

Impact and Effect of Gamification in Islamic Religious Education (PAI): Its Implications for Motivation, Engagement, Learning Culture, and Educational Equity

Anggun Akmila
Universitas Islam Tribakti Lirboyo Kediri
anggunakmilanew@gmail.com

Muhammad Maulana Alfin Sarif
Universitas Islam Negri Syekh Washil Kediri
northze25@gmail.com

Abstract: *21st-century learning requires innovative strategies to ensure that the learning process remains meaningful. One emerging approach is gamification, which involves the application of game elements such as points, badges, and leaderboards in an educational context. However, research on gamification in Islamic Religious Education tends to focus on improving overall learning outcomes and has not yet extensively examined the mechanisms through which gamification can enhance student motivation and engagement in the learning process. This article aims to examine the impact of gamification on student motivation and engagement in learning, as well as its implications for changes in learning behavior, learning culture, and educational equity from the perspective of Islamic Religious Education. This study employs a qualitative approach using a literature review method. Data sources were drawn from relevant, accredited national journal articles on the topic. The results of this study are as follows: 1) gamification significantly enhances students' learning motivation and engagement by reinforcing both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation; 2) there was a significant change in students' learning behavior following the implementation of gamification, as evidenced by increased participation, interaction, discipline, and enthusiasm in the learning process; 3) Gamification has implications for fostering a more interactive and collaborative learning culture, while also serving as a primary tool to enhance equity. The effectiveness of gamification is influenced by instructional design, the suitability of digital media, and teachers' ability to integrate game elements with the learning objectives. However, the implementation of gamification also has the potential to foster an unhealthy culture of competition and disparities in participation if it is not designed pedagogically and equitably. Therefore, gamification needs to be developed with consideration for Islamic values, the principle of equity, and the orientation toward character development of students.*

Keywords: *Gamification, Motivation, Islamic Education.*

Abstrak: Pembelajaran abad ke-21 menuntut strategi inovatif untuk memastikan proses pembelajaran tetap bermakna. Salah satu pendekatan yang sedang berkembang adalah gamifikasi, yang melibatkan penerapan elemen-elemen gim seperti poin, lencana, dan papan peringkat dalam konteks pendidikan. Namun, penelitian mengenai gamifikasi dalam Pendidikan Agama Islam cenderung berfokus pada peningkatan hasil belajar secara keseluruhan dan belum mengkaji secara mendalam mekanisme bagaimana gamifikasi dapat meningkatkan motivasi dan keterlibatan siswa dalam proses pembelajaran. Oleh karena itu, artikel ini bertujuan untuk menguji dampak gamifikasi terhadap motivasi dan keterlibatan siswa dalam belajar, serta implikasinya terhadap perubahan perilaku belajar, budaya belajar, dan kesetaraan pendidikan dari perspektif Pendidikan Agama Islam. Melalui pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi pustaka yang bersumber dari artikel jurnal nasional terakreditasi yang relevan, penelitian ini menemukan tiga hasil utama. Pertama, gamifikasi secara signifikan meningkatkan motivasi dan keterlibatan belajar siswa dengan memperkuat motivasi intrinsik maupun ekstrinsik. Kedua, terdapat perubahan signifikan pada perilaku belajar siswa setelah penerapan gamifikasi, yang dibuktikan dengan meningkatnya partisipasi, interaksi, disiplin, dan antusiasme dalam proses pembelajaran. Ketiga, gamifikasi berimplikasi pada pembentukan budaya belajar yang lebih interaktif dan kolaboratif, sekaligus berfungsi sebagai sarana utama untuk meningkatkan kesetaraan. Pada akhirnya, efektivitas gamifikasi dipengaruhi oleh desain instruksional, kesesuaian media digital, dan kemampuan guru dalam mengintegrasikan elemen gim dengan tujuan pembelajaran. Namun, implementasi gamifikasi juga berpotensi menumbuhkan budaya kompetisi yang tidak sehat dan kesenjangan partisipasi jika tidak dirancang secara pedagogis dan berkeadilan, sehingga pengembangannya harus tetap mempertimbangkan nilai-nilai Islam, prinsip kesetaraan, dan orientasi pada pembentukan karakter siswa.

Kata Kunci: Gamifikasi, Motivasi, Pendidikan Islam

INTRODUCTION

Advances in digital technology have brought about fundamental changes in the delivery of education, including in the teaching of Islamic Religious Education. These changes have become increasingly widespread since the implementation of online learning, which requires educators to develop teaching strategies that are not only cognitively effective but also capable of maintaining students' motivation and engagement. Teachers of Islamic Religious Education often rely on monotonous, conventional methods that emphasize

theory alone, without any creativity.¹ Consequently, various studies have shown that Islamic religious education often faces issues such as low participation, student burnout, and a decline in pedagogical interaction between teachers and students.²

One approach considered relevant to addressing this issue is gamification. Sebastian Deterding defines gamification as the use of game design elements in non-game contexts, which emphasizes the importance of incorporating game elements to create a more engaging learning experience.³ Meanwhile, Karl Kapp views gamification as the application of game mechanics, game aesthetics, and a game-based mindset to enhance engagement and motivation, as well as to support learning and problem-solving. In other words, gamification is understood as the use of game elements in non-game contexts to enhance students' learning experiences.⁴ Gamification is typically implemented through the use of points, badges, leaderboards, and challenge systems. The inclusion of these elements encourages students to participate more actively in discussion forums, online quizzes, and collaborative activities, as their achievements are visible and can be compared with those of other participants.⁵ These elements are designed to foster a sense of accomplishment, mastery of skills, and enjoyment similar to the experience of playing a video game.

