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CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

A. Review of Related Theories

1. English Vocabulary

a. Definition of English Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the main foundation for mastering English, enabling effective communication. According to Grabe (2018: 92) define vocabulary as “a list or collection of words for a particular language or a collection of words known and used by individual speakers,” emphasizing the role of vocabulary as a student's personal stock of words that can be developed through exposure to learning media. Furthermore, Ramadhan et al. (2020: 61) enriches this definition by stating that vocabulary is “knowledge of words, including their forms (spoken/written), meanings, and usage.” This three-dimensional framework is relevant for analyzing how students at SMAN 2 Tembilahan process vocabulary from TikTok through visual-audio form recognition, contextual meaning comprehension, and practical application in communication.

According to Folse (2019: 14) vocabulary knowledge includes “recognition/production of spoken and written forms, understanding of meaning (concepts/associations), grammatical and



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collocation usage.” This receptive-productive distinction is appropriate for evaluating students' ability to recognize the word “delicious” from TikTok subtitles and practice it in speaking.

Furthermore, according to Mudrikatussalamah (2025: 308), vocabulary is defined as “words taught in a foreign language,” so TikTok creators function as informal teachers who present vocabulary through a combination of visuals, audio, and authentic sentence examples that appeal to students.

Wilkins cited in Vincy (2020: 2041) emphasizes the essence of vocabulary by quoting Wilkins that “without grammar, very little can be conveyed; without vocabulary, nothing at all can be conveyed,” which reinforces the justification for this study on the effectiveness of TikTok as a medium for enriching lexical repertoire. In this study, vocabulary is defined as English words that are recognized receptively, produced productively, and used contextually students at SMAN 2 Tembilahan through TikTok content.

In conclusion, the various definitions above show that vocabulary encompasses not only word recognition, but also understanding of meaning, form, and the ability to use words appropriately in a communicative context. With its strong visual and audio characteristics and authentic language presentation, TikTok has the potential to help students develop receptive and



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productive vocabulary through meaningful and contextual exposure. Therefore, in this study, vocabulary is understood as the mastery of English vocabulary, which includes the recognition, understanding, and contextual use of words by students at SMAN 2 Tembilahan through TikTok content as a learning medium.

b. Types of Vocabulary

According to Schmitt (2020:15) Vocabulary in language learning can be classified into several types, namely:

1. Receptive Vocabulary

Receptive vocabulary is vocabulary that learners can understand when they hear or read it, but cannot necessarily use actively in speaking or writing. Schmitt (2020: 15) states that receptive vocabulary refers to words that learners can recognize and understand when they encounter them in listening or reading, but do not yet use productively.

In the context of learning English through TikTok, receptive vocabulary appears when students watch English videos and understand the meaning of words through visual context, speaker expressions, or text that appears on the screen. For example, students understand the word “awkward” when they see a video of an awkward situation, even though they are not yet able to use it in their own sentences. Receptive vocabulary



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usually develops faster than productive vocabulary because students receive language input more often than they produce it.

2. Productive Vocabulary

Productive vocabulary is vocabulary that learners not only understand, but can also actively use in speaking or writing. Folse (2019: 18) explains that productive vocabulary includes words that learners can use correctly in speaking or writing.

In learning through TikTok, productive vocabulary is seen when students imitate the pronunciation of words, write comments using English vocabulary, or make their own TikTok videos using the words they have learned. Productive vocabulary requires a deeper mastery, including aspects of meaning, pronunciation, spelling, and the use of words in the right context, so its development is usually slower than receptive vocabulary.

3. Active Vocabulary

Active vocabulary refers to words that learners frequently use in everyday communication. According to Nation (2020: 72), active vocabulary consists of words that learners are able to recall and use automatically in speech and writing.

Active vocabulary is closely related to habits and frequency of use. In the context of TikTok, words that frequently appear in videos, captions, or certain trends (e.g., slang or popular expressions) have the potential to become active vocabulary



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because students are repeatedly exposed to them and use them in digital interactions. TikTok can help transform passive vocabulary into active vocabulary through repetition and interesting contexts of use.

