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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TIKTOK VIDEO ENGAGEMENT AND SELF-DIRECTED VOCABULARY LEARNING AMONG EFL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The increasing prevalence of short-form video platforms has expanded opportunities for informal English learning beyond traditional classroom settings. TikTok has garnered a lot of interest among these platforms because of its microlearning features and high student engagement levels; nevertheless, there is still no empirical data connecting TikTok engagement to independent vocabulary acquisition. The purpose of this study is to look at the connection between EFL university students' self-directed vocabulary learning and their involvement with English TikTok videos. 86 undergraduate EFL students from a state institution in Palangka Raya, Indonesia, participated in the study, which used a quantitative correlational design. Two validated tools were used to gather data: the Self-Directed Vocabulary Learning Scale, which evaluates goal-setting, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation, and the TikTok Video Engagement Scale, which measures behavioural, affective, and cognitive involvement. Descriptive statistics and Pearson's product-moment correlation analysis were used to analyse the data. Higher levels of involvement were linked to more autonomous vocabulary acquisition practices, according to the results, which showed substantial positive correlations between all aspects of TikTok engagement and self-directed vocabulary learning ($r = .445–.674$, $p < .001$). Self-monitoring and self-evaluation were most strongly correlated with affective and cognitive involvement. These results imply that watching English-language TikTok videos has a significant positive impact on pupils' self-directed vocabulary growth. The study provides pedagogical implications for using digital interaction to improve learner autonomy and vocabulary acquisition in higher education and indicates that TikTok can serve as an effective supplemental microlearning tool in EFL situations.

Keywords: TikTok, EFL learners, self-directed vocabulary learning, digital engagement, microlearning

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INTRODUCTION

The use of digital technologies has drastically changed language instruction during the past ten years. The emergence of short-form video platforms like TikTok, which blend entertainment and education through multimodal, user-generated content, is one notable development. With over one billion active users by 2023, TikTok has grown to become one of the most downloaded apps globally since its 2016 debut (Statista, 2023). TikTok gives EFL students real English input that encourages creativity, engagement, and sustained attention because of its visually appealing and dynamic design. According to Conde-Caballero et al. (2024), these traits are consistent with the concepts of microlearning, which emphasise short and targeted learning experiences appropriate for the digital consuming habits of modern learners. In EFL situations, where learners frequently have limited access to actual English exposure outside of formal classroom settings, this change is especially pertinent.

Recent studies on mobile-assisted vocabulary learning also highlight the role of self-regulation and engagement in lexical development (Rahmani et al., 2022; Boroughani et al., 2023). Social media

platforms are becoming more widely acknowledged as useful resources for vocabulary building within the larger field of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL). According to a systematic review by Okumuş Dağdeler (2023), vocabulary acquisition is the most often studied topic in MALL research, indicating a high level of scholarly interest in the ways that mobile technology facilitate lexical learning. Because of its accessibility, mobility, and amusing structure, TikTok has become a popular media among numerous platforms. This trend is supported by empirical research: Simanungkalit and Katemba (2023) reported that Indonesian university students frequently encountered new English words through TikTok videos and independently sought their meanings, indicating early forms of self-initiated learning behaviour; Alghameeti (2022) found that Saudi EFL learners perceived TikTok as effective for expanding vocabulary.

Even though TikTok-assisted language learning is becoming more popular, most research to date has focused on learners' views (Alghameeti, 2022; Simanungkalit & Katemba, 2023), technological acceptability (Shen et al., 2023), or general motivating effects (Okumuş Dağdeler, 2023). These studies show that students actively use and appreciate digital platforms, but they don't offer any factual data on whether using TikTok promotes long-term, self-directed vocabulary learning. For example, Shen et al. (2023) found variables affecting students' autonomous use of mobile learning resources, but they did not look at the relationship between vocabulary outcomes and social media platform participation. Similarly, Willoughby and Sell (2024) noted the absence of empirical research connecting learner autonomy to engagement measures like frequency, interaction, and content production while acknowledging the pedagogical potential of video-based learning. Nevertheless, recent evidence suggests that engagement with short-form English video content on TikTok may facilitate autonomous vocabulary development through repeated exposure, affective involvement, and reflective language use in informal digital learning environments (Rita & Subekti, 2023; Juwita & Syahputra, 2024).

