Gamification in Islamic Religious Education Effectiveness and Challenges in Increasing Students' Learning Motivation

Desy Safitri[1], Dwi Noviani[2], Lisa Anggraini[3], Dian Vitasari[4]

[1,2,3,4] Institut Agama Islam Al-Qur'an Al-Ittifaqiah, Indralaya, Indonesia

[*]Corresponding Author: safitridesyy24@gmail.com

Article Info

ABSTRACT

Gamification, an approach that integrates game elements into non-game contexts, has attracted attention as an innovative tool for increasing students' learning motivation. In the context of Islamic education, the application of gamification offers great potential to make religious learning more interesting and interactive. This research aims to explore the effectiveness of gamification in increasing students' learning motivation in Islamic religious subjects, as well as identifying challenges that may be faced in its implementation. Literature studies show that gamification can create a more enjoyable learning environment, increase student engagement, and encourage the development of critical thinking skills. Elements such as points, badges, levels, and competitions can motivate students to achieve learning goals. However, there are several challenges in implementing gamification in Islamic education. One of them is the need to adapt game elements to Islamic values. In addition, limited resources and technological infrastructure can be an obstacle.

Keywords: Gamification, Islamic Education, Learning Motivation, Students, Challenges.

ABSTRAK

Gamifikasi, sebuah pendekatan yang mengintegrasikan elemen-elemen permainan ke dalam konteks non-permainan, telah menarik perhatian sebagai alat inovatif untuk meningkatkan motivasi belajar siswa. Dalam konteks pendidikan Islam, penerapan gamifikasi menawarkan potensi besar untuk membuat pembelajaran agama lebih menarik dan interaktif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi efektivitas gamifikasi dalam meningkatkan motivasi belajar siswa dalam mata pelajaran agama Islam, serta mengidentifikasi tantangan yang mungkin dihadapi dalam implementasinya. Studi literatur menunjukkan bahwa gamifikasi dapat menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang lebih menyenangkan, meningkatkan keterlibatan siswa, dan mendorong pengembangan keterampilan berpikir kritis. Elemen-elemen seperti poin, lencana, level, dan kompetisi

dapat memotivasi siswa untuk mencapai tujuan pembelajaran. Namun, terdapat beberapa tantangan dalam penerapan gamifikasi dalam pendidikan Islam. Salah satunya adalah perlunya menyesuaikan elemen permainan dengan nilai-nilai Islam. Selain itu, keterbatasan sumber daya dan infrastruktur teknologi dapat menjadi kendala.

Kata Kunci: Gamifikasi, Pendidikan Islam, Motivasi belajar, Siswa, Tantangan.

1. INTRODUCTION

Gamification in Islamic education is an innovative approach that uses game elements in the context of learning to increase student motivation and engagement. In recent years, the concept of gamification has become popular in various fields, including education, because it is able to stimulate enthusiasm for learning through features such as points, challenges, scoreboards, and prizes (Hambali & Lubis, 2022). Gamification not only increases student participation, but is also able to create a more interactive and enjoyable learning atmosphere. In the context of Islamic education, gamification offers a great opportunity to make religious learning more interesting and relevant to the younger generation. Given that religious learning is often considered monotonous by some students, gamification is an effective alternative to strengthen their understanding of Islamic values (Mahmud & Tamuri, 2023). The gamification approach can be applied in various aspects of Islamic education, such as in learning the Qur'an, Islamic history, and teaching Islamic moral and ethical values. In learning the Qur'an, for example, gamification elements such as competitions in memorizing verses or points for correct tajwid can foster students' enthusiasm to study harder (Rahmania et al., 2023). In addition, gamification in Islamic education can facilitate understanding of abstract and complex concepts, because learning is carried out through interesting and repetitive activities, which ultimately strengthens students' memory. This is in line with the principles of Islamic education which emphasizes active and continuous learning, so that the knowledge gained can be better understood and applied in everyday life (Jusuf, 2020).

However, although gamification offers many positive potentials, there are several challenges faced in its implementation in Islamic education environments. One of the main challenges is balancing game elements with educational content so as not to obscure the main goal of religious learning itself. If not designed carefully, gamification in Islamic education risks becoming too focused on the game aspect and forgetting the essence of religious learning. Another challenge is ensuring that gamification elements do not conflict with Islamic values and principles, especially if they involve prizes or rewards that can lead students to an excessively competitive attitude (Hakeu et al., 2023). Therefore, it is very important for educators to design gamification that remains in line with the principles of Islamic education and does not reduce the spiritual meaning of the material being taught.

