



Linking Methods, Motivation, and Outcomes
Investigating the Japanese Learning at Vocational Training Institution

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the methods, motivation, and outcomes of Japanese learning in a five-month training program at a Vocational Training Institution (LPK) and its impact on learners' language skills, particularly for those preparing to work in Japan. The study employed a longitudinal mixed-methods approach and involved eighteen participants from an LPK in Sumedang, West Java, Indonesia. Data were collected through questionnaires, observations, and proficiency tests based on the standards of the Japan Foundation (JF). The findings revealed significant variations in language proficiency, with many students reaching the A2 level by the end of the training program. Despite this improvement, challenges remained in sentence construction, the use of complex vocabulary, and students' self-confidence in speaking. The study highlights the interconnectedness of student motivation, teaching methods, and learning outcomes as key factors in determining language learning success. Learning methods serve as a means of delivering material and play a key role in motivating student learning, which in turn impacts the quality of learning outcomes. Practice-based learning, role-play, and multimedia use emerged as key methods that foster both engagement and proficiency. Student motivation was mainly driven by economic aspirations, including job opportunities in Japan and the desire to support family finances. These extrinsic motivations proved to be strong predictors of learning commitment. Furthermore, learners actively used Japanese outside the classroom, particularly during designated "Japanese days", reinforcing practical language use. The results suggest that the training programs should prioritize speaking practice, integrate culturally relevant materials, and adopt interactive strategies to increase learners' confidence and competence. The insights from this study are expected to guide educational institutions in designing more effective and sustainable Japanese language programs customized to workforce readiness, thereby supporting both the linguistic and socio-economic goals of learners.

KEYWORDS

Japanese learning; Teaching methods; Motivation; Learning outcomes; Training program.

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INTRODUCTION

The growing demand for migrant workers proficient in Japanese has rendered the Japanese language classes provided by the Vocational Training Institution (*Lembaga Pelatihan Kerja*, hence LPK) relevant in recent years. The manufacturing sector, along with various service industries, is notably influenced by this necessity. In June 2023, the Indonesian Ambassador to Japan conveyed that there were 25,337 Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) engaged in employment in Japan under the Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) program. This information has been obtained from the Indonesian government. Furthermore, by December 2022, the total number of apprentices reached 45,919 (BP2MI, 2023). The findings indicate that it is essential for migrant workers to communicate effectively in Japanese to comprehend their rights and responsibilities in the workplace, perform their duties efficiently, and carry out their tasks efficiently.

Moreover, studies on the Japanese language reveal a growing global fascination with its research. A survey by The Japan Foundation in 2021 indicated that the worldwide number of people learning Japanese has reached 3,794,714. This happens despite the decrease in the number of people participating in the study of Japanese, as shown by the previous survey (The Japan Foundation, 2023). The demand for Japanese language proficiency among Indonesian employees is significantly elevated by the country's robust bilateral relationships with Japan, particularly in trade. In the context of business, this holds significant importance. Information sourced from the Investment Coordinating Board (BKPM) (BKPM, 2024). Shows that by 2022, Japanese investment in Indonesia is expected to reach USD 4.5 billion. This implies that the extent of Japanese investment in Indonesia is constantly widening. This emphasizes the need for having a strong command of Japanese since it is a necessary ability in the field of business.

In education, evaluation is a systematic approach to assessing the effectiveness of a project or activity. It aims to determine the extent to which learning objectives are achieved. Sudijono (2013) asserts that educational evaluation encompasses measuring learning outcomes and examining factors that affect these outcomes. Learning outcomes are several abilities possessed by a student after completing the learning process (Timor, Ambiyar, Dakhi, Verawadina, & Zagoto,

2021). Various assessment strategies, such as tests, observations, and interviews, contribute to a comprehensive understanding of student performance and the effectiveness of instruction. Consequently, evaluation is essential for enhancing the quality of Japanese language education.