This disparity is important since effective self-directed learning is mostly predicted by engagement, which is defined as behavioural, emotional, and cognitive investment in learning activities (Garrison, 2021). The interactive features of TikTok, including as commenting, remixing, and algorithmic personalisation, can promote involvement that goes beyond simple amusement. To ascertain if these characteristics actually aid in language acquisition, however, empirical validation is necessary. The current study presents TikTok engagement as a potential method connecting informal digital participation with self-directed vocabulary learning, drawing on Redmond et al.'s (2018) multidimensional engagement paradigm and Holec's (1981) concept of learner autonomy.

According to earlier studies, EFL students who organise, track, and assess their vocabulary acquisition using mobile devices exhibit greater lexical autonomy and retention (Guo et al., 2022). However, nothing is known about the connection between watching English-language TikTok videos and learning vocabulary on one's own, especially in Indonesian higher education settings following the pandemic. Thus, the current study is to investigate the connection between EFL university students' self-directed vocabulary learning and their involvement with English TikTok videos. It specifically looks into the relationship between self-directed vocabulary acquisition habits and engagement levels, which are represented in viewing frequency, interactive participation, and content creation. Consequently, the following research question serves as the basis for this investigation:

RQ: Is there a significant relationship between behavioural, affective, and cognitive engagement with English TikTok videos and EFL university students' self-directed vocabulary learning?

METHOD

Research design

The association between English TikTok video engagement and self-directed vocabulary learning among EFL university students was investigated in this study using a quantitative correlational design and a survey-based methodology. For finding relationships between naturally occurring variables without the need for experimental manipulation, a correlational strategy is suitable (Creswell, 2014; Cohen et al., 2018). A survey approach made it possible to gather standardised data from a specific population, which made statistical analysis effective and trustworthy (Alshreef &

Khadawardi, 2023; Usman et al., 2024). This methodological strategy is consistent with earlier EFL digital learning research examining how learner autonomy and vocabulary development are supported by interaction with mobile devices and social media (Guo et al., 2022; Shen et al., 2023; Boroughani et al., 2023). The purpose of this design was to produce empirical data about the relationship between students' involvement with English-language TikTok material and their ability to autonomously control and track vocabulary acquisition.

Participants

86 undergraduate EFL students (N = 86) enrolled in linguistics and English education programs at a university in Palangka Raya, Indonesia, made up the participants. Their English language levels ranged from intermediate to upper-intermediate, and their ages ranged from 18 to 23. Two inclusion criteria were used in the purposive sample technique: (1) active engagement with English-language TikTok videos at least three times per week, and (2) enrolment in an academic program relevant to English. Online announcements in the classroom and academic WhatsApp groups were used to recruit participants. Before completing the survey, informed consent was obtained, and participation was entirely voluntary.

G*Power 3.1 was used to do an a priori power analysis for a two-tailed Pearson correlation (α =.05, power =.80). According to the research, a medium effect size (r =.30) could only be found with a minimum sample size of 85 participants. As a result, the final sample of 86 participants guaranteed sufficient statistical power to identify significant associations between self-directed language learning and TikTok participation.

Instruments

A single online questionnaire was created by adapting and combining two previously validated items.

1. TikTok Video Engagement Scale (TVES)

Three aspects of engagement—behavioural, affective, and cognitive—were measured using the TikTok Video Engagement Scale, which was modified from Conde-Caballero et al. (2023). A five-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting "strongly disagree" and 5 denoting "strongly agree," was used to rate the instrument's fifteen items. A few lines, such as "I pay close attention to English TikTok videos that introduce new vocabulary or expressions," were slightly reworded to better fit the English-learning setting on TikTok. According to earlier studies, this scale has strong internal reliability, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from.87 to.91 (Conde-Caballero et al., 2023; Alshreef & Khadawardi, 2023).

2. Self-Directed Vocabulary Learning Scale (SDVLS)

The Self-Directed Vocabulary Learning Scale was modified from Boroughani et al. (2023), Shen et al. (2023), and Guo et al. (2022). With an emphasis on goal-setting, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation, this 18-item test evaluated students' self-directed vocabulary acquisition practices. The same five-point Likert scale was used to record responses. "I plan weekly goals for learning English words" and "I track how many new words I have mastered" were two examples. Eleven EFL students from the same institution participated in a pilot study before the primary data collection, but they were left out of the final sample. The purpose of the pilot study was to assess the reliability, readability, and clarity of the items. Based on participant comments, a few minor changes were made. Both instruments had excellent internal consistency (=.967; =.959) according to reliability analysis, which was in line with or higher than reliability levels found in earlier studies on mobile-assisted language learning and self-regulation (Guo et al., 2022; Boroughani et al., 2023; Conde-Caballero et al., 2023).

