Educational Journal of Learning Technology
Vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 198-207, May 2025
https://doi.org/10.58230/edutech.v2i3.48
Received February 08, 2025; Revised May 02, 2025; Accepted May 05, 2025

Application of the Gamification Model in Islamic Religious Education Learning to Increase Student Learning Motivation in Vocational High Schools

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Abstract: This study explores the application of a gamification model in Islamic Religious Education to enhance student learning motivation. The research aims to examine the implementation of gamification in the learning process and its impact on the motivation of class XI TKR A students. Using Classroom Action Research, the study involved 21 students and collected data through observation, questionnaires, and documentation. Data analysis included evaluating teacher and student activity sheets and motivation questionnaires. Results show that teacher activity improved from 63% in cycle I to 90.8% in cycle II, student activity increased from 54% to 91%, and student motivation rose from 62% to 86%. These findings indicate that gamification significantly enhances student engagement and motivation in Islamic Religious Education learning.

Keywords: Gamification model, Learning motivation, Islamic religious education

1. Introduction

Education is a basic need in human life that plays a vital role in shaping individual character and behaviour. (Hakim & Darojat, 2023). Through education, human potential can be optimally developed physically, creatively, and intellectually to contribute positively to social life. (Widyastono, 2012). The educational process involves transferring knowledge, skills, and values through various methods, including training, teaching, and exploration.

In formal education, teachers have a central role in determining the success of the teaching and learning process. Good learning planning will support the achievement of educational goals, including in the subject of Islamic Religious Education (Hasriadi et al., 2024). Islamic Religious Education aims to produce students who understand, appreciate, and practice Islam's teachings in daily life. (Balqis et al., 2024). However, Islamic Religious Education often faces challenges, such as low interest and motivation in students' learning.

One of the factors that causes low student motivation to learn is learning methods that are less varied and tend to be monotonous, such as lectures (Sari et al., 2018; Kaunain et al., 2024). This method can lead to boredom and a lack of student involvement in the learning process. Low learning motivation has an impact on declining academic achievement and students' understanding of subject matter (Susanti et al., 2024). To overcome this, innovation in learning methods is needed that can increase student motivation and engagement.

One approach that can be used is gamification, which is the application of game elements in the context of learning. Gamification increases student engagement and motivation by making

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learning more interactive and enjoyable (Srimuliyani, 2023). Previous research has shown that gamification can increase students' intrinsic motivation and make learning more effective. For example, a study by (Safitri et al., 2024) found that applying gamification in Islamic Religious Education learning increased students' enthusiasm and participation in the classroom.

Although research shows the effectiveness of gamification in learning, there is still a gap in its application to Islamic Religious Education subjects at the vocational high school level. Most of the previous research focused more on primary or tertiary education, so a more in-depth study is needed on applying gamification in the context of vocational high schools, especially in Islamic Religious Education.

Based on this background, this study aims to answer the question: "How can applying the gamification model in Islamic Religious Education learning increase the learning motivation of grade XI TKR A students at SMKN 2 Palopo?" This study aims to develop and apply the gamification model in Islamic Religious Education learning and evaluate its influence on students' learning motivation. It is hoped that the results of this research can contribute to developing innovative and effective learning methods in increasing student learning motivation in vocational high schools.

2. Method

Research uses a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach to improve the quality of learning in the classroom, especially in increasing students' motivation in Islamic Religious Education subjects. The CAR model used refers to opinion (Susilo et al., 2022), which states that CAR is a form of teacher reflection on the learning process carried out directly. This research is carried out through an action cycle consisting of planning, acting, observation, and reflection, as developed by Kemmis and McTaggart. This cycle is repeated until the expected improvements and improvements in the learning process are achieved.

This study's subjects are grade XI students at one of the high schools in Palopo City who participate in Islamic Religious Education. The selection of subjects was carried out purposively, considering that the class showed a low level of learning motivation based on the initial observation results.

The data collection techniques used in this study include observation, questionnaires, and documentation. Observations were carried out to observe the activities of teachers and students during the learning process, especially in the aspects of motivation, activity, and involvement in gamification-based activities. The questionnaire measured students' learning motivation before and after applying the gamification model. Meanwhile, documentation is used to collect supporting data such as learning outcome records, photos of activities, and student evaluation results.