4. Passive Vocabulary

Passive vocabulary refers to words that learners recognize when they hear or read them but rarely or never use actively. Nation (2020: 73) explains that passive vocabulary refers to words that learners can recognize when they hear or read them but do not feel confident enough to use them.

In learning through TikTok, many words are initially at the passive stage because students only watch and understand without direct practice. However, with the support of features such as comments, duets, or content creation, TikTok has the potential to help students develop passive vocabulary into active vocabulary.

c. Vocabulary Learning

Vocabulary learning is the process through which learners acquire new words and develop their understanding of word meanings and usage. According to Sayfutdinov (2024: 31), vocabulary learning can generally be classified into two types: **intentional vocabulary learning** and **incidental vocabulary learning**. Both approaches contribute to vocabulary acquisition



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and complement each other in helping learners expand their vocabulary knowledge.

1. Intentional Vocabulary Learning

Intentional vocabulary learning refers to the deliberate and conscious effort made by learners to study vocabulary through structured learning activities. Learners intentionally focus on learning new words by using strategies such as vocabulary lists, flashcards, dictionaries, or vocabulary exercises. This approach allows learners to master specific vocabulary systematically and is particularly useful for learning academic or technical vocabulary.

In the context of this research, intentional vocabulary learning occurs when students deliberately use TikTok to search for English vocabulary content with the purpose of improving their vocabulary knowledge.

2. Incidental Vocabulary Learning

Incidental vocabulary learning refers to the acquisition of vocabulary that occurs indirectly through exposure to meaningful language without explicitly focusing on learning new words. Learners acquire vocabulary naturally while reading, listening, or watching content in English, where their main focus is understanding the message rather



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than memorizing vocabulary. This type of learning helps learners understand vocabulary in authentic contexts and supports vocabulary development through repeated exposure.

In relation to this study, incidental vocabulary learning occurs when students encounter and acquire new English vocabulary while watching TikTok videos for entertainment or other purposes without intentionally studying the vocabulary.

Based on the explanations above, TikTok can facilitate both intentional and incidental vocabulary learning. Students may intentionally search for English vocabulary content to improve their vocabulary knowledge, or they may incidentally acquire new vocabulary through repeated exposure while watching English-related videos on TikTok.

d. Aspects of Vocabulary

Vocabulary consists of four aspects namely meaning, spelling, pronunciation, and word use (Mardianawati, 2020: 11)

1. Meaning

Meaning is considered a core aspect of vocabulary learning because words often have more than one meaning depending on the context in which they are used. A word can have different meanings in different situations, so students need to understand



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not only dictionary definitions but also contextual meanings. To help students understand the meaning of words, various strategies can be applied, such as guided discovery, contextual guessing, and dictionary use.

Meaning can be conveyed through demonstration and verbal explanation. Demonstrations include the use of real objects, gestures, pictures, sketches, or visual media, while verbal explanations involve analytical definitions of words, placing words in meaningful contexts, or translating them into other languages. Actively involving students in discovering the meaning of words helps them remember vocabulary more effectively because the learning process becomes meaningful and interesting.

2. Spelling

Spelling is another important aspect of vocabulary learning because it connects written symbols with sounds and supports reading and writing skills. Correct spelling enables students to accurately recognize words in written texts and express their ideas clearly in writing. English spelling can be challenging because a word may have more than one accepted written form, especially between British and American English variations.

The inconsistency between spelling and pronunciation in English often causes difficulties for learners. Therefore,



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students need sufficient exposure to the written form of words along with their pronunciation. In digital media such as TikTok, spelling is often displayed through captions, subtitles, or text overlays, which help students associate spoken words with their written forms and reinforce spelling accuracy.

3. Pronunciation

Pronunciation refers to the way a word is spoken and how the sounds in that word are produced. Accurate pronunciation is very important because incorrect pronunciation can cause misunderstandings between speakers and listeners. Pronunciation is a major problem in learning English because of the discrepancy between English spelling and sound production.