Data Collection Procedures

A Google Forms-administered online survey was used to gather data during the 2025 even semester. Four sections made up the questionnaire: (1) demographic data; (2) the TikTok video engagement scale; (3) the self-directed vocabulary learning scale; and (4) informed consent. Participants were made aware of the study's objectives, confidentiality policies, and their freedom to leave at any moment without incurring any fees. The poll link was made available for two weeks via legitimate academic communication channels, such as online classroom announcements and WhatsApp groups. Every response was automatically made anonymous. 86 valid responses were kept for study after incomplete or inconsistent entries were eliminated. Efficiency, accessibility, and

adherence to ethical research norms were guaranteed by conducting the survey online (Creswell, 2014; Cohen et al., 2018).

Data Analysis

Data were analysed using JASP version 0.95.4. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were used to evaluate the instruments' internal consistency; values of $\alpha \geq .80$ were regarded as acceptable reliability indicators. After determining if the data distribution was normal using the Shapiro-Wilk test, descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations were calculated. The associations between TikTok video engagement (behavioural, emotional, and cognitive dimensions) and self-directed vocabulary learning (goal setting, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation) were then investigated using Pearson's Product–Moment correlation analysis. This kind of analysis aligns with earlier research on mobile-assisted vocabulary learning and digital engagement (Boroughani et al., 2023; Guo et al., 2022). Cohen's (1988) criteria were used to interpret correlation strength. Because Pearson's correlation is resilient to mild departures from normality, especially with sample sizes larger than thirty, it was employed even though some variables did not fully satisfy normality assumptions (Field, 2013).

Ethical Considerations and Limitations

International and institutional ethical standards for educational research were followed in this study (Cohen et al., 2018). The university's research ethics committee granted ethical permission before any data was collected. The voluntary nature of their participation, the confidentiality of their answers, and the anonymity of their data were all explained to the participants. All data were utilised exclusively for academic reasons, and no personally identifiable information was gathered. There are a few restrictions to be aware of. Reliance on self-reported data may result in response bias, and the correlational design restricts causal inference. Furthermore, the results' generalisability is limited by the sample size and single-institution setting. To investigate how consistent interaction with English TikTok content affects vocabulary development and learner autonomy over time, future studies may use mixed-methods or longitudinal designs (Guo et al., 2022; Shen et al., 2023).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question: Is there a significant relationship between behavioural, affective, and cognitive engagement with English TikTok videos and EFL university students' self-directed vocabulary learning?

Descriptive Statistics

Students' levels of self-directed vocabulary learning and English TikTok video engagement were summarised using descriptive statistics. All of the engagement measures' mean values, as shown in Table 1, were higher than the five-point Likert scale's midpoint, indicating moderate to high participant engagement. Affective Engagement had the highest mean score ($M = 3.984$, $SD = 0.688$) of the three engagement subscales, indicating that students engaged with English TikTok material with enjoyment, interest, and emotional connection. This result is in line with earlier research highlighting the importance of affective engagement in maintaining learning persistence and digital participation (Conde-Caballero et al., 2024; Redmond et al., 2018; Lim & Park, 2022; Bond et al., 2021).

Students actively processed, thought about, and tried to comprehend vocabulary offered in English TikTok videos, as seen by the high mean score ($M = 3.960$, $SD = 0.692$) for cognitive engagement. This finding implies that students were cognitively engaged in evaluating meaning, usage, and context rather than just being exposed to words. According to earlier research, TikTok's multimodal format, which combines textual, visual, and aural components, promotes deeper cognitive processing (Guo et al., 2022; Lai et al., 2023; Alvarez & Beaven, 2023). Subtitles, images, and audio cues can help students concentrate on form and meaning at the same time, improving vocabulary understanding. All things considered, the high degree of cognitive engagement suggests that TikTok can facilitate significant language processing as opposed to superficial exposure.

