# Students' Perceived Usefulness and Enjoyment on the Use of ClassDojo in ESL Classroom

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**Abstract**
This study examined the use of ClassDojo, a digital reward tracking tool in English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom. A total of eighty-eight (88) students, from five (5) Communicative English classes have responded to a survey form after the tool was used in the classes for a duration of a semester. The purpose of this study is to explore how the students perceive the usefulness and their enjoyment on the use of the tool. The findings show that participants have positive perceptions on both the usefulness and enjoyment of using ClassDojo in their ESL classes. Constructive competitive environment, enhanced student motivation and classroom focus as well as active classroom participation and positive classroom relationships were among the themes highlighted. Also, the results have confirmed participants' perceived enjoyment of using ClassDojo in their ESL classes.
**Keywords:** ClassDojo, Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Enjoyment, ESL Learners, Reward Chart.

**Introduction**
Technology has helped to transform classroom teaching and learning, allowing integration of many interactive educational games to enhance student learning. Visual reward charts can complement the interactive nature of these games by providing a concrete depiction of student progress and achievement. As it sets the stage for fostering a sense of competition, it is indeed a crucial element when incorporating competitive games in language classes. For instance, some studies (eg. Ortega-Arranz et al., 2019) have highlighted the motivational impact of reward strategies on student participation. According to Manaf and Ismail (2021), a visual reward system is a significant motivational tool to nurture good behaviors. However, there is a need for a more effective visual reward system to help motivate the students to accomplish the learning goals. Traditional visual reward chart prepared with manila cards, colour pencils or stickers is not effective as it requires a lot of preparation time and a certain level of creativity as well as some hidden costs. Sustainability challenge is also evident as the reward chart might not be durable for use for one semester of study. It can be very challenging for teachers to maintain a consistent and sustainable reward system to facilitate student learning. Hence, ClassDojo, which is a digital reward tracking tool, was introduced for use in five (5) Communicative English classes as a real-time documentation tool to encourage student engagement in their language classes. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research questions.

**Research Questions**
    (a) How do the ESL learners perceive the usefulness on the use of ClassDojo in their language classes?
    (b) How do the ESL learners perceive the enjoyment on the use of ClassDojo in their language classes?

**Literature Review**
ClassDojo was initially used as a behavior management tool in the classroom as the positive and negative points can be assigned in the system based on the track record of the students' behavior in the class. As highlighted by Manolev et al (2018), it offers a data-driven technology of control for the teachers as it allows them to organize, analyze and compile data related to student bahaviours.

Numerous studies have explored the use of ClassDojo in facilitating classroom teaching and learning. Burger's (2015) study has revealed that ClassDojo is a highly motivating classroom management system. These findings resonated with MacLean-Blevins's (2013) conclusion that Class Dojo was an effective tool to get students thinking about their own learning behaviors. Findings from MacLean-Blevins's (2013) study also suggest that seeing the results, picking avatars and identifying areas to work on are three main reasons why students enjoyed using ClassDojo. Meanwhile, fun/exciting/cool was the main reason why the students reported that they wanted to use the application again. Similarly, Chiarelli et al. (2015) also highlighted that the visual and audio in ClassDojo have provided students with both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation.

Parista (2023) found that points and avatars were two main components of ClassDojo that can motivate students in English class. Using points to reward users can help foster different positive behaviours in learning. For example, students can be rewarded for participating actively in class or showing good teamwork when doing a group project. It was also found that majority of the students (72.7%) perceived that using ClassDojo is exciting and fun. Besides, easy-to-use and easy-to-understand were also two features highlighted by the students. Benhadj et al (2019) collected data from 41 Moroccan High School EFL students. Positive responses such as enjoyable and stimulating, positive attention and focus, motivating, enhanced classroom participation, fun and enjoyment were revealed. Positive perceptions on the competitive aspect of ClassDojo was also highlighted and most of them responded that ClassDojo could serve as a useful tool to enhance their learning and knowledge retention. Not only that, in another study which involved pre-clinical medical students, McAlister et al (2022) used ClassDojo as a tool for real-time documentation and assessment of professional behaviour and attitude. Contingency Management strategy, as explained by Rivera (2019) can be used to further describe ClassDojo as a tool to promote or discourage certain classroom behaviours via the use of reinforcement by rewarding points or punishment through assigning negative points. Therefore, the desired classroom behaviours can be reinforced with the use of ClassDojo. This is echoed by the findings from Lipscomb et al (2018) that ClassDojo can be used as an effective intervention for reducing disruptive classroom behavior.
The gaps identified from literature review of this study revolve around the relative scarcity of research investigating the application of ClassDojo within the Malaysian context and its use in a post-secondary education setting. Therefore, the findings of this study might be useful

for those who are teaching in the similar contexts so as to better deal with the various academic needs of the target group.

