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The Application of Game-Based Learning to Increase Students' Interest and Enthusiasm in Studying Islamic Religious Education Lessons Class V at SD Negeri 097815 Sibalok Balok Bosar Maligas District, Simalungun Regency Academic Year 2024/2025

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the application of Game-Based Learning in increasing the interest and enthusiasm of grade V students in Islamic Religious Education subjects at SD Negeri 097815 Sibalok Balok, Bosar Maligas District, Simalungun Regency in the 2024/2025 school year. The research method used is classroom action research (PTK) with a qualitative and quantitative approach. The data collection process is carried out through observation, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation to obtain accurate information regarding the effectiveness of this learning method. The results of the study show that the application of Game-Based Learning has a positive impact on the learning process. Students' interest in learning increased significantly, marked by high participation in learning activities, increased learning evaluation results, and positive responses to the methods used. In addition, students showed higher enthusiasm in participating in learning, as seen from their active involvement in various educational games applied. Game-based learning not only makes the classroom atmosphere more interactive and fun, but also improves the understanding of the concept of Islamic Religious Education material more effectively. Therefore, Game-Based Learning can be used as an alternative strategy in improving the quality of learning, especially in Islamic Religious Education subjects in elementary schools.

Keywords: Game-Based Learning, interest in learning, student enthusiasm, Islamic Religious Education.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has a very important role in shaping students' character and morals from an early age. This subject aims to guide students in understanding Islamic values and applying them in daily life. However, in practice, PAI learning at the elementary school level still faces various challenges, one of which is the low interest and enthusiasm of students in participating in the learning process. Many students think that PAI learning is monotonous and less interesting because the teaching method is still dominated by lectures and memorization. The lack of active interaction in learning causes students to be less motivated and easily bored. As a result, student involvement in the learning process is low, which has an impact on their understanding and learning outcomes. Along with the development of technology and innovation in the world of education, the Game-Based Learning (GBL) approach or game-based learning has begun to be introduced as an alternative to increase students' interest and involvement in learning. Game-Based Learning integrates game elements in the learning process, thereby creating a more interactive, challenging, and fun learning atmosphere. Through this method, students can learn in a more engaging way, which can increase their motivation to understand the material being taught. This research focuses on the application of Game-Based Learning in grade V PAI learning at SD Negeri 097815 Sibalok Balok, Bosar Maligas District, Simalungun Regency, 2024/2025 school year.

The main purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of the Game-Based Learning method in increasing students' interest and enthusiasm for PAI learning. In addition, this research will also identify obstacles and provide recommendations for educators in developing more innovative and effective learning strategies. With this research, it is hoped that the Game-Based Learning method can be a solution in improving the quality of PAI learning in elementary schools, so that students are not only more motivated in learning, but also able to understand and apply Islamic values in their daily lives.

This research aims to apply Game-Based Learning in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning to increase the interest and enthusiasm of grade V students at SD Negeri 097815 Sibalok Balok, Bosar Maligas District, Simalungun Regency, Academic Year 2024/2025. In more detail, the objectives of this study are as follows: Analyze the effectiveness of the implementation of Game-Based Learning in increasing students' interest and enthusiasm for PAI learning. Determine the influence of game-based learning on concept understanding and student involvement in the learning process. Identify obstacles and challenges in the application of Game-Based Learning in PAI learning in elementary schools. Develop recommendations for educators in developing innovative learning strategies to improve the quality of Islamic Religious Education teaching. Assessing the impact of the application of Game-Based Learning on student learning outcomes compared to conventional learning methods

METHODS

This study uses the Classroom Action Research (PTK) approach which aims to increase students' interest and enthusiasm in learning Islamic Religious Education (PAI) class V through the application of Game-Based Learning (GBL). The research was conducted in two cycles, where each cycle consists of four main stages, namely:

Planning → Developing a game-based learning plan, choosing appropriate educational games, and preparing measurement instruments.

Implementation → Implementing Game-Based Learning in PAI learning by involving students in various game activities that support the understanding of Islamic concepts.
 Observation → Observing students' interests, enthusiasm, and involvement during learning.
 Reflection → Evaluate game-based learning outcomes for improvement in the next cycle.
 This method was chosen because it allows for repeated evaluation and improvement of learning strategies based on the observation results of each cycle.

Based on the results of research conducted on 9 grade V students of SD Negeri 097815 Sibalok Balok, the application of Game-Based Learning (GBL) in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning showed a significant increase in student interest and enthusiasm. This can be seen from the change in student behavior before and after the game-based learning method is implemented.

Before the implementation of GBL, students tended to be passive, lacking enthusiasm, and had difficulty concentrating on PAI learning using conventional methods (lectures and memorization). However, after the implementation of Game-Based Learning, there was an increase in students' activeness in discussing, solving challenges in the game, and showing a higher interest in PAI materials.

To measure the effectiveness of Game-Based Learning, data was collected through observation, questionnaires, and evaluation tests (pre-test and post-test). Here is a summary of the data obtained:

Data on Student Interest and Enthusiasm (Based on Questionnaire)

Assessed Aspects	Before GBL (%)	After GBL (%)	Increase (%)
Students feel happy learning PAI	55%	89%	+34%
Students actively ask questions and discuss	44%	78%	+34%
Students are enthusiastic about learning	50%	85%	+35%
Students understand the material more easily	48%	82%	+34%

From the table above, it can be seen that there has been a significant improvement in all aspects after the implementation of Game-Based Learning.