The data analysis technique used is quantitative descriptive analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Data from the observation sheet is analysed using the percentage formula: $P = (F/N) \times 100\%$, with P being the percentage sought, F being the total score obtained, and N being the maximum number of scores. The results of the analysis are then categorised into five levels of ability or activity based on average scores:

Table 1. Observation Category of Teacher and Student

No.	Average Score of Teacher and Student Ability	Assessment Category
1.	80-100	Very Good
2.	66-79	Good
3.	56-65	Fairly Good
4.	40-55	Less Good
5.	30-39	Not Good

For the questionnaire data, the analysis was carried out using two formulas, namely average and percentage. The formula obtains the average:$Mx = \frac{\sum x}{N}$

Mx is the mean, ∑x is the sum of the entire score, and N is the number of respondents. The percentage is calculated by the formula: P = (F/N) × 100%, where F is the frequency observed, and N is the total number of respondents. The categories of students' learning motivation levels based on the questionnaire are grouped into four categories, namely:

Table 2. Questionnaire Results

No.	Questionnaire Acquisition Vulnerability	Assessment Category
1.	86-100	Very Motivated
2.	70-85	Motivated
3.	50-69	Somewhat Motivated
4.	25-49	Not Motivated

3. Results

The following table shows the results of observations of the teacher's ability to apply the gamification learning model through the Bamboozle game to increase student learning motivation.

Table 3. Teacher Observation Results in Cycle I Learning

No.	Learning Stages	Maximum Score	Scores Obtained	Percentage (%)
1	Introduction to Learning	30	18	60%
2	Core Activities: Student Organising	10	7	70%
3	Core Activities: Media Provision and Worksheets	15	9	60%
4	Closing Learning	10	7	70%
	Total Score	**65**	**41**	**63%**

Table 3 shows the results of observations on teachers' activities during the implementation of learning in Cycle I. This observation includes four main stages in the learning process: the preliminary stage, the core activity (which consists of two parts: student organisation and the provision of media and worksheets), and the learning conclusion. In the preliminary stage, teachers obtained a score of 18 out of a maximum of 30, with an average percentage of 60%. This shows that teachers still need to increase efforts in building an initial learning atmosphere, such as conveying learning objectives and motivating students.

In core activities focused on student organising, teachers scored 7 out of 10, averaging 70%. This shows that the student organisation has already done quite well. However, when providing media and worksheets, teachers only obtained a score of 9 out of a maximum of 15, the same percentage as the preliminary stage, which is 60%. This indicates the need for improvement in preparing and utilising interesting learning media relevant to the material.

At the end of the learning stage, the teacher obtained a score of 7 out of 10 with an average of 70%, which indicates that the teacher has begun to show improvement in closing the learning, such as providing evaluations and feedback to students. Overall, out of a maximum total score of 65, teachers obtained a score of 41, with an average achievement of 63%. This percentage reflects that the implementation of learning by teachers in Cycle I is in the "adequate" category and still needs improvement, especially in the preliminary aspects and the provision of learning media.

Table 4. Results of Student Observations in Cycle I Learning

No.	Rating Categories	Maximum Score	Scores Obtained	Percentage (%)
1	Student Readiness to Participate in Learning	105	54	51,40%
2	Student Activeness in Learning	105	58	55,20%
3	Students' Persistence in Following Learning	105	58	55,20%
Total Average		—	—	**54%**

Table 4 presents the results of observations on student behaviour during the learning process in Cycle I based on three main assessment categories: readiness to participate, activeness, and perseverance of students in participating in learning. Each category has a maximum score of 105, which reflects the number of students multiplied by the highest score on each indicator. The category of student readiness to participate in learning obtained a score of 54 out of a maximum score of 105, with a percentage of 51.40%. This shows that most students have not shown optimal readiness in following the learning process, both in terms of attention, equipment, and mental attitude.

In the category of student activity in learning, the score obtained is 58, or equivalent to 55.20% of the maximum score. Although still in the low category, this data shows slightly more student involvement in learning activities than in their readiness. Similarly, the score obtained in the student perseverance category was also 58, with the same percentage of 55.20%. This indicates that some students are showing perseverance in completing assignments and following the learning to the end, even though it is not wholly consistent. Overall, the average percentage of all three assessment categories was 54%, which placed the level of student participation and engagement in learning in Cycle I in the low category. This suggests the need for strategic interventions, such as more engaging learning methods, to increase students' motivation and active participation in the next cycle.

Table 5. Teacher Observation Results in Cycle II Learning

No.	Rating Categories	Maximum Score	Scores Obtained	Percentage (%)
1	Introduction to Learning	30	28	93,30%
2	Core Activities: Student Organising	10	10	100%
3	Core Activities: Media Provision and Worksheets	15	14	93,30%
4	Closing Learning	10	10	100%
	Total	65	59	**90,80%**

Table 5 shows a significant increase in teachers' implementation of learning in Cycle II. This cycle is assessed through four main categories: the introduction of learning, the core activities in terms of student organisation and the provision of media and worksheets, and the conclusion of the lessons. The overall maximum score is 65, while the score obtained by teachers reaches 59, with an average percentage of 90.80%.

