enhancing concentration and supporting memory processes involved in vocabulary learning.

Positive Mood Increases Students' Confidence in Using English Vocabulary

The third theme highlighted the relationship between positive mood and students' confidence in using English vocabulary. Across all data sources, students consistently reported feeling more confident when they experienced positive emotions during learning activities.

Observation data indicated that students who appeared emotionally comfortable were more willing to answer questions, participate in discussions, and attempt to use English vocabulary in classroom interactions. These students demonstrated fewer signs of hesitation and greater willingness to communicate.

Interview findings revealed that positive classroom experiences reduced fear and anxiety associated with making mistakes. One participant explained:

> "When I feel comfortable in class, I am not afraid to try speaking English. Even if I make mistakes, I still want to participate." (S01)

Another student stated:

> "If the teacher creates a relaxed atmosphere, I feel more confident answering questions because I know I will not be laughed at." (S03)

Similarly, another participant commented:

> "The games and group activities help me practice vocabulary without feeling pressured. That makes me more confident." (S04)

Questionnaire responses further supported this finding. Students frequently described positive classroom experiences as increasing courage, reducing nervousness, and encouraging them to use English vocabulary more actively. Several students indicated that supportive teachers and classmates helped them feel confident when practicing new vocabulary.

Overall, the findings indicate that positive mood contributes to greater confidence and willingness to communicate, thereby creating more opportunities for meaningful vocabulary use.

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Supportive Classroom Activities Foster Positive Emotional Experiences

The findings also revealed that positive mood was strongly influenced by classroom conditions and instructional practices. Students consistently identified several classroom activities that generated positive emotional experiences and encouraged vocabulary learning.

Interview participants frequently mentioned games, quizzes, storytelling, role-playing, group discussions, and ice-breaking activities as the most enjoyable aspects of English lessons. One participant explained:

> "I like games because they make learning English feel enjoyable. We learn vocabulary while having fun." (S01)

Another student noted:

> "Storytelling helps me learn new words because I can follow the story and understand the meaning more easily." (S04)

Teacher support emerged as another important source of positive mood. One participant stated:

> "When the teacher is friendly and explains clearly, I feel comfortable learning English." (S02)

Similarly, another student commented:

> "The teacher always encourages us to try, even when we make mistakes. That makes me feel motivated." (S03)

Questionnaire findings confirmed these perceptions. Students repeatedly identified games, storytelling activities, quizzes, supportive teachers, and collaborative learning as factors that created positive learning experiences. These activities were frequently associated with feelings of happiness, enthusiasm, and motivation.

Observation data also demonstrated that students were more enthusiastic and engaged during interactive activities involving peer collaboration and communication. Such activities appeared to create emotionally supportive environments that encouraged participation and vocabulary use.

These findings suggest that positive mood is not solely an individual characteristic but is strongly influenced by classroom environments, instructional practices, and social interactions.

Negative Emotions as Barriers to Vocabulary Learning

While positive mood facilitated vocabulary learning, the findings also revealed that negative emotional experiences often hindered students' vocabulary acquisition.

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Participants consistently reported that stress, boredom, anxiety, and fatigue reduced their motivation, concentration, and ability to remember vocabulary.

Interview participants frequently described negative emotions as obstacles to learning. One student explained:

> "When I am stressed, I cannot focus on the lesson, so I forget the vocabulary more easily." (S02)

Another participant stated:

> "If I feel bored, I do not pay attention to the teacher, and it becomes difficult to remember the words." (S03)

Similarly, another student reported:

> "When I am nervous, I become afraid of making mistakes, so I do not want to speak English." (S04)

Questionnaire responses reflected similar concerns. Students commonly identified boredom, stress, tiredness, and anxiety as factors that reduced concentration and interfered with vocabulary learning. Many respondents indicated that these emotions negatively affected their ability to understand, remember, and use English vocabulary.

Observation data also showed that students displaying signs of boredom or disengagement participated less actively in classroom activities and appeared less attentive during vocabulary instruction. These students were less likely to respond to questions, volunteer answers, or engage in learning tasks.

These findings suggest that negative emotional states can create barriers to vocabulary acquisition by reducing engagement, limiting concentration, and discouraging participation. Consequently, fostering positive emotional experiences may be essential for creating optimal conditions for vocabulary learning.

To provide an overview of the findings, Table 1 summarizes the five major themes identified through the analysis of classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and open-ended questionnaires. The table presents the main finding associated with each theme and the data sources used to support its interpretation.

