



Students' Perceptions of Using TikTok in Learning English Vocabulary at Senior High School

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-05-16 Revised: 2026-05-21 Accepted: 2026-06-17 Keywords: <i>TikTok;</i> <i>English vocabulary;</i> <i>Students' Perceptions;</i> <i>Perceived Usefulness;</i> <i>Perceived Ease of Use</i> DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i1.11790 Corresponding Author: Vianny Kurniawan viannykurniawan039@gmail.com English Language Education, Universitas Islam Nusantara, Bandung, West Java	<i>This study investigates students' perceptions of using TikTok in learning English vocabulary at SMAN 1 Margaasih, Bandung. The increasing integration of social media in students' daily lives has made platforms like TikTok a potential medium for educational purposes, yet most existing studies on TikTok as a vocabulary learning tool have focused on university EFL learners or measured students' general attitudes without disaggregating perceptions into specific usefulness and ease-of-use dimensions, leaving senior high school students underrepresented in this line of research. This study addresses that gap through a descriptive quantitative approach using a 16-item Likert-scale questionnaire adapted from Alshreef and Khadawardi (2023), grounded in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by Davis (1989) with two dimensions: Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU). Data were collected from 32 eleventh-grade students selected through purposive sampling, and the instrument was confirmed valid and reliable through Pearson product-moment correlation and Cronbach's Alpha testing. The results showed that students hold a positive perception of TikTok in both dimensions, with the PU dimension yielding a mean score of 3.91 (Positive) and the PEOU dimension yielding a mean score of 4.00 (Positive), producing an overall mean of 3.95 (Positive). Item 2 recorded the highest score in the PU dimension (mean = 4.16), indicating that TikTok is particularly helpful in understanding new vocabulary meanings, while Item 10 reached the Very Positive category in the PEOU dimension (mean = 4.22), reflecting students' strong agreement that TikTok is easy to access for vocabulary learning. These findings extend TAM-based evidence, previously drawn mainly from university samples, to the senior high school context, supporting the model's applicability across educational levels of language learning. The results suggest that TikTok can be integrated purposefully into secondary English vocabulary instruction as a supplementary medium to strengthen students' engagement with new words beyond the classroom.</i>

1. Introduction

English is widely recognized as an international language that plays a crucial role in education, technology, and professional life. In the educational context, vocabulary is one of the most fundamental components, serving as the foundation for developing all language skills. According to Alshreef and Khadawardi (2023), a sufficient range of vocabulary enables students to understand texts, express ideas clearly, and participate effectively in communication. Without adequate vocabulary mastery, students may experience difficulties in comprehending information and conveying their thoughts (Agazzi, 2022).

Despite its importance, many students still struggle with vocabulary learning. Common challenges include difficulty memorizing new words, understanding their meanings in context, and using them appropriately in communication. These difficulties are often compounded by conventional teaching methods that rely heavily on memorization, making the learning process monotonous and reducing students' motivation (Dwipa et al., 2024).

In recent years, the rapid advancement of digital technology has transformed many aspects of education. Social media platforms, in particular, have become part of students' daily lives and offer new opportunities for language learning. Among various social media platforms, TikTok has gained significant popularity among young people aged 13–29 and has attracted attention as a platform that can support language learning through its engaging short-form video content (McCashin & Murphy, 2022). Several studies converge on TikTok's potential as a vocabulary learning tool, though from different angles. Alshreef and Khadawardi (2023) found that the majority of EFL university students viewed TikTok as a fun and effective medium for retaining vocabulary, while Dwipa et al. (2024) attributed this appeal to how the platform presents vocabulary within engaging, everyday contexts rather than isolated word lists.

This vocabulary-focused appeal appears to extend to other language skills as well: Alweldi et al. (2024) found that university students who used TikTok for practicing English speaking also reported incidental gains in vocabulary range and pronunciation, suggesting the platform's benefits are not confined to vocabulary instruction narrowly defined. This positive pattern also holds beyond the university level: Pratami and Syafryadin (2023) and Rama et al. (2023) both reported similarly positive perceptions among high school and university students, suggesting that TikTok's appeal as a vocabulary learning medium extends across educational levels and contexts.