In addition, the effectiveness of gamification in Islamic education is highly dependent on adequate technological support and the readiness of educators and students to adapt to new learning methods. Not all educational institutions have access to the necessary technology, such as computer devices or gamification-based learning applications, which can be an obstacle in implementing this method (Shaliha & Fakhzikril, 2022). On the other hand, educators' skills in using gamification technology are also an important factor in the success of this program. Educators need to have a good understanding of how to design and implement gamification so that the game elements applied are truly effective in motivating students to learn. Overall, gamification in Islamic education has great potential to increase student learning motivation and

make religious learning more interesting and relevant. With the right approach, gamification can not only strengthen students' understanding of the subject matter, but also encourage them to be more active and enthusiastic in developing their religious knowledge and understanding. However, to achieve optimal results, careful planning, training for educators, and periodic evaluation are needed to ensure that this approach continues to support the main goal of Islamic education, namely instilling deep religious values and inspiring students to become individuals with noble morals.

2.   RESEARCH METHODE

The literature study research method used to discuss "Gamification in Islamic Education: Effectiveness and Challenges in Improving Student Learning Motivation" focuses on collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing various scientific sources and relevant literature related to gamification in the context of Islamic education. This study began by identifying previous studies that discussed the concept of gamification, its effectiveness in increasing learning motivation, and how game elements are applied in religious learning. The sources reviewed included academic journals, books, articles, research reports, and case studies that discussed the application of gamification in education in general, as well as those that specifically highlighted its impacts and challenges in Islamic education. In the analysis process, this study examined empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of gamification in increasing student engagement, aspects of motivation influenced by gamification, and challenges that emerged, such as the need for adjustment to Islamic values and technological constraints. Through a qualitative approach and thematic analysis, this study compiled and grouped relevant findings to gain an in-depth understanding of the potential and constraints of gamification in the context of Islamic education. The main aim of this research is to formulate conclusions based on a comprehensive literature review, as well as offer insight into effective strategies for implementing gamification in religious learning that remains in line with the goals of Islamic education.

3.   RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Basic Concepts of Gamification

Gamification is an innovative approach that integrates game elements into non-game contexts with the aim of increasing user engagement, motivation, and participation (Daud et al., 2022). The basic concept of gamification is rooted in the understanding that games have strong intrinsic appeal, such as challenges, rewards, and competition, which can be used to encourage certain behaviors in areas such as education, business, health, and marketing. By implementing game mechanics such as points, levels, badges, leaderboards, and challenges, gamification aims to make activities that are usually considered monotonous or difficult more interesting and enjoyable. For example, in education, gamification can be used to make the learning process more interactive and motivate students to achieve academic goals through a game-like reward system (Kedah, 2023).

The basic principles of gamification involve several key components designed to create an engaging and motivating user experience. One of the main principles is the provision of consistent and immediate feedback, which helps users understand their progress and encourages them to continue participating. In addition, gamification often incorporates elements of challenge that are appropriate to the user's ability level, thus creating a sense of accomplishment when the challenge is successfully overcome. Another goal is to create clear, measurable goals that provide direction

and focus for users. By setting specific goals, users can feel significant progress and feel motivated to achieve them. These principles work together to create an environment that supports continued engagement and intrinsic motivation (Ariani, 2020).

Game mechanics are an important aspect of gamification that encompasses a variety of elements used to create a gaming experience. Points are one of the most common mechanisms used in gamification, where users earn points as rewards for certain accomplishments. Levels or tiers are used to show user progress and provide increasingly difficult challenges as they progress. Badges or other visual rewards can be given as symbols of certain accomplishments or skills that users have achieved. Leaderboards create an element of competition by comparing one user's achievements to another, which can encourage competitiveness and increase motivation. Challenges and missions are also important mechanisms that provide structure and purpose for users to actively and continuously participate in gamified activities (Sari & Alfian, 2023).

