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Psychological Capital as a Moderator between Job Stress and Work-Life Balance: Evidence from Married Working Women

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ABSTRACT

This quantitative correlational study examined psychological capital as a moderator of the association between job stress and work-life balance among married working women in Pakistan. Grounded in Conservation of Resources Theory, Spillover Theory, and Role Conflict Theory, the research utilized a cross-sectional survey design with a purposive sample of 210 married women employed across public and private sectors in Lahore, Pakistan. Standardized instruments included the Job Stress Scale (Parker & DeCotiis, 1983), the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (Luthans et al., 2007), and the Work-Life Balance Scale (Fisher et al., 2009). Pearson product-moment correlations indicated that job stress exhibited a significant inverse relationship with psychological capital and with all subdimensions of work-life balance. Conversely, psychological capital demonstrated significant positive associations with work-life balance dimensions. Moderation analysis via Hayes' PROCESS macro (Model 1) revealed a significant interaction effect ($B = .021, p < .001$), with the overall model accounting for 37.8% of the variance in work-life balance. Simple slopes analysis showed that women reporting high psychological capital sustained or improved work-life balance under elevated job stress, while those with low psychological capital displayed a marked deterioration in work-life balance at comparable stress levels. The findings empirically validate the buffering function of psychological capital within Pakistan's sociocultural milieu, where married working women navigate compounded occupational and domestic role demands. Results advocate for targeted organizational strategies such as resilience-based training, structured mentorship programs, and institutionalization of family-supportive policies to cultivate psychological capital and foster sustainable work-life balance.

Keywords: Job Stress, Psychological Capital, Work-Life Balance, Married Working Women, Moderation

Introduction

Vocabulary is a fundamental part of learning a second language since it facilitates understanding, communication, and education. Students must have adequate vocabulary to comprehend both spoken and written input, as well as to convey ideas effectively both orally and in writing. With low vocabulary, students cannot engage with the classroom activities in ESL setting and use English in real life. This is why the vocabulary development is among the key topics in the teaching of languages, particularly in tertiary education when students are supposed to learn more complex academic material (Yusoff et al., 2022; Gurmani, 2023).

Technology has been a significant aspect of language teaching in the recent past. Vocabulary teaching is usually based on memorization, repetitions, and explanation by a teacher, whereas new digital tools provide more flexible and interactive learning. Mobile-assisted vocabulary learning studies have revealed that digital tools have the potential to enhance vocabulary knowledge through exposure to target words and by enabling students to learn outside the classroom. These strategies are particularly effective with tertiary learners since they facilitate self-directed learning and facilitate vocabulary practice by being more available in everyday life (Yusoff et al., 2022; Dağdeler, 2023; Gurmani, 2023).

One of such digital tools is the podcasts, which have become popular as a tool of language learning. Podcasts are sound-based content that enables students to hear natural language in a loose manner. Students can listen at their own pace and repeat when needed because they can be accessed via mobile phones and other devices. This contextual exposure and repetition can aid learners to comprehend the meaning of words better and to memorise vocabulary more efficiently. Rather than memorising words on lists, students are exposed to vocabulary in authentic communication, which can facilitate both immediate and long-term learning (Rahul & Ponniah, 2023; Chaves-Yuste & de-la Peña, 2023).

Motivation, autonomy, and engagement are also associated with the educational value of podcasts. Digital learning tools can be positively received by students, although they need to be convenient to use and of interest to them. Learning through podcast can stimulate self-directed practice as they can listen any time and any place, so learning is less limited to classroom time. Studies in mobile-assisted language learning have indicated that language growth and enhanced engagement among learners can be facilitated by repetition listening and by allowing learners to access input in a more flexible way (Li, 2023; Şendağ et al., 2024). Moreover, recent works by researchers reveal that digital environments affect language use and vocabulary exposure, academic writing practices, which also justifies the significance of technology in modern language learning (Malik et al., 2025; Gurmani et al., 2025).