Many words in English are not pronounced according to their spelling, which often confuses learners. Therefore, students need repeated exposure to correct pronunciation models. Learning vocabulary through audio-visual media, such as TikTok videos, allows students to listen to authentic pronunciation while seeing the written form of the word. This combination helps learners improve their pronunciation and listening accuracy.

4. Word Use



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Word usage refers to how words are used appropriately in sentences and real communication. This includes grammatical functions, collocations, and appropriateness in different contexts, such as formal or informal situations. Word usage is closely related to grammar and requires students to understand how words function in the language system. Understanding word usage enables students to move from passive recognition of vocabulary to active usage. Through contextual examples, conversations, or short videos, students can observe how words are used naturally in everyday communication. TikTok content often displays vocabulary in authentic situations, helping students not only understand the meaning of words, but also how and when to use them correctly.

2. Learning Media in English Vocabulary

Learning media plays an important role in supporting the learning process. Arsyad (2020: 50) states that learning media is a tool used to deliver learning material and stimulate students' interest and understanding. In English language learning, digital media and social media platforms have become popular because they provide audio-visual content and easy access.

Some platforms that are often used to learn English vocabulary include YouTube and Instagram. YouTube provides long videos that explain vocabulary in detail, while Instagram offers short visual content



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and captions that introduce vocabulary concisely. However, these platforms often require active searching and may lack continuous exposure to learning materials.

Among these platforms, TikTok has gained significant attention as a learning medium, especially among students. TikTok features engaging short videos that combine audio, visuals, and text, making vocabulary learning more interesting and accessible. TikTok's algorithm-based recommendation system allows users to frequently encounter English learning content without having to actively search for it.

TikTok also provides interactive features such as comments, duets, and stitches, which encourage students to actively participate in the learning process. Compared to other platforms, TikTok is considered more effective in attracting students' attention, supporting microlearning, and motivating independent vocabulary learning. Therefore, TikTok is considered a promising learning medium for English vocabulary development.

1. Definition of TikTok Application

TikTok is a short video-based social media platform created by Zhang Yiming in 2016 under the company ByteDance. Initially, the app was called Douyin and was very popular in China. Due to its huge success, the app eventually spread to various countries under a new name, TikTok. TikTok itself entered Indonesia in 2017



(Simanjourang.R.,et al 2022: 10). In 2022, it was the most downloaded app worldwide with over 1 billion monthly active users, 60% of whom were Generation Z aged 16-24 (Wallaroom Media 2023). Users usually make videos that are between 15 and 60 seconds long and add music, filters, and effects.

From an educational perspective, TikTok is not only a platform for entertainment, but also a digital space that supports informal and independent learning. Qi and Haocen (2024: 29) state that TikTok can be used as a learning medium due to its large number of users, diverse content, and comprehensive features that allow creators to present educational material in a creative and concise manner. Through short videos, learners can access information quickly without being bound by time and place.

According to Warini et al. (2021: 150), TikTok provides various types of English learning materials that are most often shared by content creators, including materials on pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, common mistakes, and English facts. This content is appealing to viewers because it is easy to understand, the videos are short, and the visual editing is interesting, so that in addition to gaining knowledge, viewers also get entertainment from the videos they watch.

In addition, TikTok operates using an algorithm-based recommendation system known as the For You Page (FYP), which

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personalizes content based on viewer behavior, interests, and user interactions. According to Kaye, Chen, and Zeng (2021: 112), this algorithm allows users to repeatedly find content that matches their preferences, including educational videos. In the context of language learning, if students frequently interact with English-related content, the algorithm will continue to show them English vocabulary, pronunciation, and expressions, thereby supporting incidental learning.

In addition to presenting content, TikTok provides interactive features such as likes, comments, duets, and stitches that allow users to actively interact with content, rather than just being passive viewers. This interaction can increase students' motivation and confidence in learning English vocabulary, as they can respond to videos, practice pronunciation, or even create their own videos using the vocabulary they have learned. This interactive nature supports the formation of a positive learning perception and encourages students to take an active role in the learning process.