TikTok's relevance to vocabulary learning can be further understood through the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), proposed by Davis (1989) to explain how individuals come to accept and use a given technology. TAM identifies two main determinants of acceptance: Perceived Usefulness (PU), the extent to which a technology is believed to improve a person's performance, and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU), the extent to which using the technology is perceived as requiring little effort. When students perceive TikTok as both useful for understanding new vocabulary and easy to access and navigate, they are more likely to adopt it actively as part of their learning routine rather than treating it solely as an entertainment platform.

Empirical support for this framework comes from Adnan et al. (2024), who found that Malaysian undergraduates' acceptance and continued usage of TikTok for English learning was closely tied to how useful and easy to use they perceived the platform to be, reinforcing PU and PEOU as meaningful predictors of adoption in language-learning contexts. These two dimensions therefore provide the analytical lens through which the present study examines students' perceptions of TikTok as a vocabulary learning medium.

Beyond these earlier studies, more recent research has examined TikTok specifically among senior high school students, a population closer to the context of the present study. Tirtayasa et al. (2024) found that TikTok significantly improved students' English vocabulary scores compared to conventional teaching methods, while Rosa and Suhartatik (2025) reported that TikTok provided accessibility, engagement, and authentic contextual examples that helped learners understand vocabulary usage in real-life situations.

This experimental evidence is corroborated by Maria and Sujarwati (2025), whose quasi-experimental study with twelfth-grade students, one grade above the present study's participants, found a statistically significant improvement in vocabulary mastery following TikTok-based instruction compared to a control group in vocabulary mastery following TikTok-based instruction compared to a control group, lending further weight to TikTok's effectiveness specifically at the senior high school level. More broadly, Arciaga (2025) situates such findings within the growing recognition of TikTok as a mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) tool capable of supporting not only vocabulary but also learners' broader digital literacy.

These findings extend evidence that was previously drawn mainly from university EFL learners, such as those studied by Alshreef and Khadawardi (2023) and Simanungkalit and Katemba (2023), to the senior high school level, where students' learning autonomy and digital habits may differ from those of university learners. At the school level, adoption of platforms like TikTok for learning purposes is also shaped by factors such as peer influence, perceived enjoyment, and prior digital experience (Abas et al., 2025), factors that may help explain why senior high school students' perceptions could differ from those reported in university samples, where TikTok's academic value is typically discussed mainly in terms of usefulness and ease of use.

However, despite growing interest, limited studies have examined how senior high school students in Indonesia specifically perceive TikTok as a vocabulary learning tool using the TAM framework. Most existing studies were conducted in university or non-Indonesian contexts, and even those conducted in Indonesian high school settings, such as Rama et al. (2023) and Pratami and Syafryadin (2023), tend to measure students' general attitudes toward TikTok without disaggregating the analysis into specific usefulness and ease-of-use indicators. This gap points to the need for a descriptive quantitative study that specifically investigates senior high school students' perceptions of TikTok through the two TAM dimensions.

Beyond addressing this literature gap, understanding which of the two dimensions, usefulness or ease of use, more strongly shapes students' acceptance of TikTok carries practical significance for classroom practice, as it can help teachers decide how to integrate the platform into vocabulary instruction more purposefully rather than leaving its use to students' own initiative. The present study addresses this gap by examining students' perceptions of using TikTok for English vocabulary learning at SMAN 1 Margaasih, Bandung, guided by two research questions: (1) What are students' perceptions of using TikTok in learning English vocabulary? and (2) How effective is TikTok in helping students learn English vocabulary? By disaggregating students' perceptions into the PU and PEOU dimensions specifically among senior high school students, an educational level still underrepresented in TAM-based TikTok research, this study offers a more precise contribution than existing general-attitude studies at the same level, while extending TAM-based evidence previously drawn mainly from university learners into the senior high school context.