The effectiveness of a program or strategy is determined by its ability to successfully meet its defined objectives. In the realm of the Japanese language, effectiveness can be assessed by enhancing students' language abilities, including speaking, writing, listening, and reading. Assessment integrates the learning process, provides feedback on learners' performance, and guides instructional decisions that enhance learning effectiveness (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019).

According to the research conducted by Nunn (2020), employing interactive and practice-based teaching methods significantly improves the effectiveness of language learning, especially in speaking. Adopting appropriate methodologies is essential to guaranteeing the efficacy of Japanese language instruction.

The language learning process for Japanese includes teaching and learning processes geared toward developing Japanese language skills. Developing oral and written communication skills, vocabulary, and grammar proficiency is a process component. Teaching materials containing learning information are essential in the education system (Bagni & Sumra, 2022). Appropriate teaching materials facilitate learning and help students achieve the desired outcomes. Moreover, speaking skills are closely related to contextual learning, which motivates them to find the material connected to real-life situations (Mori, Hasegawa, & Mori, 2021). In this context, language learning allows students to explore various identities and cultures, including the cultures of others (Triana & Zubainur, 2019), hence deepening their appreciation for diverse perspectives. Nahar (2019) indicates that literacy encompasses formative, informational, and epistemic dimensions.

An individual can read, write, hear, and speak effectively using the symbols employed. On a practical level, individuals utilize language to address the demands of daily life, including reading newspapers, manuals, or instructions. At the informational level, individuals can access knowledge through language skills (Widada, 2019). The Japan Foundation (2023) indicates a growing global interest in learning Japanese, with

more than 3.7 million individuals actively participating in language study. Due to the close bilateral ties between Indonesia and Japan, learning Japanese is becoming increasingly important in Indonesia, particularly in the business and labor sectors.

A learner's degree of linguistic competency relates to their capacity to use it in several circumstances. This scope covers elementary reading, writing, listening, and speaking abilities. Yoon (2023) divides language abilities into two main groups: receptive skills, which include reading and listening, and productive skills, which include speaking and writing. Effective communication is important for people who want to study the Japanese language, especially those hoping to work in Japan, where mastery of these abilities is essential. Mastering the Japanese language fundamentally relies on enhancing one's linguistic abilities. From the perspective of learners, studying Japanese outside of Japan presents various challenges (Quintos, 2021), including restricted exposure to authentic language and insufficient opportunities for genuine language use. Outside of Japan, limited exposure may hinder students' capacity to communicate with native Japanese speakers effectively (Djafri & Wahidati, 2020).

Developing speaking, listening, and understanding skills can prove challenging without consistent exposure to authentic Japanese language contexts (Ito & Sakai, 2021). Despite advancements, obstacles persist in constructing sentences and employing intricate terminology. Research findings indicate that numerous students encounter challenges in verbal communication. The challenges arise from internal factors, such as a limited vocabulary, inadequate opportunities for spoken Japanese practice, and an interest in the language (Muryati & Astuti, 2024). This underscores the importance of placing greater emphasis on overcoming these challenges.

Furthermore, the lack of stimulating media resources for language learning and the dependence on unexciting teaching approaches greatly intensifies this challenge. Nunn (2021) suggests that employing more interactive and practice-oriented educational methods has the potential to enhance students' speaking skills. The degree to which Indonesian interns may adapt to the Japanese workplace and improve their performance through proficient Japanese language skills is highlighted (Amalia & Rahardjo, 2022).

The interaction between teaching methods, student motivation, and learning outcomes largely determines learning success. In this context, teaching methods serve as a means of delivering content and as a key factor in building and maintaining students' motivation to learn, ultimately impacting the quality of learning outcomes (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021). Likewise, in the context of Japanese learning at the Vocational Training Institution (LPK).