Based on this description, TikTok can be viewed not only as a social media platform, but also as an informal learning medium that has the potential to support English vocabulary mastery. TikTok's popularity among students, coupled with its audio-visual features and interactive environment, makes this platform relevant for further research, particularly regarding students' perception of



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using TikTok in learning English vocabulary among high school students, including those at SMAN 2 Tembilahan.

2. Features of TikTok for Vocabulary Learning

According to Rita et al. (2023: 204), TikTok has various features that can support English vocabulary learning, including:

1. Short Video Format

TikTok provides short videos that usually range from 15 to 60 seconds. This format is very suitable for the concept of micro-learning, which is learning delivered in small, focused chunks. For high school students, especially Generation Z, this short duration makes learning feel lighter and less boring, so they find it easier to accept and remember new vocabulary.

2. Text Overlay (Caption/Subtitles)

The text overlay feature allows creators to display vocabulary, meanings, or example sentences directly on the screen. This helps students see the spelling while hearing the pronunciation. In this way, students can connect the sound and the written form at the same time.

3. Audio & Music

TikTok combines audio elements such as native speaker voices, background music, and natural intonation. Through





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this audio, students can learn how to pronounce vocabulary correctly in real time. According to Alhazmi (2024: 392), the combination of sound and visuals helps students understand and remember information better than text alone. Therefore, TikTok's audio feature greatly supports pronunciation and vocabulary learning.

4. Duet & Stitch

The duet and stitch features allow users to interact with other videos by imitating, responding to, or continuing existing content. In vocabulary learning, students can imitate word pronunciation, create example sentences, or practice short dialogues. This feature encourages students to learn actively, rather than just being passive viewers.

5. Interactive Feedback (Comments, Likes, Shares)

TikTok provides a comments section, a like button, and a sharing feature that enable social interaction. Students can ask questions, give feedback, or discuss the vocabulary they have learned. This interaction can boost students' confidence and motivation because they feel involved in the learning process and receive responses from others.

3. Advantages of TikTok Video

According to Bahagia et al. (2022: 5305) There are several advantages of TikTok videos as follows:



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1. Increasing Student Motivation and Interest

TikTok has an attractive and entertaining visual display, so students do not feel like they are learning formally. This can increase student motivation and interest in learning English vocabulary. When students feel happy, they tend to be more open to learning and reviewing material independently.

2. Supporting Independent and Flexible Learning

TikTok can be accessed anytime and anywhere via smartphone. This allows students to learn vocabulary outside of class without being constrained by time and place. Learning becomes more flexible and tailored to the needs of each student, especially those who want to study independently.

3. Providing Authentic Language Exposure

Most TikTok content is created by native English speakers or international creators. Through this content, students can hear vocabulary used in real contexts, including everyday language, common expressions, and even slang. This authentic language exposure helps students understand the use of vocabulary more naturally.

4. Encouraging Active Learning and Participation



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With interactive features such as duets, comments, and video creation, students can actively engage in learning. They not only receive information, but also practice the vocabulary they have learned. This is in line with social learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of interaction in the learning process.

5. Reducing Learning Anxiety

Learning through TikTok feels more relaxed than learning in class. Students are not afraid of making mistakes because learning is done informally. This relaxed learning environment can reduce anxiety and increase students' courage in trying to use new vocabulary.

3. Students' Perception

a. The Definition of Perception

Perception is an important psychological process that plays a major role in how students understand and respond to learning experiences. Perception refers to the way individuals receive, select, organize, and interpret information from their environment to give meaning to what they experience. In the context of education, students' perceptions influence how they view learning materials, teaching methods, and learning media. Slameto (2013: 70) states that perception is a cognitive process that involves receiving stimuli, selecting relevant information, organizing it, and

interpreting it to form understanding. This means that students do not just passively receive information, but actively process it based on their thoughts and experiences. Therefore, different students may view the same learning method in different ways.

Similarly, Robbins and Judge (2017: 172) explain that perception is a process in which individuals organize and interpret sensory impressions to give meaning to their environment. This definition emphasizes that perception is subjective and influenced by personal background, expectations, and prior knowledge. In learning, this subjectivity affects students' attitudes and motivation.