2. Method

This study employs a descriptive quantitative research design. This approach was chosen because the primary objective is to describe and explain students' perceptions in the form of numerical data and percentages without testing hypotheses or establishing causal relationships (Sugiyono, 2019; Creswell, 2014). This design is consistent with previous studies on TikTok and language learning (Alshreef & Khadawardi, 2023; Pratami & Syafrayadin, 2023).

This study was conducted at SMAN 1 Margaasih, Bandung, during the 2025/2026 academic year. The population consisted of active 11th-grade students who use TikTok regularly for learning purposes. Purposive sampling was employed because not every student in the population had direct experience using TikTok specifically for English vocabulary learning, so random sampling would have risked selecting participants who could not meaningfully respond to the questionnaire (Creswell, 2014). Based on this technique, 32 eleventh-grade students were selected according to three criteria: (1) they are active students at SMAN 1 Margaasih; (2) they have a TikTok account; and (3) they have experience accessing English vocabulary content on TikTok. This sample size is consistent with Sugiyono's (2019) recommendation of 30–500 participants for quantitative research.

The research instrument was a 16-item Likert-scale questionnaire adapted from Alshreef and Khadawardi (2023), divided into two dimensions based on the TAM framework: Perceived Usefulness (PU, Items 1–8) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU, Items 9–16). The items were adapted into the Indonesian context and rephrased to suit senior high school students rather than the university EFL learners in the original instrument. Content validity was established by consulting the research advisor to confirm that each item was relevant to the research objectives and accurately represented the intended constructs.

Construct validity was then examined through a pilot study involving students outside the main sample, with an item considered valid if its corrected item-total correlation reached at least 0.50 (Pratami & Syafrayadin, 2023). Each questionnaire item was measured using a five-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating Strongly Disagree and 5 indicating Strongly Agree. The questionnaire was distributed through Google Forms via a WhatsApp group. Following the pilot study, the validity of the instrument was confirmed using the Pearson product-moment correlation, while its reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. Both analyses were conducted using Microsoft Excel.

Ethical considerations were also addressed given its involvement of human participants. Before distributing the questionnaire, the researcher explained the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the confidentiality of responses to all prospective respondents through the WhatsApp group used for data collection. Participation was voluntary, and students could withdraw at any point without academic consequence. Responses collected through Google Forms were anonymous, as the instrument did not request participants' names or other identifying information. Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the relevant teacher and school authorities at SMAN 1 Margaasih prior to data collection.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, and mean scores, using the formula $\bar{X} = \Sigma f.s / N$ (Pratami & Syafrayadin, 2023). Microsoft Excel was considered adequate for this purpose, as the descriptive quantitative design required only frequency, percentage, and mean calculations rather than inferential statistical testing. More advanced statistical software such as SPSS may offer added value for future studies that extend this analysis further, for instance through inferential comparison between the PU and PEOU dimensions. Mean scores were interpreted using the scale shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Mean Score Interpretation Scale

Mean Score Range	Category	Interpretation
4.21 - 5.00	Very Positive	Students strongly perceive TikTok as important
3.41 - 4.20	Positive	Students perceive TikTok as important
2.61 - 3.40	Neutral	Students are uncertain about TikTok's importance
1.81 - 2.60	Negative	Students do not perceive TikTok as important
1.00 - 1.80	Very Negative	Students strongly do not perceive TikTok as important

Adapted from Alshreef and Khadawardi (2023).