Previous studies on Japanese learning at LPK have been conducted. Amri, Muhammad, and Kurniawati (2023) examined the effectiveness of Kanji Card and Flash Card learning media in reading Kanji to LPK students. The results showed that using flashcards significantly affects learning to read and write kanji because students easily understand it. Then, Wiwoho (2024) examined the effectiveness of shadowing techniques in Japanese speaking skills at LPK Momiji Boyolali. The result showed that shadowing does not significantly improve Japanese speaking ability. Studies by Amri, Muhammad, and Kurniawati (2023) and Wiwoho (2024) only examined the effectiveness of a method in Japanese language learning at LPK. However, studies about comprehensive learning effectiveness at LPK are limited. Azwita, Purba, and Sudrajat (2023) examined the effectiveness of the training program at LPK Hikari Gakkai. The method used is qualitative. Data collection techniques were carried out by interviewing one of the co-founders as a teacher and conducting a literature review. The results showed that the training program at LPK Hikari Gakkai is very effective and should be continued and developed. This study only used teacher interviews. Meanwhile, learning effectiveness also requires student data to observe the comprehensive evaluation. In addition, most studies only measure learning outcomes over a short term. To determine the effectiveness of learning, a long-term study that explores the development of students' language competence is needed.

This study investigates the evaluation of Japanese learning at a Vocational Training Institution (LPK), including learning methods, student motivation, and learning outcomes, along with their impact on students ready for employment in Japan.

METHOD

This study is longitudinal and employs mixed methods, which combine quantitative and qualitative measures within a single study (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The respondents in this study were 18 students in class 20 at LPK in Sumedang, West Java, Indonesia, who had been learning Japanese for five months. The details of the participants are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Details of Participants.

Gender	Male: 10 Female: 8
Age	20-30 years old (M=22.83)
Origin (Province)	Lampung: 10 West Java: 6 Central Java: 1 Aceh: 1
Education	High School (SMA): 13 Vocational High School (SMK): 3 Bachelor: 2

Data was gathered through various methods, such as questionnaires, observations, and proficiency assessments. The questionnaire was employed with Google Forms to comprise multiple-choice and open-ended questions to obtain comprehensive data, such as learning method, learning support facility, usage of Japanese in daily life, and student motivation. Observations will yield valuable insights into the learning methods utilized.

The proficiency tests employ the evaluation standards that The Japan Foundation (JF) set forth to assess language ability levels, specifically A1 and A2. Proficiency tests allow researchers to determine the skills of a specific sample over time. Details of the proficiency standard for A1 and A2 levels are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Proficiency Standard (The Japan Foundation, 2017).

Level	Goals
A1	Can use a very basic repertoire of words and simple phrases related to personal details and particular concrete situations.
A2	Can use basic sentence patterns with memorised phrases, groups of a few words, and formulae to communicate limited information in simple everyday situations.

Furthermore, the research variables in this study are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Research Variable.

Variable	Definition	Data Source
Learning Methods	The instructional techniques used (e.g., interactive, practice-based).	Data from questionnaires and observations at LPK
Student motivation	Students' motivation to participate in the training program	Data from questionnaires
Evaluation Method (Learning Outcomes)	The level of language proficiency achieved	JF Standard Speaking test results (A1 and A2) and job interview

The JF Standard speaking test has three themes to choose from for each level. Level A1 consists of grocery shopping, expressing when feeling sick, and asking for help. Level A2 consists of asking someone to go to a picnic, shopping at a department store, and discussing with a doctor.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study are based on research variables such as learning methods, student motivation, and learning outcomes obtained from questionnaires, observation, and proficiency tests.

Learning Methods

Based on questionnaire results, the learning methods in Japanese learning at LPK as shown in Figure 1.

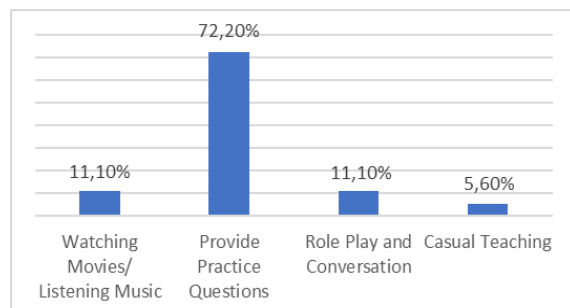


Figure 1: Japanese Learning Methods.