Table 1. Summary of Themes on Positive Mood and Vocabulary Learning

Theme	Main finding	Supporting data
Student engagement	Students described greater participation during enjoyable lessons.	Interviews, observations, questionnaires
Vocabulary retention and recall	Students perceived that positive mood helped them concentrate and remember words.	Interviews, observations, questionnaires

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Confidence in vocabulary use	Students felt more comfortable using English when they were not afraid of making mistakes.	Interviews, observations, questionnaires
Supportive classroom activities	Games, storytelling, group work, and teacher encouragement were associated with positive experiences.	Interviews, observations, questionnaires
Negative emotional experiences	Boredom, stress, and nervousness were associated with reduced attention and participation.	Interviews, observations, questionnaires

As shown in Table 1, the findings encompass both the perceived benefits of positive mood and the challenges associated with negative emotional experiences. Positive mood was associated with students' engagement, perceived vocabulary retention, and confidence in using English, while supportive classroom activities appeared to contribute to favorable emotional experiences. Conversely, boredom, stress, and nervousness were associated with reduced attention and participation. These patterns provide an overview of students' reported experiences and serve as the basis for the subsequent discussion of the relationship between emotional experiences and vocabulary learning.

DISCUSSION

Positive Mood Promotes Active Engagement in Vocabulary Learning

The findings indicate that positive mood plays a significant role in enhancing students' engagement during vocabulary learning activities. Students reported being more willing to participate in classroom discussions, answer questions, and engage in learning tasks when they experienced positive emotional states. These findings suggest that positive mood functions as a catalyst that encourages learners to become actively involved in the learning process.

This finding aligns with the principles of positive psychology, which emphasize the role of positive emotions in facilitating optimal learning experiences (MacIntyre et al., 2019). According to the Broaden-and-Build Theory, positive emotions broaden individuals' cognitive and behavioral repertoires, encouraging exploration, creativity, and active participation (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012). When learners experience enjoyment, enthusiasm, and emotional comfort, they become more open to learning opportunities and more willing to engage in challenging tasks.

The present findings are consistent with previous studies reporting that foreign language enjoyment contributes positively to learner engagement and participation. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) found that enjoyment encourages learners to become more

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involved in classroom activities and promotes positive learning experiences. Similarly, Zheng and Zhou (2022) reported that positive emotional experiences foster greater participation and interaction among language learners. More recently, Wu and Kabilan (2025) concluded that positive emotions significantly enhance learners' engagement and commitment to language learning activities.

In the Indonesian context, the findings support those of Saputra and Abdullah (2023), who emphasized the importance of emotional engagement in EFL learning. The students in the present study perceived enjoyable classroom activities and supportive learning environments as factors that increased their willingness to participate. This suggests that emotional engagement may be particularly important in Indonesian EFL classrooms, where learners often experience limited exposure to English outside school settings.

Therefore, the findings suggest that positive mood contributes to vocabulary acquisition not only through cognitive mechanisms but also through increased behavioral engagement. Students who are emotionally engaged are more likely to interact with vocabulary, practice new words, and participate actively in learning activities that facilitate vocabulary development.

These findings suggest that the relationship between positive mood and vocabulary learning may be understood through students' engagement with classroom activities. When students described lessons as enjoyable and emotionally comfortable, they also reported greater willingness to participate and practice new words. This pattern is consistent with the Broaden-and-Build perspective, which proposes that positive emotions can broaden individuals' thought and action repertoires (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012). However, the present findings reflect students' reported experiences and observed classroom behavior rather than a direct measurement of vocabulary gains. Therefore, positive mood should be understood as a perceived facilitator of vocabulary learning, not as a proven independent cause of improved vocabulary achievement.

Positive Mood Facilitates Vocabulary Retention and Recall

Another important finding of this study is that positive mood appears to facilitate vocabulary retention and recall. Students consistently reported that they could remember vocabulary more easily when they felt happy, relaxed, and interested in classroom activities. Conversely, negative emotions such as boredom and stress were perceived as obstacles to remembering newly learned words.

This finding supports theoretical perspectives emphasizing the relationship between emotion and cognition. Positive emotions are believed to enhance attention, concentration, and cognitive flexibility, all of which contribute to effective learning processes (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012). When learners experience positive emotional states, they are more likely to allocate cognitive resources to learning tasks, resulting in deeper processing of information and stronger memory retention.

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The findings also correspond with vocabulary acquisition theories emphasizing meaningful engagement with lexical items. Webb and Nation (2017) argue that vocabulary learning is strengthened when learners interact with words repeatedly and meaningfully. Similarly, Nation (2018) emphasizes that vocabulary retention improves when learners process words in engaging and personally meaningful contexts. In the present study, students frequently associated games, storytelling, and interactive activities with improved vocabulary retention, suggesting that enjoyable learning experiences facilitate deeper engagement with vocabulary.