3. Results

Validity and Reliability

Before the main analysis, validity and reliability tests were conducted. All 16 items were declared valid, with Pearson r values ranging from 0.397 to 0.800, all exceeding the r -table value of 0.349 ($N = 32$, $\alpha = 0.05$). Formal tests of statistical assumptions such as linearity and normality were not conducted prior to the Pearson correlation analysis, a common simplification in item-validity testing with small, ordinal Likert-scale samples, though this is acknowledged as a limitation of the current analysis. The reliability test showed a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.914 for the full scale, 0.827 for the PU dimension, and 0.868 for the PEOU dimension — all well above the minimum threshold of 0.60 (Pratami & Syafryadin, 2023), indicating excellent internal consistency.

Perceived Usefulness (PU) Dimension

The mean scores for each item in the PU dimension are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Mean Scores of Perceived Usefulness (PU) Dimension

Item	Statement	Mean	SD	Category
PU1	TikTok helps me learn new English vocabulary more effectively.	4.06	0.62	Positive
PU2	Using TikTok makes it easier for me to understand the meaning of new words.	4.16	0.52	Positive
PU3	I think TikTok is a useful medium for expanding my English vocabulary.	4.00	0.80	Positive
PU4	The educational content on TikTok is relevant to my vocabulary learning needs.	3.94	0.80	Positive

PU5	Watching TikTok videos helps me remember new vocabulary better.	4.12	0.61	Positive
PU6	Learning vocabulary through TikTok is more beneficial than conventional methods.	3.47	0.76	Positive
PU7	I feel that TikTok is an important tool for improving my English vocabulary.	3.81	0.78	Positive
PU8	TikTok provides authentic vocabulary materials that are beneficial for my learning.	3.69	0.69	Positive
Overall Mean		3.91	0.73^a	Positive

^a Overall SD calculated by pooling item-level responses within the dimension (n = 256).

Table 2 shows a consistently positive pattern across the PU dimension (M = 3.91, SD = 0.73), with individual item means ranging narrowly between 3.47 and 4.16. Item 2 stood out as the strongest, indicating that students found TikTok particularly helpful in clarifying the meaning of new words. Item 6 scored comparatively lower and also carried one of the larger spreads in the dimension (SD = 0.76), meaning students were more divided in their views on whether TikTok is more beneficial than conventional methods; roughly half of respondents remained neutral on this point rather than clearly agreeing or disagreeing. This item aside, responses were fairly tightly clustered around the Positive category.

Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) Dimension

The mean scores for each item in the PEOU dimension are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Mean Scores of Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) Dimension

Item	Statement	Mean	SD	Category
PEOU1	I find it easy to navigate TikTok to look for vocabulary learning content.	4.06	0.76	Positive
PEOU2	TikTok is easy to access whenever I want to learn English vocabulary.	4.22	0.71	Very Positive
PEOU3	Using TikTok for vocabulary learning does not require much effort.	3.75	0.84	Positive
PEOU4	TikTok features (subtitles, audio, captions) are easy to use for vocabulary learning.	4.12	0.71	Positive

PEOU5	I can learn new vocabulary through TikTok at my own pace without difficulty.	3.81	0.78	Positive
PEOU6	The English vocabulary content on TikTok is easy to understand.	3.94	0.62	Positive
PEOU7	I do not find it difficult to search for vocabulary learning content on TikTok.	3.94	0.67	Positive
PEOU8	Overall, TikTok is a user-friendly platform for English vocabulary learning.	4.12	0.71	Positive
Overall Mean		4.00	0.73^a	Positive

^a Overall SD calculated by pooling item-level responses within the dimension (n = 256).

Table 3 shows the PEOU dimension following a similar pattern (M = 4.00, SD = 0.73). Item 10 recorded both the highest mean (4.22, Very Positive) and a relatively tight spread (SD = 0.71), reflecting broad agreement that TikTok is easy to access. Item 11 scored lowest (3.75) and showed the widest spread in the dimension (SD = 0.84), suggesting more varied experiences with how much effort vocabulary learning through TikTok actually requires; a small minority of students disagreed outright, which the frequency data in Table 3 shows more precisely than the mean alone can.