Student Learning Outcomes (Pre-Test and Post-Test)

Tests were conducted before and after the implementation of **Game-Based Learning** with the following average scores:

No	Student Name	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Increased Value
1	Student 1	60	85	+25
2	Student 2	55	80	+25
3	Student 3	70	90	+20
4	Student 4	50	78	+28
5	Student 5	65	88	+23
6	6 students	58	82	+24
7	Student 7	62	84	+22
8	8 students	68	89	+21

No	Student Name	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Increased Value
9	Students 9	57	81	+24

Pre-Test **Average:** **60.5**
Post-Test **Average:** **84.1**
Average increase in student scores: +23.6 points

This data shows that after applying **Game-Based Learning**, the average score of students increases by **23.6 points**, indicating that this method has a positive effect on students' understanding in PAI learning.

To ensure the validity of the data obtained, several verification techniques are carried out as follows:

Data Triangulation, The observation data was compared with the results of questionnaires and interviews to ensure that the increase in students' interest and enthusiasm actually occurred. Pre-test and post-test data were analyzed in a simple statistical manner to see changes in student scores before and after the implementation of GBL. **Consistency Test**

The observation results are repeated in each cycle to see if the change in students' interests and learning outcomes is consistent or only temporary.

Confirm with PAI Teacher PAI teachers of grade V of SD Negeri 097815 Sibalok Balok were asked to provide input and confirmation regarding changes in student behavior during game-based learning. **Reflection with Students** After the second cycle, students were given the opportunity to express their opinions about the learning experience with Game-Based Learning, whether it was more interesting than the previous method and whether they found it easier to understand the material. The results of this verification process confirm that the application of Game-Based Learning in PAI class V learning has proven to be effective in increasing students' interest, enthusiasm, and understanding.

RESULT

Based on the results of the research, the application of Game-Based Learning (GBL) in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in grade V of SD Negeri 097815 Sibalok Balok has been proven to have a positive impact on students' interest, enthusiasm, and learning outcomes. These findings are in line with previous research that shows that game-based learning is able to increase student engagement, learning motivation, and concept understanding in a more interactive manner than conventional methods. **Analysis of Increased Interest and Enthusiasm of Students** From the results of the questionnaire, students' interest and enthusiasm increased by 34-35% after the implementation of Game-Based Learning. This shows that a game-based approach can create a more fun and challenging learning atmosphere, so that students are more interested in actively participating in PAI learning. Before the implementation of Game-Based Learning, students often showed saturation in PAI learning, especially when the methods used were conventional such as lectures and memorization. However, after applying Game-Based Learning, students become more motivated, actively ask questions, and show higher enthusiasm in completing the challenges in the game given. **Analysis of Improving Student Learning Outcomes** Pre-test and post-test data showed an increase in the average student score of 23.6 points, from 60.5 to 84.1 after the Game-Based Learning method was applied. This indicates that students are easier to understand the material when learning is carried out interactively through games.

One of the main factors that led to this increase was that Game-Based Learning provided a more active learning experience, where students had to think critically, work

together, and solve challenges directly related to the PAI material. This process helps students understand concepts better than passive methods such as listening to lectures.

Challenges and Obstacles in the Implementation of Game-Based Learning

Although the results are positive, there are several challenges faced in the implementation of Game-Based Learning, including: Limited technological facilities, because some educational games require digital devices such as computers or tablets, while the facilities available in schools are still limited. Teachers' adaptability, where teachers need to adjust teaching methods by using educational games that are relevant and effective in supporting learning materials. Time constraints, because game-based learning requires sufficient time allocation so that students can really understand the concepts given without rushing.

However, this challenge can be overcome by using non-digital-based games (educational cards, interactive quizzes, or simple group games) as well as conducting training for teachers to improve their skills in implementing game-based learning.

Data Validation, to ensure that the data obtained in this study is valid and reliable, several Compare data from various sources, such as observations, questionnaires, and interviews with teachers and students, to see the consistency of the research results. Analyze the conformity between the pre-test and post-test results with data obtained from questionnaires and observation of student participation during learning.

Data Consistency Test. The results obtained are compared between the first and second cycles to ensure that the increase in student interest and learning outcomes is not only a temporary effect, but occurs consistently after the implementation of Game-Based Learning. Confirm with the Teacher. PAI teachers in grade V were asked to provide feedback on changes in student behavior before and after the implementation of Game-Based Learning. Teachers are also asked to assess the effectiveness of this method in helping students understand PAI material.

Reflection with Students. After the second cycle, a discussion session was held with students to find out their experiences while learning with the Game-Based Learning method. Students stated that they preferred game-based learning over conventional methods because it was more fun, challenging, and helped them understand the material. Based on the validation process carried out, it was found that:

Data from various sources showed consistent results, where both the results of questionnaires, observations, interviews, and test results showed an increase in student interest and learning outcomes after the implementation of Game-Based Learning.

The increase in student scores from pre-test to post-test by 23.6 points was supported by findings from observations that showed that students were more active and engaged in learning after the game-based method was applied.

The teacher confirmed that there was an increase in student participation and understanding, and stated that the Game-Based Learning method can be an effective strategy to improve the quality of PAI learning. Students stated that they enjoyed learning with game-based methods more, because it made them more motivated to learn and understand the material better. With the results of this validation, it can be concluded that the application of Game-Based Learning (GBL) in learning Islamic Religious Education class V at SD Negeri 097815 Sibalok Balok has proven to be valid and effective in increasing student interest, enthusiasm, and learning outcomes.

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