Although the mean score for behavioural engagement was slightly lower ($M = 3.722$, $SD = 0.656$), it was still above the Likert scale's midpoint, indicating generally favourable behavioural participation. According to this research, students regularly watched and engaged with English-

language TikTok videos, but they were less likely to participate in more active activities like sharing, commenting, or producing material. To put it another way, behavioural participation was more receptive than productive. This pattern is consistent with the findings of Willoughby and Sell (2024), who noted that many students would rather watch videos than actively create them. In a similar vein, learners frequently exhibit strong cognitive engagement in digital learning contexts despite comparatively low behavioural participation, according to Lim & Park (2022).

Participants showed moderately good autonomy in all aspect of self-directed language acquisition. Self-Evaluation had the highest mean (M = 3.612, SD = 0.810), followed by Goal Setting (M = 3.267, SD = 0.760) and Self-Monitoring (M = 3.459, SD = 0.677). These findings show that rather than creating clear learning objectives, students were more consistent in reflecting on and tracking their vocabulary development. Self-monitoring and evaluation are important markers of metacognitive control over learning, and these patterns reflect fundamental learner autonomy principles (Holec, 1981; Garrison, 2021; Wang & Zhang, 2022; Lai et al., 2023). Overall, the descriptive results indicate that relatively strong self-directed language acquisition practices are associated with high affective and cognitive engagement with TikTok. The statistical summary of each engagement and self-directed learning dimension, including the mean and variability scores, is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Engagement and Self-Directed Vocabulary Learning. Source: JASP Output (2025)

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Behavioural Engagement	3.722	0.656	1.833	5.000
Affective Engagement	3.984	0.688	2.000	5.000
Cognitive Engagement	3.960	0.692	1.600	5.000
Goal Setting	3.267	0.760	1.000	5.000
Self-Monitoring	3.459	0.677	1.667	4.750
Self-Evaluation	3.612	0.810	1.000	5.000

Normality and Correlation Results

The Shapiro-Wilk test was used to determine the normality of the data prior to performing the correlation analysis. The findings revealed that while Self-Monitoring satisfied the normalcy assumption (p =.100), Behavioural Engagement, Affective Engagement, Cognitive Engagement, Goal Setting, and Self-Evaluation had p-values below.05, indicating deviations from a normal distribution. This situation is typical in social science studies employing Likert-scale data, even though a few variables did not fully satisfy the normalcy assumption. Because Pearson's Product-Moment correlation is resilient to modest breaches of normality, especially when the sample size surpasses 30 individuals, it was deemed suitable (Field, 2013). Table 2 summarises the Shapiro-Wilk normality test findings for each variable.

Table 2. Shapiro–Wilk normality test

Variable	W	p-value	Normality
Behavioural Engagement	0.965	.018	Not normal
Affective Engagement	0.950	.002	Not normal
Cognitive Engagement	0.929	< .001	Not normal
Goal Setting	0.965	.019	Not normal
Self-Monitoring	0.975	.100	Normal
Self-Evaluation	0.953	.004	Not normal

The links between TikTok engagement aspects (behavioural, affective, and cognitive) and self-directed vocabulary learning dimensions (goal setting, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation) were then

investigated using Pearson's Product–Moment correlation analysis. The purpose of this research was to determine the direction and intensity of linear relationships between students' self-directed vocabulary learning practices and their involvement with English TikTok videos. To ascertain whether the associations were weak, moderate, or strong, the correlation coefficients were analysed in accordance with accepted statistical principles. This analytical method made it possible to systematically investigate the relationships between various types of engagement and certain facets of learner autonomy. Table 3 displays the specific findings of the Pearson correlation analysis.

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variables	r	p	Significance Level
Behavioural – Affective Engagement	.665	< .001	Significant at p < .001
Behavioural – Cognitive Engagement	.732	< .001	Significant at p < .001
Behavioural – Goal Setting	.445	< .001	Significant at p < .001
Behavioural – Self-Monitoring	.597	< .001	Significant at p < .001
Behavioural – Self-Evaluation	.674	< .001	Significant at p < .001
Affective – Cognitive Engagement	.811	< .001	Significant at p < .001
Affective – Goal Setting	.286	.008	Significant at p < .01
Affective – Self-Monitoring	.478	< .001	Significant at p < .001
Affective – Self-Evaluation	.578	< .001	Significant at p < .001
Cognitive – Goal Setting	.298	.005	Significant at p < .01
Cognitive – Self-Monitoring	.458	< .001	Significant at p < .001
Cognitive – Self-Evaluation	.546	< .001	Significant at p < .001
Goal Setting – Self-Monitoring	.740	< .001	Significant at p < .001
Goal Setting – Self-Evaluation	.621	< .001	Significant at p < .001
Self-Monitoring – Self-Evaluation	.783	< .001	Significant at p < .001