Indah et al. (2025: 270) also explains that perception is the result of interaction between external stimuli and internal psychological processes. According to him, perception begins with sensory input through the human senses and continues with mental processing in the brain. This shows that perception is influenced by physical and psychological factors.

In addition, Efivania et al (2025: 158), through his ecological perception theory, argues that perception is an active process in which individuals directly detect information from the environment through interaction and experience. In learning situations, students actively interact with learning media, including digital platforms such as TikTok, which shape their perceptions over time.



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Based on the theories above, perception is understood as a process in which students receive, organize, interpret, and respond to learning experiences. In this study, these theories serve as a theoretical basis for examining students' perceptions of using TikTok as a medium for learning English vocabulary.

b. Process of Perception

Perception is not a direct process, but rather one that occurs in several stages. Slameto (2013: 52) explains that perception is a complex process involving three main stages, namely stimulus reception, interpretation, and response. **This theory is supported by Walgito (2010:99), who states that the process of perception starts when individuals receive stimuli through their sensory organs. The stimuli are then processed and interpreted in the brain before producing a response toward the perceived object.**

1. Stimulus Reception

Stimulus reception is when individuals receive stimuli from the environment through their senses, such as sight, hearing, or touch. In the context of learning, stimuli can be learning media, teacher explanations, or digital content such as educational videos on TikTok.

2. Interpretation

Interpretation is the process by which the stimulus received is organized and interpreted by individuals based on their

experiences, knowledge, and psychological conditions. At this stage, each student may have a different perception of the same stimulus, depending on their interests, previous learning experiences, and learning motivation.

3. Response

Responses are reactions that arise after a person interprets a stimulus. These responses can be positive or negative, in the form of interest in learning, motivation, or certain behaviors. In English language learning, positive perceptions of learning media such as TikTok can encourage students to be more active and motivated in learning vocabulary.

Therefore, the process of students' perception of the use of TikTok as a medium for learning English vocabulary is influenced by how students receive, interpret, and respond to stimuli presented through the application.

c. Step of Perception

According to Qiong (2017: 18), perception has some steps as follows:

1. Selection

Selection is the process of choosing stimuli from the environment that are received by the human senses. At this stage, individuals do not process all existing stimuli, but only select certain stimuli that are considered important or relevant.





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Qiong (2017) states that the limited capacity of the senses and human attention causes individuals to select the information they receive.

2. Organization

Organization is the process of arranging and grouping selected stimuli into meaningful patterns. According to Qiong (2017), at this stage, individuals organize the information they receive so that it is easier to understand and remember. Information is not processed separately, but is arranged into a coherent structure based on previous experience and knowledge.

3. Interpretation

Interpretation is the process of assigning meaning to organized information. Qiong (2017) explains that interpretation is influenced by an individual's prior experiences, attitudes, values, and background. Therefore, each individual's perception of the same stimulus may differ.

From those theories above, the researcher used the combination from process, and steps of perception as the indicators to find out the students perception. The indicators are:

1. Selection

Selection was chosen as the first indicator because students do not automatically process all the information th



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ey encounter on TikTok. Instead, they selectively focus on specific content related to vocabulary that catches their attention, such as short videos, pronunciation clips, or English learning posts. This indicator is important for identifying whether students consciously choose TikTok content as a learning resource rather than just entertainment.

2. Organization

Organization is used as an indicator to analyze how students arrange and organize selected information in their minds. After selecting English vocabulary content on TikTok, students organize the information by connecting new words with prior knowledge, grouping vocabulary, or remembering meanings through visual and audio cues. This indicator reflects the cognitive processes involved in understanding and storing vocabulary information presented through TikTok.

3. Interpretation

Interpretation is included because students may assign different meanings to the same learning content. This indicator explores how students interpret TikTok as a learning medium, whether they consider it useful, enjoyable, effective, or distracting in learning English vocabulary. Interpretation is influenced by students'



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learning experiences, motivation, and attitudes toward social media-based learning.