As shown in Figure 1, 13 participants (72.2% of the total sample) indicated a preference for practice questions. This approach is highly preferred by learners, suggesting that organized practice plays a crucial role in enhancing their comprehension of the language. The significant percentage indicates that students recognize the importance of engaging in repetitive and targeted exercises that strengthen their understanding. This is consistent with educational theories that highlight the importance of active engagement and formative assessment as essential elements in effective learning environments (Carless & Boud, 2018). Research substantiates this idea; for example, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021) structured practice can significantly boost motivation and retention by establishing clear student objectives. Engaging with practice questions allows learners to reinforce their understanding while fostering a sense of assurance in their language use.

Further, 2 participants (11.1%) reported engaging in activities like watching movies or listening to music. Research indicates that integrating multimedia resources such as films and music can enhance cultural understanding and promote contextual learning (Kern, 2015). These resources offer genuine exposure to the language as it is utilized in real-life contexts, which can be especially advantageous for enhancing listening skills and comprehension. Research has produced varied findings on the effectiveness of traditional and contemporary teaching methods. Some scholars contend that traditional methods provide a stronger foundation of knowledge, while others support more dynamic approaches that enhance students' creativity and critical thinking skills (Brown & Lee, 2025). This approach indicates that multimedia resources are valued for their capacity to enrich cultural context and foster engagement in language learning. Although this method was utilized less frequently than practice questions, it nonetheless highlights the significance of incorporating cultural elements into language education. Role play and conversation occur with a frequency of 2 responses, accounting for 11.1%. Much like the enjoyment of movies and music, role play and conversation have also received a respectable response rate, indicating a recognition of the value of interactive methods that enhance speaking skills through practical application.

Studies have shown that incorporating multimedia resources like films and music can facilitate cultural understanding and contextual learning (Kern, 2015). These resources provide

authentic exposure to the language as it is used in real-life situations, which can be particularly beneficial for developing listening skills and comprehension. While studies have shown mixed results regarding the effectiveness of traditional versus contemporary teaching methods, some argue that traditional methods lead to better foundational knowledge. In contrast, others advocate for more dynamic approaches fostering creativity and critical thinking skills among students (Brown & Lee, 2025).

Then, a support facility for learning Japanese can be seen in Figure 2.

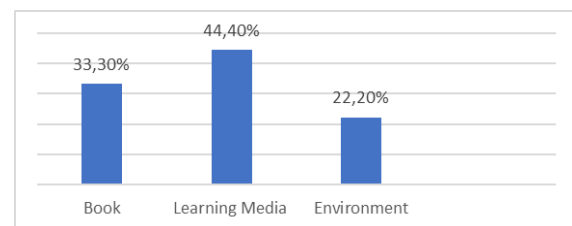


Figure 2: Support Facility for Learning Japanese.

Based on Figure 2, the primary resource highlighted by respondents is learning media, garnering a notable majority of responses at 44.4%. This suggests that a variety of educational tools, including digital platforms, videos, and interactive applications, are gaining recognition for their effectiveness in improving language learning. These resources offer compelling content that can enhance cultural understanding and promote contextual learning. Conversely, the second most referenced resource is books, which represent 33.3% of the responses. Although conventional learning materials play a crucial role in establishing foundational knowledge and serving as reference points for students, this data indicates a movement towards the incorporation of modern technology in language education. Furthermore, the third category, environment, accounted for 22.2% of the responses. This underscores the significance of the physical or social context in which learning takes place; an immersive environment can significantly boost motivation and engagement among learners.