Figure 1 illustrates this pattern across all 16 items, with PEOU items generally showing slightly higher and more tightly clustered scores than PU items. A formal inferential comparison between the PU and PEOU dimensions (e.g., a paired-samples test) was not conducted, as the available data consisted of aggregated item-level frequencies rather than respondent-level scores; the descriptive comparison above (PU M = 3.91 vs. PEOU M = 4.00) is offered as an indicative rather than statistically tested difference.

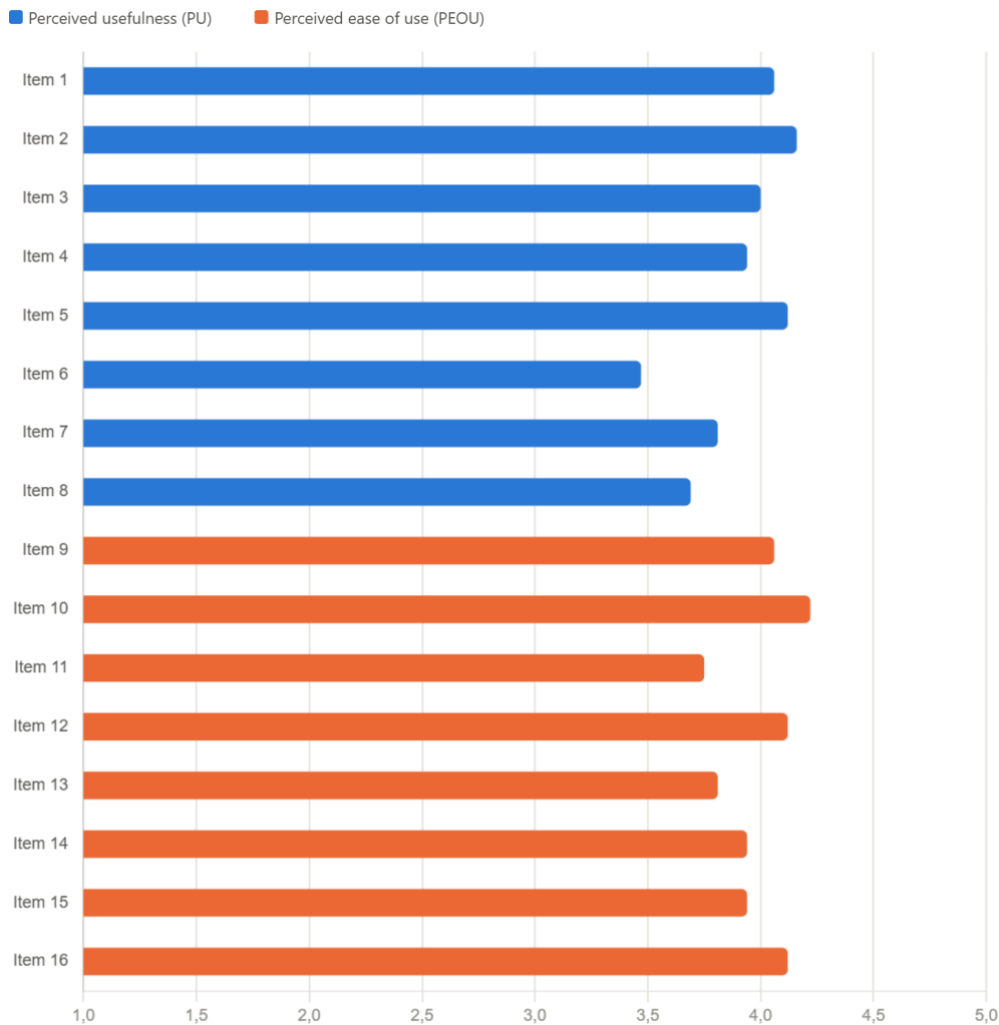


Figure 1. Mean scores of all questionnaire items across the PU and PEOU dimensions.

