

Teacher Strategies Assisted by Game-Based Learning (GBL) Models in Overcoming Students' Low Learning Motivation at Wali Songo Madrasah Tsanawiyah

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Teacher strategies, Game Based Learning (GBL), learning motivation, learning process, Islamic junior high school.

ABSTRACT

This study was motivated by the low learning motivation of students at MTs Wali Songo, as reflected in their limited participation, lack of attention during lessons, and low engagement in classroom activities. The study aimed to describe the condition of students' learning motivation, teachers' strategies assisted by the *Game Based Learning* (GBL) model to overcome low learning motivation, students' responses to the implementation of GBL, the supporting and inhibiting factors, and the impact of GBL on students' learning motivation. This research employed a qualitative approach. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation. The data were analyzed using data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, while data validity was ensured through source and technique triangulation. The findings revealed that students' low learning motivation was influenced by both internal and external factors. Teachers implemented *Game Based Learning* systematically through planning, implementation, and evaluation stages, creating a more interactive, enjoyable, and student-centered learning environment. Students responded positively to the implementation of GBL. Its successful implementation was supported by teachers' creativity, the principal's support, students' enthusiasm, and adequate learning facilities, although limited instructional time and differences in students' academic abilities remained challenges. Overall, the implementation of *Game Based Learning* effectively enhanced students' learning motivation, active participation, self-confidence, collaboration, and engagement in the learning process.

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ABSTRACT

This study was motivated by the persistently low learning motivation of students at Wali Songo Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs), as indicated by their low level of activity, lack of attention during learning, and minimal participation in the learning process. This study aimed to describe the condition of students' learning motivation, teacher strategies assisted by the *Game Based Learning* (GBL) model in overcoming low learning motivation, students' responses to the implementation of GBL, the supporting and inhibiting factors in its implementation, and the impact of GBL implementation on students' learning motivation. This study used a qualitative approach, with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, while data validity was obtained through source and technique triangulation. The findings indicated that low learning motivation was influenced by internal and external factors. Teachers implemented GBL-assisted learning strategies through the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages, making learning more interactive, enjoyable, and student-centered. The implementation of GBL received positive responses from students and was supported by teachers' creativity, the madrasah principal's support, students' enthusiasm, and adequate facilities, although challenges remained in the form of limited time and differences in students' abilities. Overall, the implementation of *Game Based Learning* was able to improve students' motivation, activeness, self-confidence, cooperation, and engagement in the learning process.

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1. Introduction

Education is a conscious and planned effort to develop human resource potential through the learning process. One of the main factors influencing learning success is students' learning motivation (Rahmayanti, 2016). Motivation plays an important role in encouraging students to achieve optimal development and academic achievement. Students with high motivation tend to participate more actively in learning, strive to understand the material, and have greater opportunities to obtain good learning outcomes.

For teachers, students' learning motivation needs to be continuously maintained and enhanced so that their enthusiasm for learning remains sustained. Meanwhile, for students, motivation functions as an internal driving force that encourages them to learn enthusiastically without coercion. In line with Sardiman's view in Emda (2017), the success of the learning process is greatly influenced by the level of learning motivation possessed by students. Therefore, teachers have the responsibility to provide encouragement and create a learning environment capable of increasing motivation so that the intended learning objectives and behavioral changes can be achieved.

Based on the foregoing explanation, it can be understood that students with good learning motivation will demonstrate greater engagement in learning activities, thereby enabling learning objectives to be achieved optimally. However, in reality, many students still demonstrate low learning motivation. This condition is evident in their lack of attention when teachers explain the material, indifferent attitudes toward learning activities, and low responsibility in completing assigned tasks.

In addressing these issues, the role of teachers becomes highly important because teachers are one of the main elements in the learning process as well as implementers of pedagogical strategies in the classroom. Therefore, teachers are required to be able to select and apply innovative learning strategies and models to improve students' learning motivation. One alternative that can be *implemented* is the Game Based Learning (GBL) model, a game-based learning model designed to create a more engaging, interactive, and enjoyable learning environment, thereby increasing students' motivation and engagement in the learning process (Septianing et al., 2024).