The psychological aspects of gamification are critical to understanding why this approach is effective in increasing motivation and engagement. Motivational theories such as self-determination theory explain that gamification can meet basic human psychological needs, such as the need for autonomy, competence, and social relationships (Malik & Tarbiyah, 2020). By giving users control over their activities (autonomy), challenges that match their abilities (competence), and opportunities to interact with others (social relationships), gamification can increase intrinsic motivation. In addition, the flow theory developed by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi is also relevant, where gamification helps create optimal conditions in which users are fully involved and focused on the activity, thereby increasing their satisfaction and engagement. The application of gamification can be found in various sectors with different goals. In the business world, gamification is used to increase employee productivity, encourage collaboration, and increase customer loyalty through game-like loyalty programs. In the health sector, gamification applications can motivate individuals to achieve their health goals, such as losing weight or exercising regularly, by providing interesting rewards and challenges. In education, gamification is used to make the learning process more interactive and fun, thereby increasing student participation and achievement. Other examples include the use of gamification in marketing to increase customer engagement through interactive and fun campaigns. With its flexibility and ability to be adapted to various contexts, gamification continues to develop as an effective tool to achieve desired goals in various fields (Isnawati & Hadi, 2021).

From the above explanations, it can be concluded that gamification is a powerful and flexible strategy to increase motivation and engagement in various contexts through the application of game elements. By understanding the basic concepts, principles, mechanisms, and underlying psychological aspects, developers and educators can design effective gamification programs that are in accordance with their goals. Although gamification offers many advantages, it is also important to consider the challenges and potential risks, such as the possibility of diverting focus from the main goal or creating unhealthy competition. Therefore, the implementation of gamification must be carried out carefully and strategically, ensuring that game elements are used wisely to support and reinforce the desired goals. With the right approach, gamification can be a very effective tool for increasing motivation, engagement, and outcomes in various areas of life.

Effectiveness of Gamification in Islamic Education

Gamification in Islamic education has shown significant effectiveness in increasing student motivation and engagement in the teaching and learning process. By utilizing game elements, such as points, levels, awards, and challenges, gamification creates a more interactive and enjoyable learning atmosphere, thus attracting students' interest in studying religious materials that are often

considered difficult or monotonous (Koten et al., 2023). Gamification allows students to be more actively involved in religious learning, both in understanding the verses of the Qur'an, hadith, or Islamic history. With this interactive approach, religious learning no longer feels rigid, but becomes something more interesting and relevant to them, especially for the younger generation who are accustomed to technology and game-based applications. The effectiveness of gamification also lies in its ability to foster a healthy competitive spirit among students. Through features such as scoreboards or leaderboards, students can see their own achievements and compare them with their friends. This can encourage them to be more enthusiastic in learning and trying to achieve better results. On the other hand, this competition can still be controlled with Islamic values, such as mutual respect and not being arrogant, which can be taught simultaneously in the process (Sutarta et al., 2023). Gamification thus not only helps improve students' understanding of religious material, but also instills important Islamic attitudes and ethics, such as humility and mutual support. In this way, gamification is not only a tool for motivation, but also a means for educating character according to Islamic teachings.

Apart from increasing motivation, gamification also makes a big contribution in improving students' memory and understanding of lesson material. Research shows that learning processes that involve repetitive physical and mental activity, such as those implemented in gamification, can help students absorb information better. In the context of Islamic education, gamification can be used to help students memorize verses of the Koran or understand the content of hadith through fun and challenging activities. With the element of repetition in the form of games, students will more easily remember the material they have studied, which is of course important in religious education where understanding and memorization are the main aspects. Thus, gamification is not only effective in motivating, but also in ensuring long-term retention of the knowledge taught.

Gamification also plays a role in strengthening Islamic values beyond subject matter, by giving students the opportunity to practice attitudes such as patience, honesty and perseverance. For example, in learning activities that use multilevel challenges, students are invited to complete each stage patiently and diligently, without rushing. This attitude is in accordance with Islamic principles which encourage its followers to always be patient and consistent in pursuing good goals. Challenges and missions in gamification also teach students to always try to achieve their targets honestly and without cheating, which ultimately strengthens moral values in their lives. In a learning process that uses gamification, students can see the positive impact of every effort they make, which builds awareness of the importance of good values in their daily lives (Mahmud & Tamuri, 2023).