Irrespective of these benefits, podcasts as a tool of vocabulary acquisition require closer research, especially at the tertiary level of ESL. A lot of classrooms still operate under traditional methods which might not serve well in maintaining vocabulary, context learning and engaging the learner. This issue is more critical in the environment when students are not exposed to real-life English beyond the classroom. In these situations, podcasts can be used as a viable means of introducing meaningful verbal input in the learning process and can act as an aiding tool in vocabulary building (Gurmani, 2023; Pei et al., 2023; Zhou et al., 2024).

Thus, the proposed research analyses the effectiveness of teaching using podcasts as a means of learning vocabulary on the tertiary level. It will seek to establish whether podcasts are more effective in enhancing vocabulary knowledge among the students than the traditional means of doing so and how the students view the use of podcasts in learning the English language. Through its emphasis on vocabulary learning and learner attitudes, the research adds to the existing body of technology-assisted language learning research and reminds scholars of the potential role podcasts play in enhancing ESL teaching (Yusoff et al., 2022; Chaves-Yuste & de-la Peña, 2023; Zhou et al., 2024).

Research Objectives

1. To measure the efficacy of podcasts as an educational vocabulary acquisition tool
2. To find out how students perceive the integration of podcasts into language learning impacts their perceptions and attitudes

Research Questions

1. How does using podcasts as an educational tool affect vocabulary acquisition in language-learning contexts?
2. How does the integration of podcasts into language learning impact students' perceptions and attitudes?

Statement of the Problem

Vocabulary acquisition has been a significant problem for ESL students in the tertiary level since they usually struggle to comprehend, remember and apply new words in contexts that matter. The conventional teaching methods of vocabulary can be useful in the short-term perspective of students, but not always in the long-term memorization or in the real-life use of language. Despite the recent findings that technology-assisted learning can be used to aid vocabulary acquisition, there is little research that has expressly looked at the effectiveness of podcasts in vocabulary acquisition with tertiary-level ESL learners, particularly where there is a scarcity of authentic vocabulary input. Thus, the question of whether podcast-based teaching can enhance vocabulary learning among students more effectively than traditional ones and how students perceive the use of podcasts in the language learning process is worth exploring (Yusoff et al., 2022; Gurmani, 2023; Chaves-Yuste & de-la Peña, 2023; Zhou et al., 2024).

Literature Review

The second language learning focuses on vocabulary knowledge as it assists in listening, speaking, reading and writing. In ESL classes students with limited vocabulary usually find it difficult to comprehend spoken information and to use language with certainty in actual communication. This is why a lot of recent research has been dedicated to technology-mediated methods of enhancing vocabulary acquisition mobile and audio-based materials. The existing review articles demonstrate that mobile-assisted vocabulary learning has become a significant research topic, and achievement and perception of learners seem to be the most prevalent results. These articles also imply that technology-based vocabulary teaching is most effective when it is modelled based on repeated exposure, word retrieval and meaningful word engagement as opposed to memorization (Dağdeler, 2023; Zhou et al., 2024).

A possible justification of the usefulness of digital tools in vocabulary acquisition is that they may present rich and repeated input. The recent research on technology-based vocabulary learning demonstrates that the largest number of effective interventions contribute to the development of receptive vocabulary via the initial stage by helping to notice and repeatedly encounter words in context (Zhou et al., 2024). This aspect matters to podcast-based learning as podcasts will introduce learners to vocabulary by way of connected speech, topical and natural conversation. Students do not memorize single words lists but listen to words in a context, which can enhance understanding and remembering. By doing so, the podcasts are consistent with the existing perceptions of vocabulary acquisition as a slow process that builds up through repeated experiences with words in contexts of meaning (Rahul & Ponniah, 2023; Zhou et al., 2024).