## Methodology

A total of eighty-eight (88) ESL learners from one of the polytechnics in Malaysia have answered the survey distributed after the ClassDojo tool was used in Communicative English classes for a duration of a semester. Purposive sampling was employed in which only students who have the experience of using ClassDojo in the language classes were involved in this study. *Table 1* shows that more than two-thirds of the participants (68.2%) were of intermediate level of English (with average and above average results) in their English paper in *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (SPM). Following Parista's (2023) study, data collection was first conducted by determining target participants, after acquiring permissions and selecting instruments, the data collection was administered. The survey consists of eleven (11) four-point likert scale close-ended questions and an open-ended question asking for their general opinion on the use of ClassDojo platform. Data gathered from survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics with Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 25 while thematic analysis was used to analyze the responses from open-ended question. Data coding and categorization were performed to develop themes that can capture the essence of the responses.

Table 1
Participants' Language Proficiency

| SPM English Result | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Grade** | **Total (N)** | **Percentage (%)** |
| A+, A, A- (Excellent) | 7 | 8.0 |
| B+, B (Good) | 31 | 35.2 |
| C+, C (Average) | 29 | 33.0 |
| D, E, F (Below average) | 21 | 23.9 |
| | 88 | 100 |

## Results and Discussion

The findings from this study suggested that participants perceived the use of ClassDojo in their language classes positively.

### (a) Participants' Perceived Usefulness of Using ClassDojo

| Statement | Mean |
|---|---|
| ClassDojo helps me behave the best during a certain activity (such as group work, lecture, individual seat work) ⌷SEP⌷in the class. | 3.63 |
| I am positively motivated by the rewarding Dojo points. | **3.61** |
| Class Dojo has really pushed me to participate in the classroom activities | **3.58** |
| Class Dojo has helped me to compete positively with my friends | **3.70** |
| Class Dojo has helped me to achieve my own learning goals. | **3.63** |
| Seeing the results of the Dojo points has motivated me to work harder in the next activity. | **3.67** |

Figure 1. Mean Scores of Survey Items

Participants responded to the statements in the survey using four-point likert scale (4= strongly agree, 3= agree, 2= disagree and 1= strongly disagree). Overall, participants perceived the usefulness of ClassDojo application positively in which all the means were found to locate in the range of 3.58 - 3.70. Specifically, participants reported that the use of ClassDojo can help them to compete positively with their friends (M= 3.70), motivate them to work harder (M= 3.67), help them to behave during a particular classroom activity (M= 3.63) and achieve their own learning goals (M=3.63). They are also positively motivated by the Dojo points (M=3.61) and ClassDojo can push them to participate in the classroom activities (M=3.58).

These findings were further supported by the data obtained from the open-ended question in the survey. Participants reported that ClassDojo can help enhance their concentration in the class. For instance, as revealed in the following excerpt:
*"It's interesting and always attract my attention to use it and also help me avoid from sleeping in class.*

Students also highlighted that ClassDojo can motivate them to work harder. As revealed in the following excerpt:
*"This is a interesting app, because it record the point that we get, so if we want to get more point we need to be hardworking to get more. It is anyway to let student to try their best and improve their english."*

In relation to classroom participation, some participants have even highlighted that ClassDojo can push them to volunteer in classroom activities, as one of the participants said:
*"It's good because its help us to be more brave because it has volunteer marks hehe."*

These findings on enhancing student motivation and encouraging active classroom participation resonated with the findings from MacLean-Blevins (2013) in which it was reported that majority of the participants had positive experiences with ClassDoJo and seeing the results or charts was top-rated among all other positive responses. This also helps explain why ClassDojo was found to be highly motivating for the students, as reported in other studies (Burger, 2015; Parista, 2023). Similarly, positive attention and focus, students' enhanced classroom participation and the competitive aspect of ClassDojo were also highlighted by Benhadj et al. (2019). All these suggest that ClassDojo might be used as an effective tool to promote student learning. It can be used as an effective tool to reinforce the desired classroom behaviour. When all the students are aware of which classroom behaviour will be rewarded and celebrated, they will be encouraged to perform better. This also explains why the use of ClassDojo can enhance student motivation in learning.