Learning and motivation are two interrelated and inseparable aspects of the educational process. Motivation is an important factor that supports students throughout the learning process, thereby encouraging them to achieve learning objectives. Learning processes supported by high motivation tend to produce more optimal learning outcomes. According to Muhammad (2017), learning is a process aimed at developing students' attitudes, knowledge, skills, and abilities, thereby resulting in

positive behavioral changes (Azzahra & Ginting, 2024).

Learning is a process designed to facilitate students in acquiring knowledge, skills, and learning experiences. According to Makki and Aflahah (2019), learning is a process of changes in individual behavior resulting from interactions with the environment, whether leading to positive or negative changes. Meanwhile, Lubis (2021) explains that learning comprises a series of activities designed to transfer knowledge to students so that they are able to understand, apply, experience, master, and develop the knowledge acquired. In its implementation, the learning process involves various approaches and methods adapted to the learning objectives. In addition, learning provides students with opportunities to develop their potential according to their learning readiness, interests, and talents. Therefore, the selection of learning media needs to be adapted to students' characteristics and learning styles so that the learning process becomes more effective (Suhartono dkk., 2024) (Islam et al., 2024).

In the educational process, learning models play a highly important role because they serve as a reference for determining the strategies, direction, and success of learning implementation. According to Hendracipta (2021), a learning model is a conceptual framework that systematically describes learning procedures for organizing students' learning experiences in achieving learning objectives. The model also serves as a guide for teachers and instructional designers in designing, implementing, and evaluating teaching and learning activities. Thus, a learning model can be understood as a description of how the learning process is designed and implemented in a structured manner. In line with this view, Sulistio and Haryanti (2022) explain that a learning model is a series of activities designed to facilitate interaction between teachers and students so that learning objectives can be achieved effectively and efficiently. Meanwhile, Hareva (2023) states that a learning model is a pattern or reference used by teachers in arranging the steps for implementing classroom learning. Through such models, teachers can manage the learning process systematically so that learning activities are more focused, effective, and aligned with the established objectives. In addition, Hendracipta (2021) explains that a model is essentially a representation or depiction of an actual condition or situation used as an example in solving a problem. Therefore, a learning model can be viewed as a framework that provides direction for teachers in designing meaningful, systematic learning experiences capable of optimally supporting the achievement of learning objectives. (Sofhan et al., 2026).

Learning strategies and models are important components in the implementation of the teaching and learning process because they help students achieve optimal learning outcomes. In addition, the appropriate application of learning strategies and models can increase learning motivation, foster positive attitudes, and develop students' affective aspects, thereby making learning

experiences more meaningful. Conversely, the use of monotonous learning methods may reduce learning motivation, decrease students' active participation, and result in less-than-optimal understanding of the material being studied. This is consistent with the findings of Susanti et al. (2024), who stated that monotonous learning methods can cause fatigue and boredom and reduce students' interest and motivation to learn. Therefore, teachers need to select and implement innovative learning models that are appropriate to the characteristics and needs of students so that the learning process becomes more effective and improves learning outcomes. This view is reinforced by Bella and Hakiky (2020), who stated that teachers must determine learning designs and models that are appropriate to students' characteristics so that learning objectives can be achieved optimally (Luh et al., 2025).

A model is a conceptual representation that describes an idea or concept that can serve as a reference for solving a problem. In the educational context, models are often used as guidelines for implementing learning because they are closely related to learning strategies. According to Musyawir (2020), a learning model is a conceptual framework that explains procedures or steps systematically arranged to organize learning activities so that learning objectives can be achieved effectively. In line with this view, Yazidi (2014) stated that a learning model is a design or pattern used as a guideline for planning and implementing the learning process. Learning models are developed based on particular approaches that include stages, procedures, and sequences of activities that serve as references for teachers in managing classroom learning processes so that learning objectives can be achieved optimally (Rifka Alkhilyatul Ma'rifat, I Made Suraharta, 2024).