In addition to the benefits already mentioned, the effectiveness of gamification in Islamic education also depends on the readiness of technology and the skills of educators in designing the right learning experience. Many digital applications or platforms can support the implementation of gamification in education, but not all Islamic educational institutions have access to this technology. Therefore, sufficient support is needed from schools, parents, and the community so that gamification can be implemented effectively (Tamara, 2024). In addition, the role of teachers in designing gamification that is in accordance with Islamic values is also very important, so that games continue to support religious learning substantially. In this case, training for educators to understand the concept and application of gamification is crucial so that this approach can be implemented optimally (Zhan et al., 2022). From the several explanations above, it is concluded that gamification in Islamic education shows great effectiveness in increasing student motivation, involvement, understanding, and retention of religious material. However, the implementation of gamification also requires careful planning and adjustment so that it remains in accordance with the goals of Islamic education. The challenges faced, such as technological limitations and the

potential for a shift in focus from religious learning to game aspects, need to be managed wisely. Thus, gamification can be a powerful tool to support more modern and relevant Islamic education, without sacrificing the essence of the religious teachings themselves.

Challenges and Obstacles

The application of gamification in Islamic education offers a lot of potential, but it is not free from various challenges and obstacles that need to be faced in order to be effective and in accordance with the goals of religious education. One of the main challenges is ensuring a balance between game elements and the essence of Islamic learning itself. There is a concern that focusing too much on the game aspect can distract students from the main goal, which is to understand and internalize religious teachings. If game elements, such as giving prizes or points, are not carefully designed, students may only be motivated by rewards and not by an intrinsic desire to understand religious knowledge. Therefore, a gamification design is needed that still respects the depth of meaning of each religious material taught, so that the entertainment aspect does not obscure the values and substance of Islamic education.

In addition, the limitations of technological infrastructure in some Islamic educational institutions, especially in rural areas or areas with limited access to technology, are a significant obstacle in implementing gamification. Many gamification platforms and applications require devices such as computers, tablets, or smartphones, as well as stable internet access to function optimally (Sodikin & Hikmawan, 2023). Not all schools or madrasahs have the budget or resources to provide such infrastructure, and often students do not have adequate personal devices. This makes it difficult to implement gamification evenly across all Islamic educational institutions. Therefore, gamification in Islamic education requires adaptation and more inclusive solutions to be accessible to students from various socio-economic backgrounds.

Another challenge that arises in gamification is the skills of educators in designing and implementing this method appropriately. Not all educators have sufficient knowledge or training about gamification and how to integrate it into religious learning. Many educators in Islamic education environments are still unfamiliar with digital technology or new concepts such as gamification, so special training is needed to prepare them (Alzahrani & Alhalafawy, 2022). In addition, educators also need to have a good understanding of the Islamic values that must be maintained in gamification so that it remains relevant and in line with the goals of religious education. Without these skills and understanding, gamification risks becoming an activity that lacks depth or is even out of line with the spiritual goals of Islamic education (Prapto et al., 2020).

In addition to technical and resource aspects, cultural challenges are also obstacles to implementing gamification in Islamic education. In some conservative environments, gamification may be considered less compatible with traditional approaches to religious education, which are usually more serious and formal. Some people may feel that religious learning should be done with a solemn attitude and without entertainment elements, so the application of gamification may be opposed or even considered inappropriate. To overcome this obstacle, an approach is needed that prioritizes communication and education to the community about the benefits of gamification, especially in a modern context and for the younger generation who are more familiar with technology. This change in perception is important so that gamification can be accepted as a positive approach that is in line with Islamic values.

Finally, gamification in Islamic education also faces challenges in terms of measuring its success and impact. Since gamification is a relatively new method, in-depth research on its effectiveness in the context of Islamic education is still limited. More empirical data and case studies are needed to understand the extent to which gamification actually impacts students' motivation, understanding, and application of Islamic values. In addition, indicators of the success of

gamification in Islamic education also need to be clearly defined so that educators and institutions can conduct objective evaluations. Without a structured evaluation, it will be difficult to know whether gamification actually helps or hinders the process of religious learning.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the literature review, it can be concluded that gamification has great potential to become one of the effective learning strategies in Islamic education. By integrating game elements such as points, levels, badges, and challenges, religious learning can be presented in a more interesting and interactive way. Research shows that gamification can increase students' intrinsic motivation, encourage active involvement, and strengthen understanding of religious concepts. In addition, gamification can also facilitate the development of 21st century skills such as creativity, collaboration, and problem solving. However, the application of gamification in the context of Islamic education also faces several challenges. One of them is the need to adjust game elements to Islamic values and principles. Other challenges are limited resources, technological infrastructure, and the lack of in-depth empirical research.

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