¹ Ikrom Novaizi and Moch Iqbal, "Inovasi Pembelajaran PAI Di Era Digital: Strategi Menumbuhkan Minat Belajar Gen-Z Melalui Gamifikasi," *Jurnal El Makrifah* 2, no. 2 (2025): 313–33.

² Ahkamsyadid Yusmaputra Salim al., "Efektivitas Gamifikasi Terhadap Keterlibatan Siswa Dalam Pembelajaran Daring: Systematic Literatur Review," *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* 10, no. 02 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.23969/jp.v10i02.25918>.

³ Sebastian Deterding et al., "From Game Design Elements to Gamefulness," in *Proceedings of the 15th International Academic MindTrek Conference: Envisioning Future Media Environments*, ACM Other Conferences (2011), <https://doi.org/10.1145/2181037.2181040>.

⁴ I. Putu Ari Utama Irawan et al., "Penerapan Model Pembelajaran Gamification Berbantuan Quizizz dalam Pembelajaran Menulis Kalimat Efektif," *Edukasiana: Jurnal Inovasi Pendidikan* 4, no. 3 (2025): 984–94, <https://doi.org/10.56916/ejip.v4i3.1622>.

⁵ Reza Pahlevi and Sri Mulyati, "Analisis Pengaruh Elemen Gamifikasi Pada Aplikasi Pembelajaran Terhadap Motivasi Belajar Siswa SMA," *Jurnal Indonesia: Manajemen Informatika Dan Komunikasi* 6, no. 1 (2025): 174–86, <https://doi.org/10.35870/jimik.v6i1.1148>.

Ultimately, this approach is expected to boost students' motivation to engage in the learning process.⁶

Teachers can integrate gamification elements into the curriculum to create a more interactive learning environment that supports students' cognitive development. In this context, using apps like Wordwall, Quizizz, or Kahoot helps organize the material so that it is easier to understand.⁷ Through gamification, students do not merely receive information but are also actively engaged in exploring concepts. This active engagement strengthens their ability to understand and internalize the material, making learning more effective in the long term. Gamification can be seen as a highly relevant tool for supporting conceptual learning, especially in addressing the educational challenges of the 21st century.⁸

Various previous studies have shown that gamification can enhance learning motivation, learning outcomes, and student engagement in digital learning. However, most studies still focus on the technical effectiveness of gamification as a learning medium and on improving academic achievement in general. Studies examining the impact of gamification on changes in learning behavior, learning culture, and aspects of educational equity in the context of Islamic Religious Education remain relatively limited. In fact, Islamic education is not only oriented toward academic achievement but also toward the development of character, justice, and balance in the learning process. Therefore, this article focuses on examining the impact of gamification on student motivation and engagement in Islamic religious education, emphasizing aspects of changes in learning behavior, learning culture, and educational equity. This study is expected to provide a conceptual contribution to the development of innovative, humanistic, and equitable Islamic Religious Education learning.

⁶ Muhammad Azman and Afakhrul Masub Bakhtiar, "Analisis Penggunaan Metode Gamifikasi Terhadap Motivasi Belajar Siswa," *Pendas : Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* 9, no. 04 (2024): 853–62, <https://doi.org/10.23969/jp.v9i04.19600>.

⁷ Lina Herlina et al., *Gamifikasi Dalam Pembelajaran*, 1st ed. (Yayasan Pendidikan Hidayatun Nihayah, 2025).

⁸ Najwa Rika Faradina et al., "Pengalaman Peserta Didik Fase B Dalam Memahami Konsep Melalui Gamifikasi Digital," *Jurnal Ilmiah Profesi Pendidikan* 10, no. 1 (2025): 866–74, <https://doi.org/10.29303/jipp.v10i1.3034>.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using the narrative review method of library research. This method was chosen to conduct an in-depth examination of the concepts, findings, and trends in research regarding the impact of gamification on students' motivation and engagement in Islamic Religious Education. The research data sources were drawn from various scientific literature, including books, articles from accredited national journals, and reputable international journals relevant to the research topic. A total of 25 primary articles published between 2020 and 2026 were analyzed. Literature selection was conducted using a purposive approach based on several criteria, namely: (1) the article discusses gamification in an educational context; (2) it relates to student learning motivation or engagement; (3) it is relevant to digital learning or Islamic Religious Education; and (4) it was published in a scientific journal with clear sourcing and academic validity. Meanwhile, articles that had no direct relevance to the research focus or were merely non-scientific opinions were not used in the analysis.