The findings are further supported by Yanagisawa and Webb (2022), who reported that learner involvement significantly influences vocabulary acquisition outcomes. Likewise, Behforouz and Al Ghaithi (2025) found that engaging instructional activities can enhance vocabulary learning by increasing learner attention and involvement. The students in this study similarly perceived positive mood as helping them focus on learning activities and remember vocabulary more effectively.

Within Indonesian EFL contexts, these findings extend previous studies that have primarily focused on vocabulary learning strategies and instructional techniques (Nur & Jusoh, 2022; Susanto, 2017). The present study demonstrates that emotional factors should also be considered when explaining vocabulary acquisition because students themselves perceive positive mood as facilitating memory and retention.

Positive Mood Strengthens Confidence and Willingness to Use Vocabulary

The findings further revealed that positive mood contributes to increased confidence in using English vocabulary. Students reported feeling more comfortable speaking English, answering questions, and practicing vocabulary when they experienced positive emotional states. Positive classroom experiences appeared to reduce fear of making mistakes and encourage greater willingness to communicate.

This finding can be interpreted through Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, which proposes that emotional variables influence language acquisition by affecting learners' receptiveness to linguistic input. When learners experience anxiety, fear, or stress, the affective filter becomes higher, limiting language acquisition. Conversely, positive emotional experiences lower the affective filter and facilitate learning. The students in this study frequently described positive mood as helping them feel relaxed and confident, suggesting that emotional comfort may create favorable conditions for vocabulary learning.

The findings are consistent with Dewaele and Alfawzan (2018), who reported that enjoyment often exerts a stronger influence on language performance than anxiety. Similarly, Dewaele and Dewaele (2020) found that supportive classroom environments contribute to higher levels of enjoyment and lower levels of anxiety. The students in the present study similarly emphasized the importance of supportive teachers and enjoyable classroom activities in promoting confidence.

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Furthermore, confidence may indirectly contribute to vocabulary acquisition by increasing opportunities for language use. Learners who feel confident are more likely to practice vocabulary, ask questions, participate in discussions, and experiment with newly learned words. Such behaviors provide opportunities for repeated exposure and productive use of vocabulary, which are important conditions for vocabulary development (Schmitt & Schmitt, 2020).

The findings also support Indonesian studies reporting positive relationships between motivation, confidence, and language learning outcomes (Kainta & Rombot, 2020; Puspitasari et al., 2024). Together, these studies suggest that emotional well-being and confidence are important psychological resources that facilitate language learning.

Supportive Classroom Environments Foster Positive Emotional Experiences

A notable finding of this study is that positive mood was strongly influenced by classroom environments and instructional practices. Students consistently identified games, storytelling, quizzes, group discussions, and supportive teacher behavior as sources of positive emotional experiences.

This finding reinforces the argument that emotions in language learning are socially constructed rather than solely individual characteristics. According to Dewaele and Li (2020), classroom emotions emerge through interactions among learners, teachers, and learning activities. Similarly, Dewaele and Dewaele (2020) demonstrated that teachers play a crucial role in shaping learners' emotional experiences.

The students in this study frequently associated positive mood with supportive teachers who provided encouragement and created enjoyable learning environments. These findings align with Li and Dewaele (2021), who reported that supportive classroom environments reduce anxiety and increase enjoyment among language learners. Likewise, Astuti and Lammers (2017) found that collaborative learning environments promote interaction and participation among Indonesian EFL learners.

The importance of classroom environment is particularly relevant in Indonesian EFL contexts, where opportunities to use English outside the classroom are often limited. As a result, classroom experiences become a primary source of exposure to English. When teachers create emotionally supportive learning environments, students may be more likely to engage with vocabulary learning activities and develop positive attitudes toward English.

Therefore, the findings suggest that teachers should view emotional support as an integral component of vocabulary instruction rather than as a secondary consideration. Creating enjoyable and supportive learning experiences may enhance both students' emotional well-being and their vocabulary development.

Negative Emotions Hinder Vocabulary Acquisition

While positive mood facilitated vocabulary learning, the findings also demonstrated that negative emotional experiences can hinder vocabulary acquisition. Students reported

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that boredom, stress, anxiety, and fatigue reduced concentration, limited participation, and made it more difficult to remember vocabulary.