The *Game Based Learning* (GBL) model is an innovative learning model that uses games as a medium to integrate educational elements into the learning process. The implementation of this model is designed to make learning activities more engaging so that the delivery of material can take place more effectively and learning objectives can be achieved more easily. According to Minisa et al. (2025), the use of Game Based Learning has a positive impact on students' enthusiasm for participating in learning at the elementary school level. In addition to increasing students' engagement during the learning process, this model also contributes to enhancing their learning motivation. In line with this view, Thenaya (2025) explained that Game Based Learning is a game-based learning model capable of creating an enjoyable learning atmosphere and encouraging students to participate more actively in every learning activity (Ayunda et al., 2026).

Game-Based Learning (GBL) is one of the learning innovations that has been increasingly implemented in modern education alongside the rapid development of

digital technology. The development of digital technology has familiarized students with various forms of digital games. Therefore, integrating game elements into the learning process is an appropriate approach to increasing student participation and *engagement*. Game-Based Learning (GBL) is considered capable of providing a more interactive and engaging learning process than passive traditional learning methods. Therefore, the implementation of GBL in the classroom is expected to increase students' interest in learning while reducing boredom.

Game-based learning (GBL) has become one of the trends in modern education that is increasingly attracting the attention of educators and researchers. In today's digital era, technological advances have influenced various aspects of life, including education. Paraphrase the sentence (Meningkatkan & Belajar, 2024).

According to Syamsuri et al. (2023, p. 171), *Game Based Learning* (GBL) is a learning model that presents various real and meaningful problems as part of students' learning process. Through this model, students are encouraged to develop critical thinking skills and problem-solving abilities. In addition, the implementation of *Game Based Learning* (GBL) can create a more engaging and enjoyable learning atmosphere, thereby increasing enthusiasm for learning, motivating students to engage actively, and stimulating the development of their creativity. In line with this view, Putra et al. (2024) explained that *Game Based Learning* (GBL) is a learning model that uses games as a medium to support students' learning processes while also serving as an alternative for overcoming various learning challenges. This model also utilizes technological developments to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the learning process. Through its implementation, students are expected to develop greater interest in learning, gain more enjoyable learning experiences, and be encouraged to develop creativity and innovation while participating in learning activities (Rameria et al., 2026).

2. Research Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. The qualitative approach was selected because it focuses on gaining an in-depth understanding of teachers' strategies in *utilizing the Game Based Learning* (GBL) model to address students' low learning motivation at MTs Wali Songo. Through this approach, researchers can collect data naturally through direct interaction with informants, thereby obtaining a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon under study based on their experiences and perspectives. Meanwhile, descriptive research was used to systematically describe

the processes of planning, implementing, and evaluating teachers' strategies in applying the GBL learning model (Sugiyono, 2023) (John W. Creswell & J. David Creswell, 2023).

The research data sources consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through direct observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation at the research site. Secondary data were obtained from school documents, instructional materials, activity photographs, madrasa archives, as well as various books and scholarly articles related to learning strategies, Game Based Learning, and learning motivation. The use of both types of data aimed to obtain complete and complementary information so that the research findings would be more credible (John W. Creswell & J. David Creswell, 2023).

Data collection in this study was conducted using three techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was used to obtain a direct overview of teacher and student activities during the implementation of the *Game Based Learning* (GBL) model. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to enable the researchers to explore more broadly and deeply the strategies implemented by teachers, students' learning experiences, and obstacles that emerged during the learning process. Meanwhile, documentation was used as supporting data through the collection of various documents, such as teaching modules, instructional materials, activity photographs, assessment results, and other archives relevant to the study. These three data collection techniques were applied in an integrated manner to obtain comprehensive, valid, and complementary data (Sugiyono, 2023).