4. Response

Responses were chosen as the final indicator because perceptions ultimately lead to actions or behaviors. This indicator analyzes students' reactions after using TikTok to learn vocabulary, such as increased motivation, interest, confidence, or willingness to learn English independently. These responses reflect whether students' perceptions result in positive or negative learning behaviors.

The concepts of selection, organization, interpretation, and response are used to explain how students view TikTok-based vocabulary learning and are operationalized as indicators to develop a questionnaire to measure student perceptions in this study.

B. Review of Related Findings

Several studies have been conducted by previous researchers related to the use of TikTok in English language learning. The first study was conducted by M. Abhi Rama et al. (2023), entitled "Students' Perception on the Use of TikTok as an Effective Learning Media in Improving Students' Vocabulary." This study examined students' perceptions of TikTok as a learning medium for improving English vocabulary. The findings showed that most students had positive perceptions of using TikTok for vocabulary learning. Students considered TikTok useful, interesting, and easy to use



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because of its audio-visual content, translation texts, and vocabulary context examples. The study concluded that TikTok was perceived as a useful learning medium for vocabulary learning and was associated with students' vocabulary improvement and learning motivation.

The second study was conducted by Lilis Cantika (2022), entitled "Improving the Vocabulary Mastery by Using TikTok Application for the Eighth Grade Students of SMP Muhammadiyah 4 Metro." This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) to investigate the use of TikTok in improving students' vocabulary mastery. The results showed an increase in students' vocabulary scores after the implementation of TikTok in the learning process. The students also responded positively to the use of TikTok because it provided interesting learning materials, supported vocabulary understanding through visual and audio content, and reduced boredom in English learning. The study focused on changes in students' vocabulary mastery following the implementation of TikTok in the classroom.

The third study was conducted by Tri Nauli Efivania et al. (2025), entitled "Students' Perceptions on TikTok Application for Learning English." This study investigated students' perceptions of TikTok for learning English. The findings showed positive perceptions in terms of perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and learning motivation. TikTok was considered helpful for learning vocabulary, pronunciation, and expressions because of its short videos, interactive features, and



accessibility. The study focused on the use of TikTok for English learning in a broader scope rather than specifically on English vocabulary learning.

The previous studies and the present study share a common interest in the use of TikTok in English language learning, particularly in relation to vocabulary learning. However, they differ in their research focus, scope, and context. Cantika (2022) focused on changes in students' vocabulary mastery through the implementation of TikTok using Classroom Action Research. Rama et al. (2023), although also examining students' perceptions and vocabulary learning, related the use of TikTok to its role as a learning medium for vocabulary improvement and learning motivation. Meanwhile, Efivania et al. (2025) examined students' perceptions of TikTok for English learning more broadly, including vocabulary, pronunciation, and expressions. In contrast, the present study specifically focuses on students' perceptions of TikTok as a medium for learning English vocabulary and does not examine vocabulary improvement, learning outcomes, or the effectiveness of TikTok.

Based on the comparison above, the research gap is not the absence of studies on TikTok, vocabulary learning, or students' perceptions, as these aspects have already been examined by previous researchers. Rather, there is limited research specifically examining students' perceptions of TikTok as a medium for learning English vocabulary within the context of eleventh-grade students at SMAN 2 Tembilahan. Therefore, the present study addresses this gap by investigating the perceptions of eleventh-grade students toward the use of TikTok as a medium for learning English vocabulary through four indicators: selection, organization,

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interpretation, and response. The novelty of this study lies in the specific combination of its focus, context, and analytical indicators, namely, examining eleventh-grade students' perceptions of TikTok specifically as a medium for learning English vocabulary at SMAN 2 Tembilahan through the four perception indicators, without measuring vocabulary improvement or the effectiveness of TikTok.