Data collection was conducted through documentation by reviewing and recording key information from each selected source. The data analysis technique employed content analysis through several stages: data reduction, thematic categorization, data presentation, and thematic conclusion-drawing.⁹ During the data reduction stage, the researcher selected information related to the impact of gamification on motivation, student engagement, changes in learning behavior, learning culture, and educational equity. Next, the data is categorized based on the main themes that recur across various studies. The final stage involves interpreting the patterns and trends of the findings to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the implications of gamification in Islamic Religious Education.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. The Impact of Gamification on Students' Motivation to Learn in Islamic Religious Education

Gamification is a learning approach designed to boost student motivation so they can learn more comfortably without feeling pressured. Simply put, gamification can be understood as the process

⁹ Wa Nirmala et al., *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif* (CV. Gita Lentera, 2025).

of incorporating game elements into learning activities. This approach is viewed as an innovative alternative in efforts to transform the education system in Indonesia. In an educational context, gamification refers to the application of game elements such as game design, game-based thinking, and game mechanics to achieve learning objectives.¹⁰ Motivation, on the other hand, is the conscious drive within a person to perform a specific action or achieve a specific goal. Motivation is generally divided into two categories: intrinsic motivation, which arises from within the individual, and extrinsic motivation, which arises from external incentives.¹¹

The application of gamification in Islamic religious education is not merely the digitization of quizzes, but rather an innovative strategy that leverages game mechanics to stimulate students' cognitive and affective engagement. Gamification elements such as points, badges, and leaderboards have been shown to significantly increase students' motivation to learn in Islamic religious education. Badges serve as symbols of achievement that foster a sense of competence and social recognition. In the context of online learning, which tends to lack direct interaction, badges can replace the function of verbal appreciation from teachers, making students feel that their efforts are valued.

Gamification can also boost students' intrinsic motivation in Islamic religious education, as it makes the learning process more dynamic, enjoyable, and less monotonous.¹² When students feel challenged and enjoy the learning process, they are more likely to engage emotionally and cognitively. This engagement is crucial in Islamic Religious Education because the learning objectives focus not only on mastering the subject matter but also on shaping students' religious attitudes, values, and character. Overall, gamification has been shown to yield many positive effects, one of which is reducing

¹⁰ Remerta Noni Naatonis et al., *Model Pembelajaran Problem Based Gamification Learning* (Penerbit Adab, n.d.), 42.

¹¹ Zuhdi Rajbi, *Motivasi Belajar Siswa Peran Orang Tua Dan Kreativitas Guru* (PT Literasi Nusantara Abadi Group, 2023), 15.

¹² Nina Rohmatul Fauziyah et al., "Transformasi Pembelajaran Dengan Gamifikasi Strategi Untuk Meningkatkan Motivasi Belajar Siswa," *Dar El-Ilmi : Jurnal Studi Keagamaan, Pendidikan Dan Humaniora* 12, no. 1 (2025): 15–25, <https://doi.org/10.52166/darelilmi.v12i1.9367>.

boredom in the learning process.¹³ Therefore, gamification in Islamic Education serves not only as a form of digital entertainment but also as a pedagogical strategy capable of more effectively enhancing motivation, participation, and the internalization of Islamic values. The literature review also explains that gamification elements generally boost student motivation across various levels of education.¹⁴

The elements commonly found in games also serve as a source of short-term motivation through healthy competition, thereby increasing students' extrinsic motivation. Students feel motivated to achieve high scores and maintain their standing relative to their peers. This encourages students to participate more actively in class, complete assignments, and pay attention to the material being presented.¹⁵ Conversely, elements such as badges or symbolic awards are more effective at fostering a sense of long-term achievement, but their impact on immediate engagement is often not as strong as that of competition-based systems and instant feedback. This is consistent with research findings showing that the use of points and reward systems can boost student motivation because they provide instant feedback and a sense of achievement that can trigger both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to learn.

The effectiveness of gamification in Islamic religious education lies not only in its entertainment value, but also in its ability to create a more meaningful and reflective learning experience.¹⁶ Islamic religious education is often perceived as theoretical, but it can be presented in a more engaging way through interactive activities such as quizzes on verse comprehension, games that match moral concepts, or challenges involving the memorization of prayers and Arabic vocabulary. The use

¹³ Muhamad Iqbal Zea Ul Haque et al., "Gamifikasi Pembelajaran Dan Pengaruhnya Terhadap Motivasi Belajar Mahasiswa," *Jurnal Pembelajaran Inovatif* 7, no. 1 (2024): 58–70, <https://doi.org/10.21009/JPI.071.07>.

¹⁴ Ahkamsyadid Yusmaputra Salim et al., "Efektivitas Gamifikasi Terhadap Keterlibatan Siswa Dalam Pembelajaran Daring: Systematic Literatur Review," *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* 10, no. 02 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.23969/jp.v10i02.25918>.

¹⁵ M. Mahbubi and Homaidi, "Analisis Implementasi Pembelajaran Berbasis Gamifikasi Pada Peningkatan Motivasi Belajar Siswa," *Al-Absor: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 2, no. 1 (2025): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.71242/wf9q5253>.

¹⁶ Farah Putri Ramadhani et al., "Implementasi Pembelajaran Berbasis Gamifikasi Pada Mata Pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam Di SMK Muhammadiyah 3 Yogyakarta: Studi Kualitatif Fenomenologis," *Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia: Teori, Penelitian, Dan Inovasi* 6, no. 1 (2026), <https://doi.org/10.59818/jpi.v6i1.2640>.

of points and rewards can boost students' motivation to engage more actively with religious material, while a system of progressive challenges helps build consistent study habits.