In addition to examining the relationships between TikTok engagement dimensions and self-directed vocabulary learning, the correlation matrix also presents intercorrelations among the engagement dimensions themselves. These correlations are reported for descriptive and theoretical support purposes, as behavioural, affective, and cognitive engagement are conceptually interrelated components within digital engagement frameworks. The strong associations observed among these dimensions indicate that learners' emotional involvement, cognitive processing, and behavioural interaction with English TikTok videos tend to co-occur. However, these inter-engagement correlations are not treated as primary outcomes of the study. The central analytical focus remains on the relationships between TikTok engagement dimensions and self-directed vocabulary learning behaviours.

All engagement and self-directed learning aspects showed strong positive connections, according to the research. Affective engagement and cognitive engagement showed the greatest correlation ($r = .811$, $p < .001$), suggesting that students who were emotionally engaged with TikTok content were also more cognitively engaged with vocabulary processing. Furthermore, learners who observed their vocabulary improvement were also more inclined to evaluate their learning outcomes, according to a strong connection between self-monitoring and self-evaluation ($r = .783$, $p < .001$). Higher involvement with English TikTok videos is linked to more autonomous vocabulary acquisition behaviours, according to moderate to substantial correlations ($r = .445–.674$) between engagement dimensions and self-directed learning dimensions. These results are in line with earlier research showing beneficial connections between learner engagement, TikTok use, and autonomous vocabulary acquisition techniques (Rita & Subekti, 2023; Susanto & Suparmi, 2024; Guo et al., 2022).

Analysis and Interpretation

With correlation coefficients ranging from.445 to.674 ($p < .001$), the results of the correlation analysis show that TikTok video engagement, which includes behavioural, affective, and cognitive dimensions, has a significant positive relationship with self-directed vocabulary learning among EFL university students. According to these results, students who watch, react emotionally to, and digest English TikTok content more actively likely to be more autonomous in their vocabulary acquisition. These correlation values fall within the moderate to strong range in accordance with Cohen's (1988) guideline, highlighting the significant contribution of digital engagement to autonomous language learning. This tendency is consistent with Garrison's (2021) engagement concept, which highlights the critical role that behavioural participation and affective involvement in online contexts play in maintaining learner autonomy and motivation. In a similar vein, Redmond et al. (2018) contend that meaningful digital engagement promotes deeper emotional and cognitive investment, both of which are critical for sustaining self-directed learning practices over time.

The substantial association between affective and cognitive engagement ($r = .811$, $p < .001$) is a noteworthy finding, indicating a close relationship between emotional enjoyment and cognitive processing in digital vocabulary learning environments. This association suggests that students are more likely to make cognitive investments in learning and remembering new terminology if they find TikTok material interesting and enjoyable. This kind of interaction demonstrates TikTok's function as an informal learning environment that promotes reflective learning practices and exposes users to real English input, in addition to its position as an entertainment platform. The current results are in line with earlier studies that demonstrate how mobile-assisted vocabulary learning environments improve learning perseverance and self-regulation through meaningful engagement (Guo et al., 2022). Similarly, Usman et al. (2024) found that regular exposure to English-language TikTok videos improved vocabulary skills and self-directed learning techniques. However, these findings show strong correlations rather than causal effects because the study was correlational.

Overall, the study shows that students' self-directed vocabulary learning is favourably correlated with their involvement with English TikTok videos through enhanced connection with real-world language use, independent learning habits, and maintained motivation. The platform's multimodal characteristics, which include textual elements, aural input, and visual clues, seem to offer contextualised learning opportunities that promote deeper cognitive processing. These results support the idea that digital engagement can support independent vocabulary learning outside of traditional classroom instruction when it is paired with relevant information.

Discussion and Implications

The results of this study offer significant insights into how EFL university students' self-directed vocabulary learning is supported by their involvement with English TikTok videos, especially in digitally mediated learning situations. Significant relationships between behavioural, affective, and cognitive engagement characteristics imply that digital engagement is a key factor in autonomous vocabulary growth rather than only a motivational byproduct. These findings are consistent with the digital engagement hypothesis, which holds that the combination of emotional pleasure and cognitive investment is necessary for prolonged learning in online environments (Bond et al., 2021). In this sense, TikTok's multimodal and interactive features, like comment-based interaction, audiovisual emphasis, and subtitles, seem to promote both deeper cognitive engagement and emotional

resonance. As a result, students are more likely to control their own learning processes and stay interested in lexical topic.

