GAMIFICATION IN THE CLASSROOM: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF QUIZIZZ AND KAHOOT PLATFORMS ON STUDENT MOTIVATION AND ENGAGEMENT

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ANNOTATSIYA:

This research paper explores the integration of gamification in contemporary educational settings, specifically examining the comparative efficacy of two widely adopted game-based learning platforms: Quizizz and Kahoot. In the modern educational landscape, maintaining high levels of student motivation and engagement is a persistent challenge for educators. Gamification—the application of game-design elements in non-game contexts—presents a viable solution by transforming traditional assessments into interactive experiences. This study presents a comparative analysis focusing on how these platforms influence learner dynamics, intrinsic motivation, and classroom participation. While Kahoot leverages a synchronous, teacher-paced competitive model that fosters high-energy, collective classroom excitement, Quizizz offers an asynchronous, student-paced approach that prioritizes individualized learning paths and immediate feedback. The preliminary conceptual framework established in this article sets the stage for evaluating the psychological and pedagogical implications of both platforms on student learning outcomes.

Introduction

The rapid evolution of educational technology has fundamentally shifted instructional paradigms, moving from teacher-centered methodologies to more active, student-centric environments. In traditional classrooms, passive learning frequently results in diminished student motivation, low retention rates, and disengagement. To combat these challenges,

educators have increasingly turned to gamification as a pedagogical strategy. Gamification involves incorporating elements such as points, leaderboards, timers, and immediate feedback into the instructional design to drive behavioral engagement and enhance the psychological drive to learn.

At the core of gamification's success is Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which posits that human motivation is sustained by the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Educational platforms that effectively leverage these needs can shift a student's motivational orientation from extrinsic rewards to intrinsic curiosity and long-term engagement. In primary and secondary education, digital game-based learning (DGBL) tools provide structured environments where these needs can be dynamically fulfilled. Among the plethora of digital tools available to modern educators, Kahoot and Quizizz have emerged as market leaders in classroom quiz applications. Although both platforms serve the overarching goal of reinforcing curriculum content through gamified assessments, they utilize contrasting structural mechanics that produce distinct classroom dynamics and psychological impacts on students.

1.1 Overview of the Platforms

Kahoot, launched in 2013, operates predominantly as a synchronous, teacher-paced tool. Questions are displayed on a central screen (such as a projector or smart board), and students respond using their personal devices acting as buzzers. The platform emphasizes speed and accuracy, generating a highly competitive, high-energy environment. The collective experience fosters a strong sense of relatedness and shared excitement, making it ideal for introductory activities, review sessions, and whole-class engagement.

In contrast, Quizizz, introduced in 2015, focuses on an asynchronous, student-paced delivery method. Both the questions and answer choices appear directly on the student’s individual screen. This design minimizes the time pressure associated with a central display and allows learners to progress through the assessment at their own speed. Quizizz integrates avatars, redemption questions (allowing students to re-attempt missed questions), and detailed post-quiz reports, which emphasizes competence and autonomy over direct peer-to-peer competition. To better understand the structural variations between these two platforms, the following table outlines their core features and pedagogical orientations:

Feature / Attribute	Kahoot Platform	Quizizz Platform
Pacing Mechanics	Synchronous; teacher-controlled transition between questions.	Asynchronous; student-controlled progression.
Display Focus	Centralized; questions on main board, shapes/colors on devices.	Individualized; questions and choices on the student's device.
Feature / Attribute	**Kahoot Platform**	**Quizizz Platform**
Motivational Catalyst	Extrinsic & Social; leaderboard pressure, real-time speed competition.	Intrinsic & Task-Oriented; personal mastery, self-improvement features.
Anxiety Mitigation	Lower mitigation; public countdowns can induce performance anxiety.	Higher mitigation; private pacing and redemption loops reduce stress.

1.2 Research Problem and Significance

While extensive literature supports the positive impact of gamification on student performance generally, there is a gap in comparative studies that examine how structural variations within these platforms specifically influence student motivation in non-Western or developing educational systems. This article establishes a comparative framework to analyze how the synchronous mechanics of Kahoot and the asynchronous features of Quizizz differentially impact student engagement levels. By analyzing these nuances, this research provides educators with actionable insights into selecting the appropriate tool based on their specific instructional objectives, classroom demographics, and student psychological profiles.

To achieve this, the study investigates how the real-time, competitive nature of Kahoot affects student anxiety and motivation compared to the self-paced, gamified environment of

Quizizz. While Kahoot's live leaderboards and countdown timers can spark high-energy participation, they often alienate introverted or lower-performing students who feel pressured by the public clock. Conversely, Quizizz's asynchronous mode alleviates this time-pressure, allowing students to process information at their own speed while still maintaining engagement through individual power-ups and avatars. Examining these distinct student reactions reveals that the choice between these platforms is not merely a matter of technological preference, but a strategic decision that directly influences classroom inclusivity and learning outcomes.

Specifically, the research studies how the structural differences between these two platforms correspond to diverse student learning styles and psychological needs. Kahoot's synchronized, whole-class format relies heavily on immediate feedback and extrinsic motivation, creating a high-pressure, game-show atmosphere. This setup typically succeeds in classrooms with highly social, competitive atmospheres. Still, it can easily result in disengagement among students who require more processing time or those who experience test anxiety. In contrast, Quizizz's asynchronous, student-paced model shifts the focus from speed to mastery. By including features like memes, redemption questions, and independent progress

Although extensive literature documents the positive effects of gamification on student performance, there remains a lack of comparative studies that investigate how structural differences within these platforms influence student motivation in non-Western or developing educational contexts. This study introduces a comparative framework to examine how the synchronous mechanics of Kahoot and the asynchronous features of Quizizz affect student engagement levels (España-Delgado, 2023). By exploring these distinctions, the research offers educators practical guidance for selecting the most suitable tool according to instructional objectives, classroom demographics, and student psychological characteristics.

Accordingly, this study examines how the real-time, competitive format of Kahoot influences student anxiety and motivation in comparison to the self-paced, gamified environment of Quizizz. Kahoot's live leaderboards and countdown timers may foster energetic participation, but they can also contribute to speed-induced stress and superficial information processing among some learners (Küçükali, 2024; Sercanoğlu Öden et al., 2021). In contrast, Quizizz's student-paced and asynchronous features reduce immediate time pressure, enabling students to process information at their own pace and decreasing test-related anxiety through the use of individual power-ups and customized avatars (Itsnaini et al., 2023). Analysis of these differing student responses demonstrates that selecting between these platforms is not simply a technological choice, but a strategic decision that significantly affects classroom inclusivity and learning outcomes.

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