The study findings indicate that gamification makes a significant contribution to enhancing students' motivation to learn, both intrinsic and extrinsic. The point system serves as a form of immediate feedback that provides positive reinforcement for every learning activity students undertake. Students tend to show greater consistency in completing assignments, participating in online discussions, and accessing learning materials independently.¹⁷ The quick responses within these game elements help students stay focused and engaged, making the learning process feel more interactive than conventional methods. Gradual challenges or levels are also effective because they provide a progressive learning experience. Students feel they have clear goals to achieve, which sparks their curiosity and motivation to complete each stage of the learning process.¹⁸ This means that gamification does not merely influence intrinsic and extrinsic motivation separately; rather, the two often work together, reinforcing each other to enhance student engagement.

The implementation of a point-based gamification system significantly contributes to increased student motivation and engagement in learning. This is evident in a quantitative research journal written by Saras Pratama, as demonstrated by the difference in posttest scores between the experimental and control groups, which showed very strong statistical significance ($p < 0.01$). These findings confirm that the integration of gamification elements, such as points, badges, and leaderboards, can create a more participatory and meaningful learning environment.¹⁹ Thus, gamification does not merely serve as an extrinsic motivational stimulus; it also has the potential to strengthen students' intrinsic motivation to engage more deeply in online learning.

¹⁷ Risqiatul Hasanah M.Sos and Ermalianti M.Pd, *Gamifikasi Pendidikan Tinggi: Teori, Desain, dan Integrasi Pembelajaran Digital* (Basya Media Utama, 2025).

¹⁸ Muhammad Afdan Rojabi, *Strategi Gamifikasi: Mengubah Tugas Menjadi Tantangan* (Afdan Rojabi Publisher, 2025).

¹⁹ Saras Pratama, "Pengaruh Gamifikasi Berbasis Point System Terhadap Motivasi Dan Keterlibatan Mahasiswa Dalam Mata Kuliah Desain Grafis," *Indonesian Journal of Education And Computer Science* 3, no. 1 (2025): 1–6, <https://doi.org/10.60076/indotech.v3i1.1200>.

The element of healthy competition through leaderboards also provides a positive incentive for students to improve their understanding of the material without causing excessive academic pressure. Competition designed in a balanced manner can foster a spirit of *fastabiqul khairat* in learning, as long as it remains guided by ethical and pedagogical values. Additionally, the implementation of gamification allows teachers to present material in the form of interactive activities, such as reflective quizzes, Islamic case studies, and simple project-based assignments that are contextualized to real-life situations.

The implementation of classroom instruction using gamification-based learning media as a form of creative innovation is an approach that aligns with the 21st-century learning paradigm, which emphasizes student-centered learning. This approach positions students as active participants in the learning process, enabling them to be directly involved in constructing knowledge and shaping their learning experiences. A number of studies have shown that the use of gamification as a learning strategy is effective in enhancing student motivation and engagement.²⁰ One such method involves the use of the “Ammar Puzzle,” derived from the acronym “Ammar,” which refers to “The Prophet’s Manners of Eating and Drinking.” This tool consists of a picture puzzle divided into several small pieces, designed to develop critical thinking skills, foster patience, and encourage collaboration among students. This learning model is considered effective in increasing learning motivation because it takes place in a flexible and interactive atmosphere. Students have the freedom to assemble the puzzle without external pressure, allowing them to manage the learning process independently in a more enjoyable way. This method also helps students retain their understanding of the material longer compared to conventional learning methods.²¹ By integrating game elements into the learning process, the learning environment becomes more interactive, enjoyable, and meaningful, thereby encouraging active participation and improving the overall quality of the learning process.

Gamified learning can leverage various existing platforms as an innovative strategy to boost student motivation and engagement. Digital platforms such as Quizizz, Genially, and Kahoot are widely

²⁰ Muhammad Wahfiyudin Romadoni, “Pengaruh Strategi Reading Guide Terhadap Prestasi Belajar Mata Pelajaran Aqidah Akhlak Siswa Madrasah Aliyah,” *Ta’rim: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Anak Usia Dini* 4, no. 1 (2023): 1, <https://doi.org/10.59059/tarim.v4i1.92>.

²¹ Annisa Rahmania Azis et al., “Media ‘Ammar Puzzle’ Sebagai Inovasi Gamifikasi: Strategi Revolusioner Dalam Pembelajaran Shalat Akhlak (Pai) Di Sd Icp Al-Falah Darussalam,” *Studia Religia: Jurnal Pemikiran dan Pendidikan Islam* 9, no. 02 (2025): 190–202, <https://doi.org/10.30651/sr.v9i02.25961>.

used to present material in the form of interactive quizzes that incorporate game elements such as points, time limits, and leaderboards.²² The platform is effective for reviewing course material because it creates a learning environment that is both competitive and enjoyable.²³ In addition, Wordwall and Educandy offer a variety of simpler, visually-oriented educational games, making them suitable for reinforcing basic concepts, introducing Islamic terminology, and gradually practicing the memorization of prayers or Arabic vocabulary. Furthermore, character-development-based gamification platforms like Classcraft offer a different approach by integrating role-playing game concepts into learning. These interactive digital platforms are highly effective for formative assessment because they create an environment that is both competitive and enjoyable.²⁴

Gamification platforms in Islamic religious education enable the internalization of Islamic character values, such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility, through a reward system based on students' positive behavior. Meanwhile, platforms like Blooket combine academic quizzes with simple strategy games, which effectively boost enthusiasm for learning while keeping students focused on the material. Thus, the diversity of these gamification platforms demonstrates that the integration of technology into learning can be tailored to learning objectives, student characteristics, and the availability of supporting resources, without compromising the substance and normative values of education. Gamification, as implemented on various learning platforms, offers several positive implications for enhancing student learning motivation. The following are some of the effects of gamification on student motivation:

1. Active participation through the use of game elements such as point systems, rankings, and rewards can encourage students to engage more actively in the learning process. The challenge of achieving the highest score or reaching a certain position in the

²² Hasna Latipah Sakinah et al., "Science-gamification: Bentuk gamifikasi dan implementasi dalam pembelajaran IPA," *Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan IPA* 5, no. 1 (2025): 15–22, <https://doi.org/10.52434/jkpi.v5i1.42328>.