In digital learning settings, emotional and mental processes are interdependent, as evidenced by the high correlation between affective and cognitive engagement. Learners are more likely to thoroughly digest vocabulary and consider language use when they find enjoyment and emotional connection in English TikTok content. Results by Juwita and Syahputra (2024), who found that students actively interacting with English TikTok videos increased their word recall through frequent exposure and focused attention, lend credence to this interpretation. Furthermore, TikTok's potential to assist independent learning practices was reinforced by Rita and Subekti's (2023) discovery that Indonesian EFL learners viewed it as an accessible and stimulating tool for vocabulary acquisition. These trends imply that microvideo participation acts as a link between organised self-directed learning and casual social media use.

The moderate to strong correlations between TikTok engagement and learner autonomy dimensions—goal setting, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation—from the standpoint of self-directed learning suggest that regular exposure to short-form English videos promotes metacognitive awareness and learning responsibility. This result is consistent with Knowles's (1975) self-directed learning principles, which prioritise learner initiative and self-regulation. Although TikTok encourages reflective and monitoring behaviours, organised goal formulation may still need pedagogical scaffolding, according to the relatively lower mean scores for goal setting. The idea that informal digital learning environments enhance formal instructional assistance rather than replace it is supported by this observation. Therefore, when carefully incorporated into more comprehensive learning frameworks, TikTok can be viewed as a helpful tool that promotes autonomy.

This study theoretically adds to the body of literature by establishing an empirical connection between vocabulary development, self-directed learning, and digital engagement. It shows how affective engagement, such as enjoyment and interest, and behavioural engagement, such as watching and interacting with content, work together to enhance metacognitive regulation and cognitive investment. These results support the idea that learner autonomy is increasingly mediated by social contact and digital engagement. Practically speaking, the findings imply that EFL teachers could use TikTok as an additional vocabulary-learning tool by adding reflection exercises, guided viewing activities, and follow-up conversations. Recognising social media platforms as valid learning environments may help curriculum designers and legislators create blended and microlearning-focused EFL programs that complement students' digital habits while upholding pedagogical rigour.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that engagement with English TikTok videos is positively associated with self-directed vocabulary learning among EFL university students. Students who reported higher levels of behavioural, affective, and cognitive engagement demonstrated stronger tendencies in setting learning goals, monitoring their vocabulary progress, and evaluating their learning outcomes. These results suggest that learners do not merely consume TikTok content for entertainment purposes but actively utilize it as a source of meaningful language exposure. Emotional enjoyment and cognitive involvement emerged as prominent factors that support vocabulary acquisition in digital learning contexts. Overall, the findings confirm that engagement with English TikTok videos corresponds with increased learner autonomy and vocabulary development beyond formal classroom instruction.

The results further reveal that affective and cognitive engagement were more dominant than behavioural engagement in supporting self-directed vocabulary learning. While students frequently experienced enjoyment, interest, and cognitive involvement when engaging with English TikTok videos, fewer learners demonstrated high levels of active behavioural participation such as commenting or producing content. Nevertheless, even limited behavioural interaction was associated with reflective learning behaviours, including vocabulary awareness and self-evaluation. These findings indicate that meaningful vocabulary learning can occur through repeated exposure and cognitive processing, even when learners engage primarily as viewers. Thus, the empirical evidence

indicates that emotional and cognitive dimensions of engagement are more strongly associated with autonomous vocabulary learning than overt behavioural participation.

From a pedagogical perspective, these findings suggest that TikTok can be utilized as an effective supplementary microlearning resource in EFL contexts. Educators may integrate English TikTok videos into instructional activities to encourage vocabulary exposure, reflection, and learner autonomy, while still providing structured guidance to support goal setting. The platform's multimodal features, including visual, auditory, and textual input, offer contextualized learning opportunities that can complement classroom instruction. For curriculum designers, incorporating digital microlearning strategies may enhance learner motivation, digital literacy, and independent vocabulary development. Future research is therefore recommended to examine causal relationships and long-term vocabulary retention through longitudinal or mixed-method designs.

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