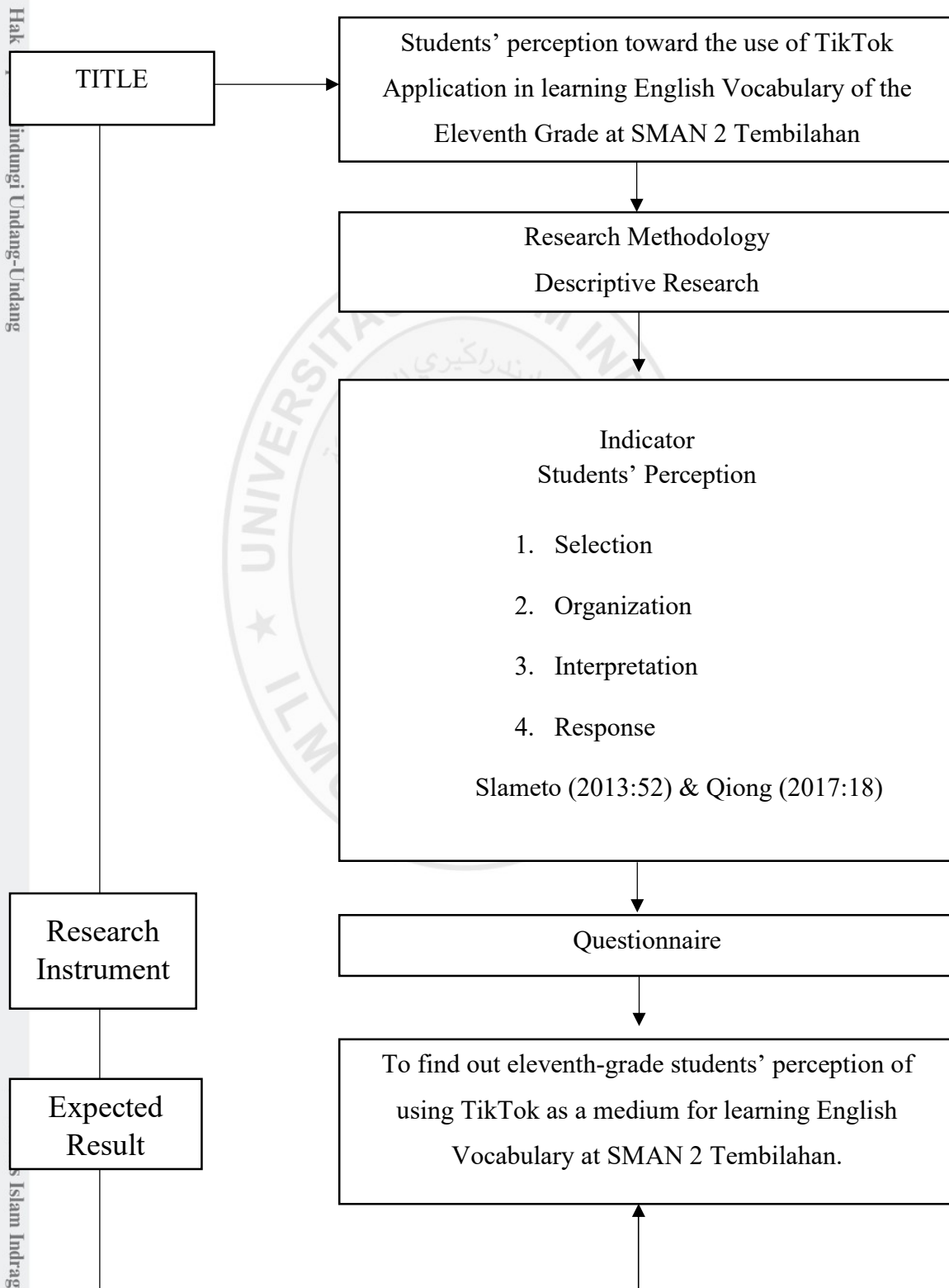
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C. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this research can be seen below.



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Based on the conceptual framework above, this study employs a descriptive quantitative research design to investigate eleventh-grade students' perception toward the use of the TikTok application in learning English vocabulary at SMAN 2 Tembilahan. Data are collected through a questionnaire developed based on perception indicators, namely selection, organization, interpretation, and response. The results are expected to describe students' perception of TikTok as a medium for learning English vocabulary.



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