²³ Arfiyany Nur Amalia and I. Nyoman Ruja, "Meningkatkan Semangat Belajar Dan Motivasi Siswa Melalui Platform Gamifikasi Quizizz Dan Refleksi Pembelajaran Digital Berbasis Google Form: Penelitian," *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Dan Riset Pendidikan* 4, no. 2 (2025): 9174–82, <https://doi.org/10.31004/jerkin.v4i2.3122>.

²⁴ Risqiatul Hasanah and Ermaliani, *Gamifikasi Pendidikan Tinggi: Teori, Desain, dan Integrasi Pembelajaran Digital* (Basya Media Utama, 2025), 15.

rankings motivates students to approach their studies with greater seriousness and enthusiasm. The level of student participation in quizzes on gamification platforms can serve as an indicator of achievement. The more students who are involved and actively participate in the quizzes, the higher their level of motivation toward Islamic religious education.

2. Students' level of perseverance in studying Islamic Religious Education material can serve as an indicator of learning success. Students' consistency in using the gamification platform as a learning tool, their active participation in various quiz sessions, and their ongoing efforts to improve their scores and understanding over time reflect a strong sense of intrinsic motivation. The implementation of the gamification platform also enriches students' learning experience in understanding Islamic Religious Education material, which is rich in Islamic values, norms, and principles. Through this method, students do not merely act as recipients of information but also as active participants in the learning process. Immediate feedback can aid in mastering the material while also facilitating the application of religious values in daily life.
3. Improvements in students' understanding of Islamic Education concepts can serve as an indicator of successful learning motivation. This is reflected in students' ability to gain a deeper understanding of the values, principles, and practices of Islamic teachings through the use of gamification as a learning medium. The variety of question types available on platforms such as Quizizz, Kahoot, and Classcraft—including multiple-choice, true-false, and short-answer questions—provides variety in learning strategies. This variety allows teachers to design more dynamic and engaging lessons.²⁵ As a result, students' interest in learning is maintained, the likelihood of boredom is low, and students are encouraged to continue engaging in challenging learning activities.
4. Students' learning outcomes, as reflected in their scores on game-based quizzes, can serve as an indicator of their level of

²⁵ Renata et al., "Integrasi Gamifikasi Berbasis Penghargaan dalam Meningkatkan Motivasi Belajar Bahasa Indonesia Di Tingkat Menengah Pada Era Digital," *Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Indonesia (JPPI)* 2, no. 4 (2025): 495–506, <https://doi.org/10.62017/jppi.v2i4.4610>.

motivation to learn. Students' consistency in achieving good scores and the continuous improvement in their quiz results indicate that they have a strong drive to learn and improve their academic performance in Islamic Religious Education. The instant feedback system plays a crucial role in helping students identify their mistakes and gaps in understanding the Islamic Religious Education material. Information obtained directly regarding correct or incorrect answers provides clear guidance for students to make improvements, while fostering self-confidence and sustained learning motivation.

5. Dynamic Evaluation and Assessment: Gamification-based evaluation and assessment allow teachers to monitor students' learning progress in a more dynamic and continuous manner. Through level systems, game stages, or specific achievement indicators, students can independently track their own learning progress. Furthermore, the use of avatars or virtual characters in the evaluation process enhances student engagement, as assessment is no longer perceived as a stressful activity but rather as part of an enjoyable learning experience. Thus, gamification serves not only as an evaluation tool but also as a means of learning reflection that fosters motivation, self-confidence, and active student engagement in the learning process.²⁶
6. Active participation in discussions: When students use game-based digital platforms as a medium for learning Islamic Religious Education material, followed by their active participation in class discussions on the topic, this reflects a high level of motivation to learn. This demonstrates the students' commitment to deepening their understanding of the material while actively participating in the learning process. It not only supports individual learning but also enables the implementation of collaborative and competitive learning. Through group game or class competition features, positive social interactions among students are fostered. This environment contributes to building a supportive learning

²⁶ Nurhikmah H et al., "Pelatihan Gamifikasi Dalam Pembelajaran: Meningkatkan Keterlibatan Dan Partisipasi Siswa Sekolah Menengah Pertama," *As-Sidanah: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat* 7, no. 2 (2025): 304–26, <https://doi.org/10.35316/assidanah.v7i2.304-326>.

community while cultivating a spirit of togetherness and social values aligned with the learning objectives of Islamic Religious Education.²⁷

The use of gamified learning materials, while offering various advantages, also has the potential to cause a number of negative effects. Excessive use of game elements can shift students' focus from understanding learning concepts to merely earning points, rewards, or rankings, thereby risking a decline in the quality of learning. Additionally, gamification can create a motivation gap among students, as more competitive students tend to be more motivated than those who are less responsive to game elements, which can ultimately affect the equity of engagement in learning. On the other hand, the intensive use of gamification also raises concerns regarding the potential for addiction, especially if students become too focused on gaming activities to the point of neglecting other learning and social activities. Therefore, prudent management is required, including time management and a balanced gamification design, to ensure that the benefits remain optimal without causing negative effects.²⁸