Data validity in this study was tested through the application of source triangulation, technique *triangulation*, and member checking. Source triangulation was conducted by cross-checking and comparing information obtained from various informants, such as the madrasa principal, teachers, and students. Meanwhile, technique triangulation was conducted by comparing data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation to assess the consistency of the *information* obtained. In addition, member checking was conducted by requesting confirmation from informants regarding the interview results to ensure that the data corresponded to the experiences and intended meanings conveyed by the informants. The application of these measures aimed to strengthen the credibility, validity, and trustworthiness of the research findings (John W. Creswell & J. David Creswell, 2023).

Data analysis in this study used the interactive analysis model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which includes four main stages: data collection (data collection), data *condensation* (data condensation), data *presentation* (data display), and *conclusion* drawing and verification (*conclusion drawing/verification*). The analysis process was conducted continuously from the

initial stage of data collection until the completion of the study. Through these stages, the researchers were able to obtain and formulate accurate and credible findings regarding teachers' strategies, assisted by the *Game Based Learning* (GBL) model, in improving students' learning motivation at MTs Wali Songo (Matthew B. Milles, A Michael Huberman, 2020).

3. Results and Discussion

Results

The findings of this study were compiled based on data obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation conducted at MTs Wali Songo. This study aimed to comprehensively describe *teachers'* strategies in implementing the *Game Based Learning* (GBL) model as an effort to improve students' still-low learning motivation. The collected data were analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques, including the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, resulting in findings that corresponded to actual conditions in the field.

The research findings indicate that students' low learning motivation is influenced by various factors, both originating from within the students themselves and from the learning environment. As a solution to this issue, teachers implemented various learning strategies integrated with the *Game Based Learning* (GBL) model. The implementation of this model aimed to create a more engaging and interactive learning atmosphere while encouraging active student participation, thereby increasing their learning motivation.

The presentation of the research findings was organized according to the established research questions, including: (1) the condition of students' learning motivation *before* the implementation of the *Game Based Learning* (GBL) model, (2) teachers' *strategies* in implementing the *Game Based Learning* model to improve students' learning motivation, (3) students' responses to *the use of the Game Based Learning* model, (4) factors supporting and hindering the *implementation of the Game Based Learning* model at MTs Wali Songo, and (5) the *impact of* implementing the *Game Based Learning* (GBL) model on students' learning motivation.

All research findings are presented systematically based on observational data, interviews with the madrasah principal, teachers, and students, and are reinforced by relevant documentation. The presentation of these data is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the implementation of teacher strategies assisted by the *Game-Based Learning* (GBL) model in improving students' learning motivation at Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) Wali Songo.

Based on observations during the learning process at MTs Wali Songo, it was found that the learning motivation of some students remained in the low category. This condition was evident in students' lack of attention to

teachers' explanations, the limited number of students actively asking or answering questions, and the presence of students who talked with their peers during learning activities. In addition, some students' enthusiasm for participating in learning was still low, resulting in learning activities being predominantly teacher-centered.

Interviews with teachers and the madrasah principal revealed that students' low learning motivation was one of the problems requiring immediate attention. Therefore, teachers implemented the *Game-Based Learning* model through several stages: preparing lesson plans, communicating learning objectives, providing apperception activities, forming learning groups, conducting educational games, rewarding the group with the best results, and evaluating learning. During the learning process, teachers also explained the game rules, guided each group, and provided motivation so that all students actively participated in completing each challenge. Based on the interview findings, this strategy was selected because it was considered capable of increasing student engagement in learning activities.

Interviews with students indicated that the implementation of the *Game-Based Learning* model received positive responses. During the learning process, most students demonstrated changes in their learning behavior. They became more active in discussions, more confident in expressing their opinions, better able to collaborate with group members, and showed greater enthusiasm than before the *Game-Based Learning* model was implemented.