The findings reveal a nuanced appreciation for both traditional books and contemporary learning media among Japanese learners. However, contrasting research indicates that while books lay the groundwork for knowledge, multimedia resources may foster greater engagement and contextual understanding, which are essential for effective language learning in today's

environment. Hattie and Donoghue (2016) highlight that although traditional materials such as textbooks offer a certain level of structure, they often fail to engage students as effectively as multimedia resources can.

Integrating insights from contemporary theories on motivation and technology-enhanced education into teaching practices allows educators to cultivate dynamic environments that foster successful language learning outcomes. Kern (2015) asserts that the integration of multimedia enhances cultural understanding and contextual learning, proving to be more effective than traditional methods by themselves.

Next, Japanese usage outside the classroom can be seen in Figure 3.

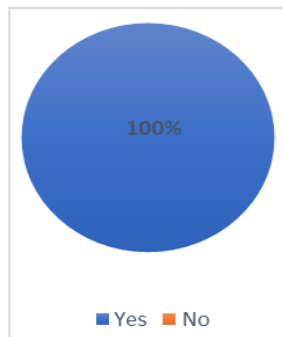


Figure 3: Japanese Usage Outside the Classroom.

Figure 3 shows that every respondent affirmed the “Yes” signifying that all participants reported utilizing Japanese beyond their classroom environments. Respondents use Japanese outside of the classroom during “*Nihongo no Hi*” (Japanese Days). They are also encouraged to use Japanese when talking to teachers or friends outside the classroom.

The findings suggest that learners are driven to incorporate their language skills into everyday activities, which can significantly improve both fluency and comprehension. Interacting with the language beyond the classroom facilitates practical application and strengthens the knowledge acquired in an academic environment. Nevertheless, differing results from additional research indicate that not every learner engages with their target languages beyond structured educational environments. A study conducted by MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Conrod (2020) revealed that numerous students encounter anxiety when engaging socially in foreign languages, mainly because they fear making errors or facing

judgment from their peers. This suggests that although some individuals may feel assured in using Japanese outside of the classroom, others may encounter difficulties stemming from psychological barriers.

Furthermore, the study conducted by Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) emphasizes the impact of individual factors, including motivation and self-efficacy, on students’ engagement with a foreign language in informal settings. Although this specific group demonstrates elevated engagement levels, more exhaustive research reveals variability among diverse learner populations concerning their out-of-class usage.

Student Motivation

Student motivation in Japanese learning can be seen in Figure 4.

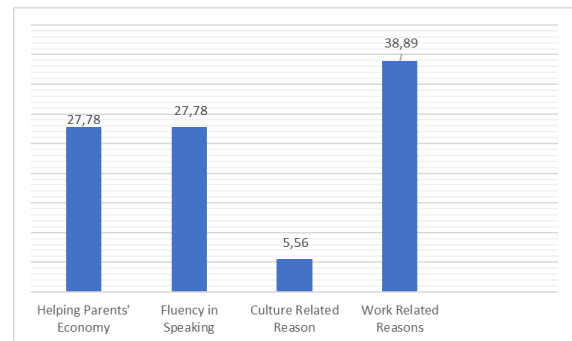


Figure 4: Japanese Learning Motivation.

Based on Figure 4, the primary motivation pertains to work opportunities, as evidenced by 7 responses (38,89%). This suggests that many learners perceive language skills as crucial for obtaining employment and furthering their careers, whether within Japan or with companies involved in business relations with Japan. Furthermore, the significance of family support is underscored by the motivation “Helping Parents’ Economy,” which garnered 5 responses (27,78%), indicating that learners are also motivated by a wish to enhance their families’ financial stability. Moreover, fluency in speaking serves as a crucial motivator, receiving 5 responses (27,78%); this indicates a robust focus on attaining conversational proficiency in the language. Although cultural interests are referenced infrequently, with only one response (5,56%), they nonetheless signify a crucial element that drives specific learners. Tran,

Marinova, and Nghiem (2023) proposed the conceptual framework in Figure 5.