There has been a growing interest in podcasts in language education due to its flexibility, accessibility, and ability to provide authentic spoken language. Recent experimental research by Chaves-Yuste and de-la Peña (2023) revealed that the use of podcasts was useful in enhancing EFL linguistic competence, particularly listening and speaking. Similarly, Şendağ et al. (2024) added that mobile extensive listening and podcasting did not only enhance listening comprehension but had a positive impact on speaking and critical thinking, and promoted autonomous learning. The significance of the findings is that they demonstrate that podcasts are not just auxiliary listening resources, but could be organized teaching devices in a wider language-learning context. They appear to be valued due to repeated listening, mobile access,

and the possibility of learners to engage with content outside the classroom (Chaves-Yuste & de la Peña, 2023; Şendağ et al., 2024).

Recent studies have also proved the relationship between listening input and vocabulary development. Rahul and Ponniah (2023) discovered that listening was an important way to achieve incidental vocabulary acquisition, and vocabulary scores of learners depended on the time they spent listening. This confirms the notion that exposure to vocabulary can grow even in case word learning is not the primary objective of the lesson. This is particularly applicable in learning that involves podcast use since learners tend to hear the words repeatedly whilst they pay attention to ideas, stories, or information. These exposures can assist learners to observe vocabulary, relate meaning to use and recall words with time. Thus, podcasts can facilitate vocabulary growth by teaching it directly and by incidental learning (Rahul & Ponniah, 2023).

The other helpful perspective is based on mobile-assisted language learning research. In a meta-analysis of 20 experimental studies based on 1,218 participants, Li (2023) established that the overall impact of mobile-assisted language learning on the development of listening in EFL learners is moderate-large. Though the study was done on listening and not vocabulary, but the result can be applied to vocabulary learning since listening and vocabulary learning are tightly related. Students with a higher level of what they hear comprehend can easier recognize the meaning of words, their patterns and recurring forms. As podcasts are typically listened to via mobile devices and rely on listening, it is possible to consider them a subset of the broader MALL context that facilitates language development based on flexible and repeated exposure (Li, 2023; Şendağ et al., 2024).

Recent researches also indicate that the effectiveness of podcasts is not only a matter of exposure but also based on the learning strategies applied by the students as they listen. Pei et al. (2023) concluded that online metacognitive listening self-directed practice had a great impact on the EFL learners listening comprehension, although the influence on self-efficacy was less evident. On a similar note, Aziz et al. (2025) found that podcast-based learning had the highest benefits to university EFL learners when scaffold characteristics were present. In their experiment, learners applied strategies like segment repetition, use of transcripts and vocabulary journaling and these strategies were associated with improved listening proficiency and vocabulary retention. It implies that podcasts can be more productive when combined with guided activities, thought, or transcript assistance instead of passive listening resources (Aziz et al., 2025; Pei et al., 2023).

Besides language acquisition, another theme of significance in the new literature is that of learner attitude. According to numerous studies, students are positively exposed to the use of podcast-based learning as it is more flexible and engaging compared to conventional classroom routines, Şendağ et al. (2024) discovered that mobile podcasting was perceived by the learners as a motivational and facilitative tool of self-regulated learning. Similar results were found by Aziz et al. (2025): students appreciated podcasts as an authentic source of input and appreciated their utility in autonomous learning. Positive attitudes are important since inspired learners will spend more time in the target language, repeat listening activities, and will keep learning outside the classroom. This form of out-of-class activity is particularly beneficial to students in the tertiary level as it transforms the process of language learning into a more individual and continuous one (Aziz et al., 2025; Şendağ et al., 2024).

Simultaneously, podcasts are not a panacea to the problem that is depicted in the literature. Several recent researches indicate issues that can diminish their performance. Accent and speech speed were the biggest obstacles among students in the university of Aziz et al. (2025), whereas learners in the same study enjoyed the podcasts that had adjustable speed and other

learning aids. Pei et al. (2023) also mentioned that the inability to listen to challenging words and unknown vocabulary can undermine the confidence of learners. These results imply that podcasts may offer authentic input, but authenticity is not a sufficient condition. Transcripts, glossaries, replay, or teacher support can still be required by learners to maximize the benefits of podcast-based learning. This is especially critical in ESL classrooms where students possess varying levels of proficiency and do not have equal access to learning resources (Aziz et al., 2025; Pei et al., 2023).