This study also highlights the need for caution in the sustained implementation of gamification. If gamification elements are applied in a monotonous manner and are not further developed, there is a risk of learning fatigue, which can reduce the effectiveness of learning. Several studies also note that the motivation generated by gamification elements may be short-lived if the instructional design places too much emphasis on rewards (reward-oriented). Consequently, the effectiveness of gamification in fostering sustained motivation heavily depends on the integration of learning objectives with meaningful game mechanics. Therefore, gamification designs in education need to be developed in an adaptive and dynamic manner, in terms of the variety of rewards, the types of challenges, and the integration of Islamic values that are relevant to social developments and educational technology.

²⁷ Savira Rahmania et al., "Pemanfaatan Gamification Quizizz Terhadap Motivasi Belajar Siswa Pada Mata Pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam," *Tadbir: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 11, no. 2 (2023): 114–33, <https://doi.org/10.30603/tjmpi.v11i2.3714>.

²⁸ Febrianto Hakeu et al., "Pemanfaatan Media Pembelajaran Berbasis Gamifikasi Dalam Proses Pembelajaran di MIS Terpadu Al-Azhfar," *Awwaliah: Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* 6, no. 2 (2023): 154–66, <https://doi.org/10.58518/awwaliah.v6i2.1930>.

B. The Effect of Gamification on Student Engagement and Learning Behavior

Gamification has a significant impact on increasing student engagement—behaviorally, emotionally, and cognitively.²⁹ This behavior can be referred to as “engagement,” defined as a willingness to participate. Frederick defines student engagement as a meta constructive process that encompasses students' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive involvement in learning. Students tend to participate more actively in lessons, engage in discussions, and complete assignments on time.³⁰ From an emotional perspective, gamification can reduce boredom and increase interest in learning. Cognitively, the challenges in gamification encourage students to think critically and reflectively. This aligns with the learning objectives of Islamic Education, which emphasize not only memorization but also the understanding and practice of Islamic values in daily life. Gamification also serves as an active strategy to support school engagement in elementary and secondary education.³¹

Emotional engagement is evident in increased enthusiasm, greater enjoyment of learning, and reduced boredom during the online learning process. This is important given that online learning often leads to digital fatigue. Gamification can transform the perception of learning from a passive activity into an interactive and challenging experience.³² Within the game platform, elements such as avatars, daily missions, scores, and challenges make the learning process more dynamic. Students feel they have control over their learning experience. This aligns with Self-Determination Theory, according to which

²⁹ Rafid Ari Martdana and Atno Atno, “Gamifikasi Dalam Pembelajaran Sejarah: Analisis Literatur Terhadap Dampaknya Pada Motivasi Dan Keterlibatan Belajar Siswa,” *Edukasiana: Jurnal Inovasi Pendidikan* 4, no. 2 (2025): 327–35, <https://doi.org/10.56916/ejip.v4i2.1148>.

³⁰ Rahmania et al., “Pemanfaatan Gamification Quizizz Terhadap Motivasi Belajar Siswa Pada Mata Pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam.”

³¹ Rizky Rinaldi, “Systematic Literature Review: Pemanfaatan Gamifikasi Digital Untuk Meningkatkan Kualitas Pembelajaran,” *Indonesian Journal of Multidisciplinary Scientific Studies* 3, no. 5 (2025): 403–7, <https://doi.org/10.33151/ijomss.v3i5.713>.

³² Abbasyakhrin Abbasyakhrin and Erni Suryani, “Pengaruh Metode Gamifikasi Dan Gaya Belajar Terhadap Motivasi Belajar Mahasiswa,” *JUPEIS : Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Ilmu Sosial* 4, no. 3 (2025): 214–20, <https://doi.org/10.57218/jupeis.Vol4.Iss3.1699>.

gamification can fulfill three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and social connection.³³ This encourages students to change their behavior and focus more on completing tasks and solving problems. Progressive challenges linked to a points and levels system have proven to help students understand their learning progress step by step. Thus, gamification not only increases quantitative participation but also the quality of engagement in learning.³⁴

The study results indicate significant changes in students' learning behavior following the implementation of gamification. Students became more disciplined in managing their study time, more proactive in seeking additional materials, and more responsible for completing assignments. The point system and leaderboard functioned as self-control mechanisms that encouraged students to maintain consistent academic performance. These elements not only created an interactive and enjoyable learning environment but also served as scaffolding, helping students with lower abilities to develop through interaction with teachers and peers.³⁵

In addition, gamification encourages goal-oriented behavior, in which students set clear learning goals to earn specific points or badges. This behavior has a positive impact on increasing persistence and learning resilience, particularly in Islamic religious education, which demands a high degree of independence—not merely understanding the material in theory but also applying it in daily life. However, some studies have also found a tendency toward instrumental learning behavior, where students learn solely to pursue scores or rankings. These findings underscore the need to balance gamification with learning reflection so that students continue to grasp the substantive meaning of the material, rather than focusing solely on the game's outcomes.