This finding further supports Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, which emphasizes the detrimental effects of negative emotions on language learning. Students in the present study frequently described stress and boredom as factors that interfered with attention and memory, suggesting that negative emotions may reduce the effectiveness of vocabulary learning activities.

The findings are also consistent with research on foreign language anxiety. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014) argued that anxiety and enjoyment coexist in language learning but exert different influences on learner outcomes. Similarly, Listiani and Sutrisno (2024) found that Indonesian junior high school students simultaneously experience enjoyment and anxiety during English learning. The present findings confirm that negative emotions continue to influence learners' experiences even when positive emotional experiences are present.

Interestingly, students did not simply identify negative emotions as unpleasant experiences; they explicitly linked them to difficulties in remembering vocabulary, concentrating during lessons, and participating in classroom activities. This suggests that emotional experiences directly influence learners' perceptions of vocabulary acquisition.

Taken together, the findings indicate that vocabulary acquisition is influenced not only by instructional techniques and learning strategies but also by learners' emotional experiences. Positive mood appears to facilitate engagement, retention, confidence, and participation, whereas negative emotions may hinder these processes. Consequently, fostering positive emotional experiences should be considered an important component of effective vocabulary instruction in EFL classrooms.

Theoretical Contribution

The present study contributes to the growing body of positive psychology research in second language acquisition by demonstrating how positive mood influences vocabulary acquisition among Indonesian junior high school EFL learners. While previous studies have primarily focused on foreign language enjoyment, motivation, anxiety, or vocabulary learning as separate constructs, this study illustrates how emotional experiences are intertwined with vocabulary acquisition processes. The findings suggest that positive mood supports vocabulary learning through multiple pathways, including increased engagement, improved retention, greater confidence, and enhanced participation. This highlights the importance of integrating emotional and cognitive perspectives in understanding vocabulary acquisition in EFL contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study explored Grade VIII students' lived experiences of positive mood during English vocabulary learning at SMP Negeri Model Terpadu Madani, Palu, Indonesia. Five

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themes emerged: student engagement, vocabulary retention and recall, confidence in vocabulary use, supportive classroom activities, and negative emotional experiences. The findings indicate that students perceived positive mood as supporting their concentration, participation, confidence, and willingness to use English vocabulary. Games, storytelling, collaborative activities, and supportive teacher behavior were frequently associated with positive learning experiences, whereas boredom, stress, and nervousness were associated with difficulties in concentration and participation.

The study contributes to research on positive psychology in second language acquisition by highlighting how students describe the relationship between emotional experiences and vocabulary learning in an Indonesian junior high school context. Unlike studies that focus primarily on enjoyment, anxiety, or vocabulary learning strategies separately, this study brings these experiential dimensions together to examine students' perspectives on vocabulary learning.

For English teachers, the findings highlight the value of creating supportive classroom environments and providing meaningful opportunities for vocabulary practice. However, because the study relied on qualitative data from a single school, the findings should be interpreted as context-specific insights rather than evidence of a direct causal effect of positive mood on vocabulary achievement. Future research could examine these relationships across different educational contexts and combine learners' reported experiences with direct measures of vocabulary development.

Pedagogical Implications

The findings have several practical implications for English language teaching. First, teachers should recognize the importance of students' emotional well-being in vocabulary instruction. Creating positive classroom environments characterized by encouragement, emotional support, and meaningful interaction may enhance students' engagement and vocabulary development. Second, incorporating enjoyable and interactive learning activities such as games, storytelling, role-playing, collaborative tasks, and quizzes may help foster positive emotions while simultaneously providing opportunities for vocabulary practice. Third, teachers should be attentive to factors that may generate negative emotional experiences and seek to minimize classroom anxiety, excessive pressure, and boredom that could impede learning.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. The study was conducted in a single school and involved a relatively small number of participants, which may limit the transferability of the findings to other educational contexts. In addition, the study relied primarily on students' self-reported experiences, which may be influenced by individual perceptions and subjective interpretations.

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Future research may expand this line of inquiry by involving larger and more diverse participant groups across different educational levels and regions. Researchers may also employ mixed-methods or longitudinal designs to examine how positive mood influences vocabulary development over time. Furthermore, future studies could investigate the relationships among positive mood, foreign language enjoyment, motivation, self-confidence, and actual vocabulary achievement to provide a more comprehensive understanding of emotional influences on language learning.

In conclusion, the findings suggest that positive mood constitutes an important psychological resource that supports vocabulary acquisition among EFL learners. By fostering emotionally supportive learning environments, teachers may not only improve students' emotional experiences but also create more effective conditions for vocabulary learning and overall language development.

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