Previous empirical studies also substantiate the usefulness of podcasts in vocabulary acquisition when listening is structured in a collaborative or purposeful manner. Saeedakhtar et al. (2021) studied collaborative podcast listening and discovered that it has a beneficial impact on listening comprehension and vocabulary acquisition and positive attitudes among the learners. Though this research did not focus on tertiary education, it reinforces the broader argument that podcasts can play a role in lexical development when learners engage in active processing of the information they hear. Collectively, the literature indicates that podcast-based teaching is most effective when it involves authentic audio input and repetition, collaborative work, and follow-up activities to guide learners to focus on vocabulary (Saeedakhtar et al., 2021; Rahul & Ponniah, 2023).

Although these findings are promising, there are some gaps in the literature. To start with, many recent studies have given interest to listening, speaking, or language proficiency in general whereas less has been done on vocabulary learning as the primary outcome, particularly in tertiary level. Second, most of the research has been carried out in urban or comparatively well-informed environments, thus we have limited information about the functioning of the podcast-based vocabulary teaching in rural or under-resourced or marginal settings. Third, increased literature indicates that learner factors, including self-regulation, technology familiarity, accent tolerance, and learning preference strategies can affect the results, but these variables are not always dealt with in experimental designs. Lastly, it is indicated by the recent evidence that podcasts are most effective with the back of the transcripts, replay, note-taking, or guided tasks, which implies that future studies should not only focus on whether podcasts are effective or not, but also on better understanding of the most effective conditions under which they are used (Aziz et al., 2025; Daagdeler, 2023)

Nevertheless, the literature also demonstrates that podcasts cannot be considered as an independent technique. They seem more effective when structured support is provided to learners, when the content is at the right level and of interest and the teaching should consider disability factors like difficulty in accent and visual aids. Thus, research focusing on exploring the effectiveness of the podcasts in the vocabulary learning of ESL learners at the tertiary level has the capacity to contribute to the research in this area, particularly when it involves the comparison of podcast-based learning with the traditional one and the attitudes of students towards the process (Aziz et al., 2025)

Research Methodology

The efficacy of podcasts in vocabulary learning in the tertiary level was investigated using a mixed-method research design in this study. The quantitative and qualitative approaches enabled the researcher to not only analyse the performance outcomes of learners but also their perceptions and experiences concerning podcast-based learning. This method is justified by the recent literature that suggests that technology-based vocabulary learning needs to be considered in terms of both performance results and student attitudes (Dağdeler, 2023; Zhou et al., 2024).

In the quantitative section, the research was conducted in the form of a quasi-experiment, where one group was a control group and the other was an experimental group. This design was suitable in that it enabled comparison of students who were taught vocabulary by traditional methods and those who were taught vocabulary using podcast methods of teaching. Language learning experiments have demonstrated that podcasts and other mobile-assisted learning tools can have a positive impact on vocabulary acquisition and other language-related skills in contrast to traditional methods (Chaves-Yuste & de-la Peña, 2023; Li, 2023; Şendağ et al., 2024). In the current research, this design was a direct response to the initial research question of measuring whether podcast-based instruction was an effective way of enhancing vocabulary achievement as compared to traditional teaching.

In the qualitative section, the research examined the perceptions and opinions of the learners regarding the use of podcasts to learn a language. This was significant since previous studies have revealed that engagement, motivation, autonomy and comfort of students using digital tools are key factors in determining the success of podcast-based learning (Aziz et al., 2025; Pei et al., 2023; Şendağ et al., 2024). As such, qualitative feedback was obtained to get a more accurate idea of how students felt about the use of podcasts and about their perception of the usefulness of podcasts in vocabulary learning. This was a part that dealt directly with the second research objective.