³³ Diana Lorenza et al., “Penerapan Gamifikasi Untuk Meningkatkan Motivasi Belajar PAI Di SMP 15 Kota Bengkulu,” *Educatioria : Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan* 5, no. 3 (2025): 192–201, <https://doi.org/10.36312/educatoria.v5i3.576>.

³⁴ Dzirra Ananda Hersya and Tata Sutabri, “Gamifikasi Pembelajaran Di Dunia Virtual: Studi Komparatif Platform Metaverse Terhadap E-Learning Konvensional,” *Journal Sains Student Research* 3, no. 2 (2025): 615–21, <https://doi.org/10.61722/jssr.v3i2.4379>.

³⁵ Ahmad Arif Wahyudi R et al., “Implementasi Gamifikasi sebagai Strategi Pembelajaran Sejarah Untuk Meningkatkan Keterlibatan Sosial dan Pemahaman Siswa dalam Konteks Zone of Proximal Development,” *Jurnal Wahana Pendidikan* 12, no. 1 (2025): 109–22, <https://doi.org/10.25157/jwp.v12i1.17159>.

In terms of behavior, gamification has proven to be an effective pedagogical tool for fostering positive learning habits. Features such as activity leaderboards can increase students' awareness of their level of participation in the Learning Management System (LMS), including attendance, assignment submissions, and engagement in discussion forums. Additionally, reward systems and rapid feedback help reinforce disciplined behaviors, such as punctuality and consistency in learning. Research by Sugiarto and Musyafa indicates that the up to 15% improvement in learning outcomes on gamified LMS platforms is not solely due to game elements, but is also influenced by time flexibility and the speed of feedback, which can boost students' motivation and self-directed learning. Furthermore, various game elements such as points, rewards, and challenges have proven effective in strengthening students' self-regulated learning (SRL) skills.³⁶ Overall, gamification not only improves academic performance but also enhances psychological, social, and behavioral aspects, making digital learning more engaging, motivating, and effective for students. These results confirm that integrating gamification not only boosts psychological motivation but also directly impacts academic performance. Gamification is effective because it fosters a sense of achievement, clarifies learning objectives, and cultivates a sense of control and engagement among students.³⁷

In Islamic Religious Education, increased engagement should not be limited to learning activities alone, but should also influence the internalization and practice of Islamic values. Gamification can serve as a means to instill the values of discipline, honesty, responsibility, cooperation, and the spirit of competing in good deeds (*fastabiquil khairat*) through structured learning activities. For example, rewards are not only based on academic scores but also on honesty, consistency in worship, discipline, or positive participation in learning. With this approach, gamification in Islamic Religious Education not only increases engagement but can also support the formation of students' religious character in a more contextual and meaningful way.

³⁶ Ramadhani Sugiarto and Ahmad Musyafa, "Learning Management System (LMS) Pada SMK 1 Barunawati Jakarta," *Jurnal Teknologi Informatika Dan Komputer* 10, no. 2 (2024): 768–89, <https://doi.org/10.37012/jtik.v10i2.2422>.

³⁷ Naufal Albion Z.s et al., "Systematic Literature Review: Integrasi Elemen Gamifikasi Dalam E-Learning Dan LMS Untuk Meningkatkan Motivasi Belajar," *RIGGS: Journal of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Business* 4, no. 4 (2026): 2637–46, <https://doi.org/10.31004/riggs.v4i4.3859>.

C. The Implications of Gamification for Learning Culture and Educational Equity

In the context of learning culture, gamification shifts the learning paradigm from a passive approach to a more participatory and competitive one. The resulting learning culture tends to be more dynamic, adaptive, and challenge-based.³⁸ Students no longer simply wait for the teacher's instructions; instead, they are encouraged to actively explore the material and engage in healthy competition. On the other hand, leaderboards also foster a culture of competition that risks widening the gap between students with high and low academic abilities. If not designed inclusively, this culture can lead to psychological pressure, feelings of inferiority, or demotivation for students who consistently rank at the bottom.³⁹ Furthermore, the implementation of technology-based gamification also has the potential to widen educational disparities if it is not supported by adequate access to devices and internet connectivity. Students with limited access to technology will find it more difficult to participate in gamified learning compared to those with full digital access. This situation indicates that gamification does not always result in an equitable learning experience for all students.

From the perspective of Islamic religious education, this issue is closely linked to the principles of justice (*al-'adl*) and equality of rights (*musawah*) in access to education. The concept of *al-'adl* emphasizes that every student must receive fair learning opportunities in accordance with their needs and circumstances. Meanwhile, *musawah* underscores the importance of equal treatment without discrimination based on social, economic, or academic ability. Therefore, the application of gamification in Islamic Religious Education should not be solely oriented toward competition and scoring, but must also consider aspects of inclusivity and humanity. Gamification needs to be designed as a tool that supports all students in developing according to their individual potential, rather than merely creating academic competition.

The research findings underscore the importance of combining competitive gamification with collaborative elements, such as group missions and cooperation-based rewards, to foster a learning culture

³⁸ Muhammad Afdan Rojabi, *Strategi Gamifikasi: Mengubah Tugas Menjadi Tantangan* (Afdan Rojabi Publisher, 2025).

³⁹ Rojabi, *Strategi Gamifikasi* (Afdan Rojabi Publisher, 2025).

that balances competition and solidarity. Another key finding relates to the issue of educational equity. Gamification has the potential to exacerbate inequalities if implemented without considering differences in access to technology, students' prior abilities, and socio-cultural backgrounds. Students with better access to devices and internet connections tend to perform better in point systems and leaderboards.