In the preliminary stage of learning, teachers obtained a score of 28 out of a maximum score of 30, which shows a percentage of 93.30%. This shows that teachers have started learning well, including providing motivation, communicating learning objectives, and connecting the material with students' previous knowledge. In the student organisation category, teachers achieved a perfect score of 100%, which reflects success in forming study groups and directing students effectively to participate in learning activities.

In providing media and worksheets, teachers scored 14 out of 15, or 93.30%, indicating that teachers have prepared learning media and worksheets very well, thus supporting a more interactive and engaging learning process. Meanwhile, in the category of closing learning, the

teacher also achieved a perfect score (100%), indicating that the teacher had closed the learning by reflecting on the learning activities, providing evaluations, and providing reinforcement to the material that had been taught. Overall, the improvement in teacher performance in Cycle II shows success in designing and implementing more effective and efficient learning, thereby supporting the achievement of learning goals optimally.

Table 6. Results of Student Observations in Cycle II Learning

No.	Observed Categories	Maximum Score	Scores Obtained	Percentage (%)
1	Student Readiness to Participate in Learning	105	95	90,50%
2	Student Activeness in Learning	105	98	93,30%
3	Students' Persistence in Following Learning	105	95	90,50%
	Total	315	287	**91%**

Table 6 shows the results of observations on three main categories observed during learning in Cycle II, namely student readiness to participate, student activeness in learning, and student diligence in participating in learning. The maximum score that can be obtained in each category is 105, with the overall maximum total score being 315. In Cycle II, the total score obtained by students was 287, which resulted in an average percentage of 91%. In the student readiness to participate category, students scored 95 out of 105, equivalent to 90.50%. This shows that students have shown high readiness in learning and actively participating in discussions or activities carried out during learning.

For student activeness in learning, students scored 98 out of 105, or 93.30%, indicating that they were more actively involved in every learning activity, both in answering questions, participating in learning games, and collaborating with classmates. Meanwhile, in the category of student perseverance in participating in learning, students obtained a score of 95 out of 105, which reflects 90.50%. This shows that students are diligent and focused on following each stage of learning, despite the challenges in some activities. Overall, the observation results showed a significant increase in student engagement and participation in learning in Cycle II, which was reflected in the achievement of a higher percentage compared to Cycle I. This shows the gamification model's success in increasing students' motivation, activity, and perseverance in learning.

4. Discussion

Application of the Gamification Model in Islamic Religious Education Learning

These results show that the use of gamification has a positive influence on students' motivation to learn. Game elements such as awarding points, challenges, group competitions, and prizes can help create a fun and competitive learning atmosphere. This strategy makes students feel more challenged and motivated to achieve the set learning targets. In addition, this model can also shift the role of students from passive to active, which is reflected in increased activity in answering questions, discussing, and completing group assignments.

The gamification model also indirectly provides space for strengthening collaborative values, such as cooperation, responsibility, and discipline. In the context of Islamic Religious Education learning, this is a significant added value because the primary goal of religious education is not only cognitive, but also to strengthen students' affective and character.

These findings align with the results of research conducted by (Rosa et al., 2024) This concludes that the application of gamification in learning can significantly increase students' interest in learning, especially when the game elements are adjusted to the age and characteristics of the students. Research by (Syahputri et al., 2025) Also shows that gamification strategies positively affect intrinsic motivation and student engagement and can create a conducive and fun learning climate.

Moreover (Lestari et al., 2024) stated that learning with a game-based approach increases students' attraction to the material and strengthens their retention of the lesson's content. This comparison shows that the results of this study are consistent with previous findings and reinforce the evidence that gamification is a relevant and effective strategy, especially in the context of religious education, which has tended to be monotonous and only oriented to memorisation.

Practically, the results of this study provide an idea that teachers can use the gamification model as an alternative to effective learning strategies in overcoming students' low learning motivation. Points, levels, leaderboards, and rewards can be applied in face-to-face activities and online learning. Teachers are also encouraged to be more creative in designing game elements that are engaging, meaningful, and aligned with learning objectives. For example, interactive quizzes containing religious values can be created, or group competitions can be created to contextually understand the meaning of Qur'anic verses. This implication also touches on classroom management, where gamification has been proven to reduce students' passive behaviour and create a more dynamic and interactive atmosphere. In addition, this strategy can help teachers assess the development of students' social and participatory skills more objectively.