Besides, some students in this study have also noticed that ClassDojo can help foster positive classroom relationships, as revealed in the following excerpt. Perhaps, students can feel the sense of closeness when collectively celebrating a desired classroom behaviour.
*"Class Dojo is good to create stronger relationship with classmates and also lecture"*
As highlighted by Lipscomb et al (2018), ClassDojo is easy to implement and cost-effective. Some students in this study have also noticed that ClassDojo is a useful classroom management tool for the lecturers. As revealed in the following excerpts:

**"***Its very helpful during the class because lecturer can add point to students without using any paper or long procedure to collect all student's point easily*

*"Class dojo help lecture to give point at student on the class for the reward."*

**(b) Participants' Perceived Enjoyment of Using ClassDojo**

| Statement | Mean |
|---|---|
| It was exciting when using CLASS DOJO as we can see who got the most points in the class. | 3.74 |
| I like the little cute monsters / avatars in Class Dojo | 3.69 |
| I feel excited to participate whenever Class Dojo is used in the class. | 3.70 |
| It was fun when using Class Dojo as I get to see how I have progressed throughout the semester. | 3.69 |
| I hope other classes will use Class Dojo as well. | 3.75 |

Figure 2. Mean Scores of Survey Items

Also, participants perceived the enjoyment of using ClassDojo application positively in which all the means were found to locate in the range of 3.69 - 3.75. Specifically, participants reported their hope for the use of ClassDojo in other classes (M=3.75). They were excited to see who can get the most Dojo points (M=3.74) and were excited to participate whenever ClassDojo is used in the class (M=3.70). They liked the little cute monsters/ avatars in ClassDojo (M=3.69) and it was fun to see how they have progressed throughout the semester (M= 3.69).

These findings were further supported by the data obtained from the open-ended question in the survey. Several recurring themes emerged and the most prominent theme was that most of the participants described the ClassDojo application as a very interesting tool as it can make the learning process more interesting for them and it can infuse vitality, adding energy and liveliness to the lessons, making them more dynamic and engaging. Positive words like 'interesting', 'awesome', 'attractive', 'love', 'exciting', 'cute' and 'like' were found in their responses.

Some representative quotes for this theme are
*"The class Dojo is very interesting. this application make(s) learning more interesting and energies"*
*"What an awesome way to learn (E)nglish and make it more attractive"*
*"I love the class (d)ojo. Because it make(s) me more exciting when we play game and get extra points if we win it."*
*"Everyone has a cute character and I like it because it's cute to me. I hope that every class will use it."*
These results aligned with the findings from previous studies (MacLean-Blevins, 2013; Parista, 2023) that students really enjoyed using ClassDojo as they were motivated by the Dojo points and avatars. Also, students mentioned that they would like to use the application again as it was fun, exciting and cool. As highlighted by Chiarelli et al (2015), the visual and audio used in ClassDojo might have the potential to motivate the students. Perhaps, they help inject energy and liveliness to the lessons, creating an engaging, exciting and interesting learning environment for the students. This also resonated with the findings from other studies when

positive responses such as enjoyable and stimulating, fun and enjoyment were revealed (Benhadj et al., 2019).

## Conclusion

It can be concluded that students typically hold positive perceptions regarding the use of ClassDojo platform in their language classes. Constructive competitive environment, enhanced student motivation and classroom focus as well as active classroom participation and positive classroom relationships were among the perks highlighted. Students perceived that ClassDojo is an interesting tool as the rewarding Dojo points and cute avatars particularly, can generate excitement and help create a more dynamic and engaging learning environment in the classroom. The findings of this study thus highlighted the importance of recognizing and addressing diverse student needs in a positive learning environment. It is advisable for educators to engage in preliminary discussions with their students to determine which classroom behaviours, aligned with the learning objectives, should be rewarded and celebrated in the platform when initially introducing the tool to the students. This is to motivate them to work towards achieving the learning goals, encouraging them to demonstrate these behaviours at a later stage. Future research may explore the integration of ClassDojo in post-secondary education settings. A comprehensive understanding on how these students can derive optimal benefits from the platform can equip the educators to deliver services effectively in these settings. Also, another valuable avenue for future research might involve soliciting student feedback to gather insights on additional customization options for the platform. Perhaps, gathering these perspectives could yield valuable input for enhancing features or inspiring more innovative ideas in the future.

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