Discussion

The findings related to the first research question showed that there were still students at Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) Wali Songo with low levels of learning motivation. This condition was reflected in several indicators, such as students' lack of attention when teachers delivered the material, low participation in the learning process, limited confidence in expressing opinions, and the continued presence of students who did not complete assignments within the specified time. In addition, some students appeared to lose focus easily during the learning process and preferred talking with friends, playing by themselves, or paying insufficient attention to the teacher's explanations.

Based on interviews with the madrasah principal and teachers, students' low learning motivation was influenced by various factors. These factors included the previous use of teaching methods dominated by lecturing, which caused boredom; students' low interest in certain subjects; the limited variety of learning media used; the influence of peer environments; and the use of gadgets, which reduced students' study time at home.

The findings related to the second research question showed that teachers implemented various learning strategies assisted by the *Game-Based Learning* (GBL) model as an effort to improve students' learning motivation. These strategies were implemented

systematically through the stages of planning, implementation, and learning evaluation.

At the planning stage, teachers began learning activities by providing apperception and motivation to students, then explained the game rules to be applied. Next, students were divided into several groups so that they could collaborate in completing the designed challenges. The games used did not merely function as entertainment media but were also designed to help students understand material concepts through enjoyable and meaningful learning activities.

During the implementation of learning, teachers acted as facilitators who directed the course of the games, provided guidance to students experiencing difficulties, and ensured that all students were actively involved. In addition, teachers provided reinforcement in the form of praise and simple rewards to the group that achieved the best results, both as a form of appreciation and to enhance students' learning motivation.

At the evaluation stage, teachers and students reflected on the entire series of learning activities that had been carried out. Teachers provided feedback on the material that had been learned while also evaluating the effectiveness of using games in helping students understand the learning material.

The implementation of this strategy shows that the *Game-Based Learning* (GBL) model does not merely introduce games into the classroom; rather, it is a learning model systematically designed to ensure that learning objectives can be achieved optimally. Through learning activities that combine study and play, students gain more meaningful learning experiences, making the material easier to understand and remember.

With regard to the third research question, the findings indicate that most students responded positively to the implementation of the Game Based Learning (GBL) model. Based on the interview results, students stated that they enjoyed participating in learning activities more because the classroom atmosphere became more active, engaging, and enjoyable. They also felt more comfortable participating in the learning process because the material was delivered through interactive game-based activities.

In addition to creating an enjoyable learning environment, the *implementation of Game Based Learning* also helped students understand the material more easily. The games designed by the teacher enabled students to focus more on learning, actively discuss with their groups, and become more confident when answering questions and expressing their opinions. Students who had previously tended to be passive began to demonstrate the confidence to participate in learning activities. The observation results also showed that nearly all students were actively *involved during the implementation of Game Based Learning*. They demonstrated high enthusiasm, were able to cooperate with group members, and were eager to complete each challenge provided.

These positive responses indicate that the *Game Based*

Learning model is able to accommodate the learning characteristics of students, who tend to prefer interactive, collaborative, and challenging activities. Therefore, the implementation of this model not only increases students' interest in learning but can also enhance their active participation, self-confidence, and enthusiasm for learning throughout the learning process.

The findings related to the fourth research question indicate the presence of factors that both support and hinder the *implementation of* the Game Based Learning (GBL) model. The first supporting factor is teachers' creativity in designing educational games tailored to the learning material. Teachers are able to develop various forms of simple games that still contain educational elements, thereby attracting students' interest in participating in learning. The second factor is the support of the madrasah principal, who provides teachers with opportunities to continue developing innovative learning models and methods. The third factor is students' high enthusiasm during learning activities, which serves as one indicator of the successful *implementation of* Game Based Learning in creating an enjoyable learning environment. Other supporting factors include the availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure, such as classrooms, learning media, whiteboards, and various other supporting equipment that can be utilized during the learning process.