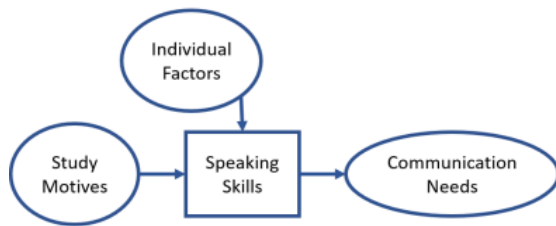


Figure 5: Conceptual Framework Perceived Speaking Skills, Motives, and Communication Needs of Studying the Japanese Language (Tran, Marinova, & Nghiem, 2023).

Based on Figure 5, the interplay among study motives, speaking skills, individual factors, and communication needs represents a multifaceted domain of investigation within language acquisition. The foundation of this framework consists of study motives, which act as essential catalysts for learners' engagement in language studies. The motives behind these actions can differ significantly; they include professional goals, such as obtaining employment in Japan or supporting family finances, and personal interests, like engaging with culture (Tran, Marinova, & Nghiem, 2023). This is consistent with Gardner's (2019) socio-educational model, which asserts that motivation plays a crucial role in achieving success in language learning. Recent research indicates that intrinsic motivations do not consistently produce superior outcomes to extrinsic motivations.

A study conducted by Alharbi (2020) illustrates that intrinsic motivation enhances enjoyment and engagement in learning activities; however, extrinsic factors, including job opportunities and financial incentives, tend to exert a more immediate influence on learners' commitment and performance. This indicates that although integrative motivations play a crucial role in fostering long-term engagement with the language and culture (Gardner, 2019), instrumental motivations may more effectively facilitate short-term success.

Individual factors are crucial in shaping a learner's development of speaking skills. Age, living conditions, and prior experiences significantly influence learning; for example, younger learners often exhibit distinct learning styles compared to older individuals, and access to native speakers can significantly improve

proficiency. Dörnyei's motivational self-system theory provides a comprehensive analysis of how individual differences influence motivation, dividing it into three key components: the ideal L2 self (aspirations), the ought-to L2 self (obligations), and the L2 learning experience (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021).

This model emphasizes the importance of developing speaking skills, a priority for many learners influenced by their motivations and unique circumstances. Individuals motivated by career opportunities tend to concentrate on practical vocabulary that is pertinent to business contexts; in contrast, those inspired by personal interests often emphasize informal dialogue and cultural expressions (Tran, Marinova, & Nghiem, 2023).

The research conducted by Liu, Zhang, and Wang (2019) reinforces this idea while also revealing opposing results: they found that students who concentrated mainly on attaining high grades frequently encountered anxiety during speaking tasks, stemming from pressure rather than deriving enjoyment from the act of communication itself.

Ultimately, these speaking skills should correspond with wider communication requirements, including fluency and comprehension of context and cultural subtleties, which are vital for successful engagement with native speakers.

Evaluation Method of The Learning Outcomes

Proficiency Test

The proficiency test for students at LPK is given three times: at the beginning, middle, and end of the training program. The proficiency test uses a speaking task based on the JF Standard in A1 and A2. The goal of the training program is A2, which is to be able to perform basic interactions necessary for daily life. The results are shown in Table 4.

Based on Table 4, 13 students aim for the A2 level, three are almost at A2, and two are still at A1. Despite progress in proficiency, verbal communication skills were hindered by difficulties in sentence construction, use of complex vocabulary, and lack of motivation and confidence.

Table 4: The Result of the Proficiency Test by Students.