From the theoretical side, this research strengthens behavioristic and constructivist theories in learning. From a behavioristic perspective, reward systems in gamification can reinforce positive student behavior through external reinforcement, such as points or rewards. From a constructivist perspective, gamification allows students to actively build their knowledge through hands-on experience, exploration, and collaboration. This model also supports the theory of learning motivation as put forward by (Deci & Ryan, 2008), where student engagement in learning increases with autonomy, competence, and social connectedness. Gamification provides autonomy in choosing strategies, a sense of competence through overcoming challenges, and social connectedness through group interaction. Thus, this research can be a reference for developing new theoretical frameworks that combine pedagogical approaches and educational psychology, particularly in technology- and game-based instructional design.

Application of the Gamification Model Increases Student Learning Motivation

One of the formulations of the problem in this study is the extent to which the gamification model can increase the learning motivation of grade XI students in Islamic Religious Education. Based on the data obtained from the two learning cycles, it was found that there was a significant increase in the level of student motivation. In the first cycle, the average student motivation was 62%, which increased to 86% in the second cycle. This 24% increase shows that the application of gamification has a real and positive influence on improving student learning motivation.

This improvement can be understood from the perspective of educational psychology, where game elements such as points, challenges, level systems, rewards, and healthy competitions can create a fun and challenging learning atmosphere. This provides a new stimulus that makes students not feel bored, encouraging them to participate more actively in learning. In this context, students' motivation to learn is not only formed because of academic pressure alone, but also because of the intrinsic drive born from curiosity, competitive spirit, and satisfaction when achieving an achievement.

These findings are in line with research conducted by (Mahbubi & Homaidi, 2025) Integrating game elements in learning significantly increases student engagement and motivation. In his research, students who learned through the gamification model showed higher enthusiasm and a positive perception of the learning process. They feel that learning becomes more interesting and interactive, and sparks enthusiasm to complete tasks more vigorously.

In addition, research by (Yulinda, 2025) Revealed that gamification-based learning increases intrinsic motivation, as students feel more independent and motivated to complete challenges to obtain awards. In this case, the study's results confirm previous findings and strengthen the argument that the gamification model is a practical approach to developing students' motivation and interest in learning.

From a practical point of view, the success of gamification models in increasing learning motivation has important implications for teachers. Teachers can use this approach as an alternative

learning strategy, especially when dealing with students who tend to be passive or less interested in following conventional learning. Utilizing technology and creativity in designing game elements can make learning more interactive, competitive, and fun without abandoning the learning objectives' essence.

Theoretically, these findings strengthen the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2008) This emphasises that learning motivation can increase if students feel autonomy, competence, and social connectedness in the learning process. The gamification model can meet all three components: autonomy arises when students are free to solve challenges; competencies are built through a system of levels and achievements; and social connectedness is strengthened through collaborative and competitive activities between students. Thus, it can be concluded that applying the gamification model has proven effective in increasing students' motivation to learn. This model impacts cognitive engagement and strengthens students' affective dimensions, such as enthusiasm, confidence, and a desire to continue learning. The success of this model opens up opportunities for educators to continue to innovate in developing learning strategies that are adaptive to the needs and characteristics of today's students.

Application of Gamification in Increasing Student Activity and Engagement

Another problem formulation in this study is how active students are when applying the gamification model during the learning process. Based on the observations in the two learning cycles, it was found that there was a significant increase in student activity. In the first cycle, student activity was recorded at 54%, then increased to 91% in the second cycle. This figure shows that the gamification model positively influences increasing student involvement in learning.

Student activity in this context is measured based on active participation in class discussions, involvement in educational games designed as part of learning, and response to teacher tasks. This increase in liveliness is concrete evidence that game elements such as points, levels, challenges, and rewards create a more engaging and interactive learning atmosphere, encouraging students to be more actively engaged.

More deeply, students who initially showed passive and less responsive tendencies in conventional learning experienced a change in attitude when the gamification approach was applied. Competitive challenges and awards arouse students' enthusiasm to show their best abilities. Gamification provides a space for students to feel appreciated for their efforts and gives meaning to every process they go through in learning.

The results of the study reinforce these findings. (Rahayu et al., 2021). This shows that engaging and interactive media can significantly increase student activism. In his research, Rahayu et al. It concludes that learning strategies that involve technology or interactive visual and audio elements can arouse students' curiosity and strengthen their participation in the classroom. This is particularly relevant to the gamification approach that inherently uses a variety of interactive media in the learning process. Similarly, research (Anurogo et al., 2024) Students who learned through gamification approaches responded more positively to assignments and classroom interactions. They are more enthusiastic about answering questions, solving challenges, and providing input on classroom activities. These findings support the results of this study, which shows that the gamification model not only increases motivation but also directly affects aspects of student activity and engagement in learning.