In addition to these supporting factors, the study also identified several obstacles to the *implementation of* the Game Based Learning model. One major obstacle is limited instructional time, as game-based activities require a longer time allocation than conventional learning methods. Furthermore, differences in students' academic abilities mean that some learners require more intensive assistance during the activities. Classroom management also presents a particular challenge for teachers because a more active learning environment has the potential to generate noise. To address these various obstacles, teachers establish clear game rules, limit the duration of games, provide instructions before activities begin, and conduct continuous supervision throughout the learning process. Thus, the obstacles that arise do not reduce the effectiveness of implementing the *Game Based Learning* model.

With regard to the fifth research question, the findings indicate that the *implementation of* the Game Based Learning (GBL) model has a positive impact on students' learning motivation at MTs Wali Songo. This impact is reflected in increased enthusiasm for learning, students' active participation in learning activities, and greater self-confidence when expressing opinions and answering questions posed by the teacher.

Furthermore, students became more disciplined in completing assignments, more focused during the learning process, and more responsible for both individual and group tasks. Learning that was previously considered monotonous became more engaging and enjoyable, making students feel more comfortable participating in

classroom learning activities. The *implementation of* Game Based Learning also had a positive impact on the development of students' social skills. Through group game activities, students learned to cooperate, respect others' opinions, communicate effectively, and solve various problems collaboratively.

The implementation of GBL not only enhances intrinsic motivation but also helps learners understand the material more easily, develop critical thinking skills, and receive feedback that can strengthen their enthusiasm for learning. Although several obstacles exist, such as limited facilities, teachers' lack of competence in utilizing technology, time constraints, and differences in students' abilities, the *Game Based Learning* model can serve as an effective and innovative learning alternative for improving learners' motivation and understanding of the material explained by the teacher.

Overall, game-based learning can enhance students' learning motivation by providing challenges, immediate feedback, rewards, and meaningful learning experiences. When students experience an enjoyable learning environment, they tend to participate more actively in learning, enabling learning objectives to be achieved more effectively.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study on Teacher Strategies Assisted by the Game-Based Learning (GBL) Model in Addressing Students' Low Learning Motivation at Wali Songo Islamic Junior High School (MTs), it can be concluded that the implementation of learning strategies integrating the Game-Based Learning (GBL) model with well-planned learning management has a positive impact on improving students' learning motivation. Prior to the implementation of GBL, the learning motivation of some students was still relatively low, as indicated by a lack of enthusiasm in participating in lessons, minimal active participation in class, low confidence in asking questions or expressing opinions, and feelings of boredom due to the learning process still being dominated by conventional methods.

In its implementation, teachers systematically designed learning activities by establishing learning objectives, selecting appropriate materials, designing relevant educational games, managing collaborative learning activities, and providing motivation, guidance, rewards, and evaluation throughout the learning process. This strategy was able to create a learning atmosphere that was more active, interactive, enjoyable, and student-centered. Its impact was reflected in increased student engagement in learning, self-confidence, collaborative skills, courage to express opinions, and enthusiasm in completing tasks to achieve learning objectives.

The findings of this study indicate that the successful *implementation of* Game-Based Learning (GBL) depends

not only on the use of games as learning media but also on teachers' ability to design learning strategies suited to student characteristics, manage the classroom effectively, and create a learning environment that can encourage the growth of learning motivation.

Based on these findings, teachers are advised to adopt *Game-Based Learning* (GBL) as an alternative learning strategy to be implemented continuously by adapting it to the characteristics of the material, learning objectives, and students' needs so that learning motivation can continue to improve. For the madrasah, the findings of this study are expected to serve as a consideration in developing teacher competency improvement programs, such as training or workshops on game-based learning, thereby optimizing the quality of the learning process.

This study still has limitations because it was conducted at only one madrasah and focused on students' learning motivation. Therefore, future researchers are advised to expand the research setting to different educational levels or institutions and to examine other aspects related to the *implementation of Game-Based Learning*. Thus, future research is expected to enrich existing findings while making broader contributions to the development of both theory and practice in innovative learning in Indonesia.

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serve as a reference for future research on the implementation of the *Game-Based Learning* model to improve students' learning motivation.

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