Participants

The sample consisted of 80 tertiary level learners, who were categorized into two groups; a control group and an experimental group, and each group had 40 students. The experimental group was given instructions in the form of podcasts and the traditional vocabulary teaching was given to the control group. The choice of tertiary level learners was appropriate since vocabulary acquisition at this level needs more autonomous, contextual and academically meaningful exposure to language. The earlier literature also highlighted that technology-based vocabulary learning is beneficial to tertiary learners as they offer them flexible access to target words and repeated exposure to the target words outside of the classroom setting (Gurmani, 2023; Yusoff et al., 2022).

Intervention

The experimental group received instruction by means of chosen podcasts applied as the learning tools as far as vocabulary learning was concerned. The selection of podcasts was due to their ability to offer an authentic spoken input to the learner, repeated exposure to words in context, and flexible delivery via digital devices. Such aspects render podcasts particularly beneficial in second language acquisition in terms of language development (Rahul & Ponniah, 2023; Chaves-Yuste & de-la Peña, 2023). Comprehension and retention were also reinforced with supporting materials like transcripts, glossaries and follow-up vocabulary tasks. This is in line with previous studies that indicate that podcasts are more effective when learners are aided with scaffold techniques like repetition, use of transcripts and guided vocabulary exercises (Aziz et al., 2025; Pei et al., 2023). Control group, on the other hand, was subjected to traditional classroom-based vocabulary learning.

Procedure

The research was done in two stages. During instructional phase, traditional vocabulary teaching was used in the control group and podcast-based teaching was used in the experimental group. Both groups took a post-test to determine the outcomes of vocabulary learning after the treatment. Their scores were then compared to establish whether the effect of podcast-based instruction was higher in vocabulary acquisition compared to conventional teaching. Instructional comparison was reasonable to use since the previous studies have demonstrated

that repeated listening, authentic input, and mobile access could enhance lexical learning and overall language performance (Li, 2023; Şendağ et al., 2024; Zhou et al., 2024).

Meanwhile, students in the experimental group were interviewed about their perceptions of podcast integration to gather qualitative feedback. Students also recalled their experiences in listening to podcasts to learn vocabulary, like problems with interest, flexibility, learning contexts, and problems with accent and visual learning. This process had significance as the literature indicates that as much as podcasts can be inspiring and helpful, there are also learners who experience obstacles that impact understanding and confidence (Aziz et al., 2025; Pei et al., 2023).

Instruments

Data collection was done using two instruments. To determine the level of achievement of the learners after the treatment, a vocabulary post-test was conducted. This tool produced the quantitative data that were used to compare the performance of the control and experimental groups. Second, the data on qualitative responses were gathered to explore the attitudes and perceptions of the students towards podcast-based learning. Systematic reviews support the use of both achievement data and perception data as the most frequent and practical results of technology-enhanced vocabulary studies are vocabulary performance and learner attitudes (Dağdeler, 2023; Zhou et al., 2024).

Data Analysis

The two research objectives were used to arrange data analysis. To fulfil the first goal, group statistics and independent samples t-test were used to analyse the quantitative data obtained during the post-test. Mean scores, standard deviations, and standard error values of both groups were computed to compare their performance in vocabulary. The independent samples t-test was used to determine whether the difference between the control and experimental groups was statistically significant. This type of analysis was suitable as the study was intended to test the impact of podcast-based instruction on vocabulary achievement. The statistical results indicated that the experimental group indeed outperformed the control group, which confirms the prior studies regarding the effectiveness of the podcast-based and mobile-assisted language learning (Chaves-Yuste & de-la Peña, 2023; Li, 2023; Rahul & Ponniah, 2023).

In order to contribute to the second objective, thematic analysis was used to analyze qualitative data (Clarke & Braun, 2017). The answers of students were analysed, and major themes were identified, such as the first impression, engagement, and the effectiveness of vocabulary acquisition, the long-term learning, and personalization, barriers to education, and integration perceptions. This kind of analysis was appropriate since it assisted to explain the experience the learners went through when listening to podcasts and how listening to podcasts influenced their attitudes towards language learning. Other previous studies on podcast-based instruction have also reported similar learner-centered themes, particularly with regards to motivation, flexibility, autonomy, and issues like unfamiliar accents and absence of visual cues (Aziz et al., 2025; Şendağ et al., 2024).