4. Discussion

1. Students' Perceptions of Using TikTok in Learning English Vocabulary (RQ1)

A. Overall Result and Interpretation

The PU dimension yielded an overall mean of 3.91, placing it in the Positive category (Table 1) and directly answering Research Question 1: students at SMAN 1 Margaasih hold a positive perception of TikTok's usefulness in learning English vocabulary. No items fell into the Neutral, Negative, or Very Negative categories; item-level detail, including the comparatively higher score on Item 2 and lower score on Item 6, is presented in Table 2 and Figure 1 above rather than repeated here.

B. How These Findings Relate to Other Studies

These results help explain why TikTok is perceived as useful in the first place: rather than presenting vocabulary as isolated word lists, the platform embeds new words in short, visual, and contextualized content, a format that plausibly makes meaning easier to infer and retain than conventional list-based memorization. This may also explain why Item 2, on understanding word meaning, scored higher than Item 6, on TikTok's benefit relative to conventional methods; the format appears to help students grasp meaning in the moment more than it displaces established study habits.

This interpretation is consistent with Alshreef and Khadawardi (2023), who similarly found that a majority of EFL students reported improved vocabulary retention and enjoyment through TikTok, and with Dwipa et al. (2024), who attributed TikTok's usefulness to its engaging, everyday contextual presentation of vocabulary rather than to the platform itself. Framed this way, the present findings extend rather than merely repeat these earlier results: they suggest that usefulness is tied specifically to how vocabulary is presented, not to TikTok's popularity as a platform, which aligns with the Perceived Usefulness component of the TAM (Davis, 1989) in explaining why students who see a clear performance benefit are more likely to adopt a technology actively in their learning.

2. The Effectiveness of TikTok in Helping Students Learn English Vocabulary (RQ2)

A. Overall Result and Interpretation

The PEOU dimension recorded an overall mean of 4.00, placing it in the Positive category (Table 1) and answering Research Question 2: students positively perceive TikTok as effective in helping them learn English vocabulary. The combined overall mean of 3.95 further confirms a consistently favorable perception across both dimensions; item-level detail, including Item 10's Very Positive score and Item 11's comparatively lower score, is presented in Table 3 and Figure 1 above rather than repeated here.

B. How These Findings Relate to Other Studies

The particularly high score on accessibility (Item 10) is unsurprising given that TikTok is a platform students already use daily for non-academic purposes; unlike a dedicated learning application, it requires no new habit formation; students simply redirect an existing behavior toward a new purpose. This may explain why PEOU (mean = 4.00) was rated slightly higher than PU (mean = 3.91) overall: ease of use is largely inherited from students' prior familiarity with the platform, whereas usefulness for vocabulary learning specifically still depends on the quality and relevance of the content they happen to encounter.

These findings align with the Perceived Ease of Use component of the TAM framework (Davis, 1989), which asserts that the easier a technology is to use, the more likely users are to adopt it consistently. The high PEOU scores suggest that students encounter minimal barriers when using TikTok for vocabulary learning. This is also consistent with the Technology-Mediated Learning Theory (Bower, 2019), which emphasizes that technology expands access to education by enabling learning anytime and anywhere — a characteristic strongly reflected in Item 10's Very Positive score. Rama et al. (2023) and Pratami and Syafradin (2023) reported similarly positive perceptions among high school and university students regarding TikTok's effectiveness, confirming the consistency of these findings across different educational levels.

3. How This Study Differs from Prior Research

While the overall positive perception found in this study is broadly consistent with earlier work, it also departs from that work in one respect worth stating plainly. Studies such as Alshreef and Khadawardi (2023) and Simanungkalit and Katemba (2023) were conducted among university students, whose learning autonomy and digital habits likely differ from those of senior high school students. Studies conducted at the high school level, such as Rama et al. (2023), measured students' general attitudes toward TikTok without separating the analysis into distinct usefulness and ease-of-use components.