No	Name	T1	T2	T3
1	S1	A1	A1	A2
2	S2	A1	A1	A2Δ
3	S3	A1	A1	A2
4	S4	A1	A1	A2
5	S5	A1	A2	A2
6	S6	A1	A1	A2Δ
7	S7	A1	A1	A1
8	S8	A1	A2	A2
9	S9	A1	A2	A2
10	S10	A1	A2	A2
11	S11	A1	A1	A1
12	S12	A1	A2	A2
13	S13	A1	A2	A2
14	S14	A1	A1	A2
15	S15	A1	A2	A2
16	S16	A1	A1	A2
17	S17	A1	A1	A2Δ
18	S18	A1	A1	A2

Job Interview

As of April 1, 2025, 16 learners have completed the interview with a Japanese company, whereas two students (S7 and S11) have yet to reach this achievement. This outcome underscores the effectiveness of the teaching methods and the motivational elements that play a crucial role in fostering student success in learning Japanese.

The statistic that 88.9% of students successfully passed the interview with a Japanese company highlights a significant relationship between effective teaching strategies and student performance. Interactive learning methods, including role-playing and group discussions, have likely improved speaking skills and fostered learners' confidence. Vygotsky's Social Development Theory posits that social interaction is essential for cognitive growth; therefore, involving students in collaborative activities fosters a more profound understanding and retention of language concepts.

Furthermore, incorporating varied vocabulary via multimedia resources, including videos and music, has effectively enhanced cultural understanding (Kern, 2015). This is consistent with Dörnyei and Ushioda's (2021) Motivational Self-System Theory suggests that learners demonstrate greater engagement when they perceive the relevance of their studies through practical application instead of mere rote memorization. The favorable results noted among these students

suggest that intrinsic factors, including a genuine interest in Japanese culture, and extrinsic factors such as potential job opportunities, drove them. On the other hand, the two students who did not pass the interview might have encountered diminished motivation or a lack of adequate engagement with the subject matter. Research demonstrates that motivation plays a vital role in successful language acquisition; in its absence, even the most effective teaching methods may prove inadequate (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). The findings indicate a necessity for customized support strategies to enhance motivation across the entire learner population.

The data highlights the effectiveness of teaching methodologies when paired with robust motivational frameworks, demonstrating their significant impact on language learning outcomes. Creating an engaging environment that emphasizes practical application alongside traditional study methods, such as kanji practice, allows educators to effectively prepare their students for success in academic settings and real-world scenarios, including job interviews.

Educators should integrate interactive and engaging strategies into their teaching methodologies to enhance learning outcomes. Strategies like role-playing, multimedia resources, and collaborative learning can cultivate a more engaging classroom atmosphere that promotes active participation. Furthermore, offering numerous practice opportunities via games or technology can clarify the complexities of kanji and enhance accessibility for learners.

Moreover, incorporating cultural elements into lessons can significantly boost motivation and contextual comprehension, thereby rendering the learning experience more relatable for students. Teachers can develop tailored strategies that address various needs by acknowledging students' unique learning styles and preferences. Confronting the complexities of kanji necessitates a comprehensive strategy that integrates creative pedagogical techniques with a deep awareness of students' motivations and experiences.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the methods, motivation, and learning outcomes of Japanese learning at a Vocational Training Institution (LPK) over five months and its impact on the language skills of students ready for employment in Japan. The

results revealed variations in proficiency, with a considerable number of participants being at the A2 level. Despite improving proficiency, obstacles emerged in sentence construction, intricate vocabulary usage, and a lack of motivation and self-assurance in verbal communication.

This study indicates that learning methods and student motivation impact learning effectiveness. This acknowledgment highlights the necessity for teaching strategies that effectively tackle these challenges while boosting student motivation. This study highlights a significant motivational factor, which is the utilization of learning media. This underscores the growing acknowledgment of various educational tools, including digital platforms, videos, and interactive applications, as effective means for improving Japanese language proficiency. These resources offer compelling content that can enhance cultural understanding and promote contextual learning.

Moreover, the findings suggest that training programs should emphasize speaking practice, incorporate a varied vocabulary, and utilize interactive teaching methods that enhance students' self-assurance. The anticipated outcomes are poised to aid institutions in crafting more effective learning strategies, which will, in turn, significantly enhance students' proficiency in the Japanese language.

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