In general, the mixed-method approach suited this study as it presented the evidence of the quantifiable effectiveness of podcasts in the process of vocabulary acquisition and also the impressions of the learners toward the use of podcasts. Through this approach, the methodology was fully consistent with the objectives of the research as well as with the analysis, provided in the study (Dağdeler, 2023; Zhou et al., 2024).

Results and Discussion

Question 1: How does the use of podcasts as an educational tool affect vocabulary acquisition and retention in language-learning contexts?

Group Statistics					
	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
post-tests	control	40	63.9500	12.97720	2.05188
	experimental	40	78.4750	9.22368	1.45839

Taking the statistics of the groups, it can be noted that there is a significant amount of disparity between the results of the post-test of the control and experimental groups. The experimental group that applied the use of podcasts as a means of education has a better mean of 78.48 as compared to the control group mean of 63.95. Such a difference indicates that the intervention; usage of podcasts, enhanced the performance of the participants in the study. The result of this study is in agreement with previous studies that podcast can be used as a tool in teaching and learning with a view to improving word knowledge.

Independent Samples Test										
Control / Experimental Group		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Results		4.435	.038	-5.770	78	.000	-14.52500	2.51736	-19.53668	-9.51332
				-5.770	70.392	.000	-14.52500	2.51736	-19.54522	-9.50478

The provided table presents the results of an independent samples t-test comparing the post-test scores of the control and experimental groups. Levene's test for equality of variances yielded an F-value of 4.435 and a p-value less than .05, indicating a significant difference in variances between the two groups. Consequently, the t-test results assuming unequal variances were considered. The t-value is -5.770 with 70.392 degrees of freedom, and the p-value is .000, demonstrating a highly significant difference in mean scores between the groups. The experimental group outscored the control group by an average of 14.52 points, as indicated by the mean difference of -14.52. The negative sign denotes that the control group's mean is lower than the experimental group's mean. The standard error of the difference is 2.5, and the 95% confidence interval ranges from -19.54 to -9.50, further confirming the statistical significance of the difference. These results indicate that the experimental group, which utilised podcasts as an educational tool, significantly outperformed the control group in post-test scores, suggesting that the intervention effectively enhanced vocabulary acquisition and retention.

Question 2: How does the integration of podcasts into language learning impact students' perceptions and attitudes?

The integration of podcasts into language learning is an innovative approach that provides learners with flexible, context-rich environments to enhance their vocabulary acquisition.

Themes and Subthemes

Main Themes	Subthemes
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First impressions	Doubt, willingness to consider
Engagement	Interest, Storytelling, Relatability
Vocabulary Acquisition Effectiveness	Contextual Learning, & Repeated Exposures
Extended Learning	Comfort, Approaches, Desire
Personalization	Suitability, useful content
Education Barriers:	Accents, no kit, no body gestures
Perceptions of Integration_	Favourable Optional or Mandatory

The qualitative findings showed that the integration of podcasts into language learning had a generally positive effect on students' perceptions and attitudes. Most participants responded favourably to podcast-based instruction and viewed it as a useful and engaging way to learn vocabulary. Although some students were initially doubtful about the effectiveness of podcasts compared with traditional classroom methods, their opinions became more positive after experiencing the intervention. This suggests that exposure to podcast-based learning helped learners become more open to technology-supported language instruction.

The students reported that podcasts increased their interest and engagement in learning. They found the audio materials more appealing because they presented vocabulary in meaningful and realistic contexts rather than in isolated word lists. Storytelling, relatable topics, and repeated exposure to vocabulary were identified as important features that supported comprehension and retention. These responses suggest that podcasts made vocabulary learning more interactive and memorable for learners.

Another important finding was the flexibility offered by podcasts. Students appreciated the opportunity to listen to materials at their own pace and in different settings, such as at home or while traveling. This flexibility encouraged independent learning and allowed students to connect language practice with their daily routines. In this way, podcasts supported learner autonomy and made vocabulary learning more convenient and personalized.