The present study's contribution is therefore not that it confirms a positive perception again, but that it identifies *which* component, ease of use, drives that perception more strongly at the senior high school level specifically, a distinction the general-attitude studies at this level could not make. This also means the present findings should not be read as a straightforward replication of university-level results: the mechanism behind the positive perception, students redirecting an existing platform habit toward vocabulary learning, may be more pronounced among high school students whose daily TikTok use is typically heavier than that of university students juggling academic and professional platforms.

4. *A Caution on TikTok's Limitations as a Learning Medium*

These positive results should not be read as suggesting TikTok is free of drawbacks as a learning medium. TikTok remains, first and foremost, an entertainment platform: Simanungkalit and Katemba (2023) similarly identified distraction and app overuse among the disadvantages university students associated with using TikTok for vocabulary learning, and Rosa and Suhartatik (2025) reported that their EFL participants' attention was occasionally pulled toward unrelated entertainment content while trying to review vocabulary.

It is also plausible that the platform's short, fast-paced format encourages brief, surface-level exposure to new words rather than the sustained practice that deeper vocabulary retention typically requires, though this study did not test that possibility directly. Taken together with the moderate score on Item 6, these cautions point toward the same conclusion: TikTok functions best as a guided, teacher-integrated supplement rather than an unsupervised, stand-alone learning tool.

5. *Pedagogical Implications*

The strongly positive PEOU score, particularly Item 10's accessibility rating, suggests TikTok can realistically be integrated into structured vocabulary practice rather than left as incidental, unstructured exposure. Rather than leaving students to encounter vocabulary content by chance, teachers could curate specific TikTok accounts or hashtags focused on English vocabulary and assign them as part of homework or independent practice, converting a platform students already use daily into a purposeful learning routine (Abas et al., 2025).

At the same time, the moderate score on Item 6 indicates that TikTok is best positioned as a complement to, rather than a replacement for, classroom instruction; teachers might, for example, use short TikTok clips as a warm-up or review activity within a lesson rather than assigning them as the primary instructional material. For curriculum designers and school administrators, these findings suggest that structured, teacher-guided integration of short-form video platforms offers a low-cost way to enrich vocabulary instruction, particularly in schools where access to more specialized educational technology is limited.

Taken together, these interpretations should be read alongside the limitations of the study's design, namely its single-school sample and reliance on self-reported perceptions rather than measured vocabulary outcomes, discussed further in the Conclusion.

5. Conclusion

The results of this study show that students at SMAN 1 Margaasih, Bandung, hold a positive perception of TikTok as a medium for learning English vocabulary. The PU dimension recorded a mean score of 3.91 (Positive), with Item 2 receiving the highest score (mean = 4.16), indicating that TikTok is particularly helpful in understanding new vocabulary meanings. The PEOU dimension obtained a mean score of 4.00 (Positive), with

Item 10 reaching the Very Positive category (mean = 4.22), reflecting students' strong recognition of TikTok's accessibility. The overall mean score of 3.95 (Positive) confirms consistently favorable perceptions across both dimensions, in line with the TAM framework (Davis, 1989) and the Technology-Mediated Learning Theory (Bower, 2019).

A favorable aspect of this study is the high reliability of the research instrument (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.914$ for the full scale; $\alpha = 0.827$ for PU; $\alpha = 0.868$ for PEOU), along with confirmed validity for all 16 items ($r = 0.397\text{--}0.800 > r\text{-table} = 0.349$), ensuring the data are trustworthy and consistent.

This study has several limitations: the sample was limited to 32 students from one school, data were collected only through a self-report questionnaire without triangulation, and the study measured perceptions rather than actual vocabulary gains. Future researchers are recommended to involve larger and more diverse samples, use mixed-method approaches such as interviews or observation for richer data, and examine the direct impact of TikTok use on vocabulary test scores. English teachers are also encouraged to draw on the structured integration strategies outlined in the Discussion, rather than leaving TikTok as incidental exposure, while students are encouraged to use the platform more intentionally for educational purposes.

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