In terms of practical implications, these results suggest that teachers can leverage gamification as an effective alternative learning strategy to encourage students to be more active and engaged. This approach can solve common problems such as low student participation, a passive classroom atmosphere, and students' difficulty understanding the material due to monotonous learning methods. Teachers can also adapt game elements to the teaching material and student characteristics to make learning more contextual and relevant.

Meanwhile, from the theoretical implications, this finding strengthens the theoretical view of Social Constructivism (Vygotsky, 2012), emphasizing that learning occurs optimally when students are actively engaged and cooperative in challenging social situations. The gamification model provides a forum for students to actively interact with materials, friends, and teachers and provides

space for reflection on their understanding through assignments and games. Thus, it can be concluded that gamification can consistently increase student activity and involvement in Islamic Religious Education learning. This model not only creates a fun learning environment, but it also encourages students to become active participants in every learning process. This improvement shows active participation-based learning is key to shaping meaningful learning and long-term impact.

The Impact of Gamification Implementation on Material Comprehension

In addition to increasing student motivation and activity, the gamification model applied in this study also significantly impacts students' understanding of Islamic Religious Education materials. Learning packaged in educational games, challenges, and reward systems has proven to create a more enjoyable and meaningful learning experience for students.

The results of the evaluation of student understanding carried out through pre-test and post-test showed a very significant increase. The average pre-test score of students is 41, while the average post-test score increases to 91. This improvement shows that students are more motivated and active in learning and truly understand the material's content.

This increased understanding can be interpreted as a result of an interactive learning environment responsive to students' needs. With game elements such as challenges, scores, levels, and rewards, students are more focused, encouraged to learn independently, and strongly desire to complete learning tasks. The learning atmosphere becomes more lively, so initially considered difficult material becomes easier for students to accept and remember.

These findings are in line with research (Fitriana & Masjid, 2025), which concluded that interactive and engaging learning media can improve students' understanding of abstract or complex concepts. In this case, gamification is an innovative medium combining entertainment and education elements to help students absorb information more effectively.

In addition, research conducted by (Handayani et al., 2024) It also shows that students who learn with a game-based approach retain learning materials better than those who use conventional methods. Thus, gamification approaches have a short-term impact on increasing participation and contribute significantly to students' cognitive learning outcomes.

Regarding practical implications, teachers can make the gamification model an alternative learning strategy, especially for conceptual Islamic Religious Education materials that require in-depth understanding. This approach helps teachers deliver learning that is contextual, fun, and adaptive to the needs of the digital generation. Teachers also find it easier to monitor the development of students' understanding through the results of games or challenges given.

Theoretically, these findings support the theory of constructivism (Piaget, 1966), which states that learning is an active process in which students build their knowledge through hands-on experience and engagement. In the context of gamification, every challenge or game becomes a stimulus that allows students to build understanding based on their reasoning, rather than just passively receiving information. It also aligns with the principles of andragogy, which emphasises the importance of student involvement in designing their own learning experience.

Applying the gamification model in Islamic Religious Education learning has positively impacted students' understanding of the material, especially "Faith in Allah's Apostles". Creating a fun, competitive, and interactive learning atmosphere encourages students to dig deeper into information, connect concepts, and apply them in real-life contexts. Gamification is a fun learning strategy that improves students' overall cognitive learning outcomes.

5. Conclusion

This study aims to determine the effectiveness of applying the gamification model in increasing students' motivation, activity, and understanding of Islamic Religious Education materials in grade XI. Based on the results of research conducted through two cycles, it was found that the application of gamification was able to significantly increase student learning motivation from 62% to 86%, increase student activeness from 54% to 91%, and increase students' understanding of the material, which was shown by an increase in the average score from 41 (pre-

test) to 91 (post-test). Gamification elements such as challenges, points, competitions, and rewards have created a fun, competitive, and interactive learning atmosphere that encourages active student engagement.

Based on these findings, the researcher recommends integrating the gamification model more widely in the learning process, especially in Islamic Religious Education subjects requiring conceptual understanding and emotional involvement. Teachers are expected to continue to innovate in designing learning strategies based on technology and student interests to create a conducive and fun learning atmosphere. This research provides new insights for the world of education about the importance of adaptive learning approaches to the characteristics of the digital generation. It supports modern education theories that emphasise active and meaningful learning experiences.

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