The findings also showed that students valued the relevance of podcast content to their personal interests and academic needs. When the materials were meaningful and easy to relate to, learners felt more motivated to continue listening and learning. This indicates that personalization and contextual relevance played an important role in shaping positive attitudes toward podcast-based learning.

Despite these positive responses, some students also reported challenges. The main difficulties included unfamiliar accents and the absence of visual or non-verbal cues, which sometimes made comprehension harder. These concerns suggest that podcasts may not fully meet the needs of all learners when used alone. Therefore, while podcasts were seen as beneficial, students appeared to prefer their use as a supportive or complementary tool rather than as the only method of instruction.

Overall, the qualitative results indicate that podcasts positively influenced students' attitudes by increasing motivation, engagement, flexibility, and interest in vocabulary learning. At the same time, the findings highlight the need to combine podcasts with other teaching resources to address difficulties related to listening comprehension and learning preferences. Thus, podcast-based learning was perceived as an effective and learner-friendly approach, particularly when integrated thoughtfully into broader language instruction.

Discussion

The results of this study show that podcast-based teaching positively influenced tertiary vocabulary learning. The result that the experimental group performed higher in the post-test implies that podcasts facilitated vocabulary learning better than the traditional teaching method. The first possible explanation is that podcasts might have provided the learners with exposure

to vocabulary in meaningful and repeated contexts that could have enhanced comprehension and retention. This explanation can be aligned with previous studies that have indicated that mobile-assisted and podcast-based learning can reinforce vocabulary knowledge through exposure to more words and facilitating contextual learning (Yusoff et al., 2022; Gurmani, 2023; Rahul & Ponniah, 2023). The results are also aligned with other studies that found that the use of podcasts enhances the language learning outcomes because it makes the input more real, available, and interesting to learners (Chaves-Yuste & de-la Peña, 2023; Şendağ et al., 2024). The qualitative results also indicated that students acquired rather positive attitudes to podcast-based learning. Learners reported that podcasts were interesting, flexible and contributed to learning vocabulary in context, implying that this method of instruction facilitated motivation and learner control. These results align with the existing research that discovered technology-assisted learning to be more interactive and supportive of self-directed language practice, particularly when the learners have the opportunity to study the materials at their own pace (Li, 2023; Aziz et al., 2025). Simultaneously, other students complained about challenges concerning the unknown accents and the lack of visual indicators. This also confirms previous studies that indicate podcasts work, though to the maximum effect when scaffolded with transcripts, repetitions, and other learning aids (Pei et al., 2023; Aziz et al., 2025). Thus, the current research proposes the idea that podcasts can be implemented as a supplementary resource in the language teaching process but not as a substitute to traditional methods.

Conclusion

Finally, the results of the given study indicate that the use of podcasts to teach vocabulary was effective at the tertiary level since the experimental group did better than the control group and students also reported a generally positive attitude towards the use of podcasts to learn languages. The research indicates that podcasts have the potential to facilitate vocabulary learning through repeated, contextual, and flexible language exposure, as well as enhance learner motivation, engagement, and autonomy. These outcomes align with the previous study indicating that podcast-based and mobile-assisted learning can improve vocabulary growth and develop positive perceptions towards learners in the case of second language (Yusoff et al., 2022; Gurmani, 2023; Chaves-Yuste & de-la Peña, 2023; Li, 2023)

Nevertheless, the research also means that podcasts cannot be taken as an entirely alternative to traditional teaching because some learners experienced certain challenges connected with the inability to understand the unfamiliar accents and absence of visualization. Thus, the research suggests that podcasts are most applicable in the case of incorporation with other teaching resources, including transcripts, glossaries, and guided classroom tasks. It is also recommended that future researches need to look at podcast-based vocabulary learning using bigger samples, dissimilar groups of learners, and extended durations of intervention to come up with an extensive knowledge of its effectiveness in the teaching of ESL.

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