However, the study's findings also indicate that gamification can serve as a tool to promote fairness when designed according to the principles of equitable design. Adjusting difficulty levels, providing effort-based rewards.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the use of personal or anonymous leaderboards has been shown to minimize disparities and enhance a sense of fairness in online learning. Thus, gamification is not merely a technical strategy but also has an ethical dimension that must be considered in digital education practices. The implementation of gamification fosters a new learning culture that tends to be competitive. Healthy competition can spur the spirit of learning, but excessive competition has the potential to cause psychological pressure and disparities in participation. Students with limited access to technology or digital skills are at risk of falling behind. From an Islamic educational perspective, fairness is a fundamental principle that must be upheld in the learning process. Therefore, gamification needs to be designed to be inclusive, collaborative, and proportionate so as not to cause unfairness while continuing to support the development of character and noble morals.

Equitable gamification can also be implemented through collaborative tasks rather than solely individual competition. In Islamic Religious Education, a collaborative model is more relevant because it aligns with the values of *ukhuwah*, mutual aid (*ta'awun*), and the spirit of working together for the common good. Through group challenges, students can learn to help one another, discuss, and share their understanding so that the learning process is not only oriented toward individual achievement but also the development of social and religious character. Additionally, teachers need to provide flexibility in the form of assignments and learning media so that students with limited access to technology can still participate in the learning process optimally.

Although gamification-based digital media has proven effective in supporting the learning process, there are also a number of

⁴⁰ Karl M. Kapp, *The Gamification of Learning and Instruction: Game-Based Methods and Strategies for Training and Education* (John Wiley & Sons, 2012)

challenges in its implementation. The main obstacles encountered are technical issues, such as limited devices and unstable internet connections, which prevent some students from fully participating in gamification activities. These conditions have the potential to disrupt the learning process and reduce the effectiveness of gamification.⁴¹ Time constraints when answering questions also pose a challenge for some students. The short duration can cause anxiety, especially for students who need more time to understand the questions and concepts being tested. Therefore, the availability of devices and adequate internet access are important factors in supporting the success of digital-based learning. In addition to technical obstacles, teachers' competence in implementing gamified learning presents a challenge of its own. Another challenge relates to differences in students' abilities to use digital technology.

Overall, these findings confirm that the success of gamification in education depends not only on the media used, but also on the readiness of the infrastructure, effective time management, and the enhancement of digital literacy among students and teachers.⁴² Teachers play a key role in the implementation of gamification. Teachers must ensure that game elements do not overshadow the substance of the material, but rather reinforce conceptual understanding.⁴³ The success of gamification depends heavily on the teacher's ability to design game elements that are relevant to the learning objectives.⁴⁴ With careful planning and adequate support, the potential of gamification can be maximized to create more effective and enjoyable learning experiences.

⁴¹ Renata et al., "Integrasi Gamifikasi Berbasis Penghargaan dalam Meningkatkan Motivasi Belajar Bahasa Indonesia Di Tingkat Menengah Pada Era Digital."

⁴² Risnawati Jailani, "Dampak Gamifikasi Dalam Pembelajaran Terhadap Motivasi Dan Prestasi Siswa," *Jurnal Pendidikan, Hukum, Komunikasi* 1, no. 1 (2025): 26–35, <https://doi.org/10.69623/j-dikumsi.v1i1.43>.

⁴³ M. Mahbubi and Homaidi, "Analisis Implementasi Pembelajaran Berbasis Gamifikasi Pada Peningkatan Motivasi Belajar Siswa," *Al-Absor: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 2, no. 1 (2025): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.71242/wf9q5253>.

⁴⁴ Abdul Malik Saif Ababil et al., "Penerapan Gamifikasi Dalam Pembelajaran Pendidikan Islam Untuk Meningkatkan Motivasi Dan Hasil Belajar Siswa," *Indonesian Journal on Education (IJoEd)* 1, no. 4 (2025): 316–22, <https://doi.org/10.70437/xzfp3h16>.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the literature review, it can be concluded that gamification in Islamic Religious Education has been shown to have great potential for improving students' motivation, engagement, and learning behavior in online learning. Game elements such as points, badges, challenges, and leaderboards can create a more interactive and enjoyable learning environment, encouraging students to be more active, disciplined, and responsible in the learning process. In addition to impacting academic aspects, gamification also influences students' psychological and social aspects, particularly in fostering behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. However, the implementation of gamification also presents several challenges, notably the risk of instrumental learning motivation, excessive competition, and technological access disparities in digital learning. Therefore, the implementation of gamification in Islamic Education (PAI) needs to be designed in a more humanistic, inclusive, and values-oriented manner, grounded in Islamic educational principles such as al-'adl (justice), musawah (equality), cooperation, and fastabiqul khairat.

This article offers a novel perspective by positioning gamification not only as a technical strategy for digital learning but also as a pedagogical approach with implications for learning culture, religious character development, and educational equity from an Islamic perspective. Based on the study's findings, Islamic Education teachers are advised to implement gamification in a balanced manner by emphasizing effort-based rewards, collaborative tasks, learning reflection, and the use of an evaluation system that is not solely score-oriented. Furthermore, future research is expected to empirically examine the effectiveness of gamification models that are more inclusive and grounded in Islamic educational values within both online and in-person learning contexts.

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