



## Implementation of the Gamification Method to Increase Bahasa Indonesia Learning Motivation in Grade V Students

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### ARTICLE INFO

*Keywords:* Gamification,  
Learning Motivation, Bahasa  
Indonesia, Classroom Action  
Research, Elementary School

*Received :* 27 August

*Revised :* 20 September

*Accepted:* 18 October

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the implementation of the gamification method and to analyze its contribution to Bahasa Indonesia learning motivation among fifth-grade students at UPTD SD Negeri 12 Parepare, a context rarely examined in gamification research. Qualitative classroom action research based on the Kemmis and McTaggart model was conducted in three cycles with one teacher and 14 students (7 boys and 7 girls). Data were collected through observation, questionnaires, and documentation, then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model. Teacher activity increased from 57.14% (Poor) to 92.8% (Good), student activity from 66.1% to 88.7% (Good), and average learning motivation from 62.7% (Fair) to 87.3% (High), with 13 of 14 students reaching the high to very high category. Consistent implementation of the five gamification steps proved essential.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Indonesian learning in elementary school aims to develop students' ability to communicate both orally and in writing, as well as to serve as a vehicle for the development of national culture, science, and technology (Ali, 2020). However, the practice of Bahasa Indonesia learning in Grade V at UPTD SD Negeri 12 Parepare still tends to be monotonous, teacher-centered, and lacking in contextual activities, causing students to become passive. Interviews, preliminary observation, and a pre-research questionnaire administered to 14 students showed that 4 students had low learning motivation, 7 students were in the fair category, and only 3 students were in the high category, confirming the low level of Bahasa Indonesia learning motivation in the class.

The quality of learning is greatly influenced by the teacher's ability to select appropriate and varied methods. Suprijono (as cited in Aminah et al., 2022) asserts that a learning method is a pattern that serves as a guideline for designing and delivering instruction in the classroom. At the elementary school level, learning-while-playing methods are relevant because they encourage students to be active, collaborate, and become directly involved in learning (Wulanjani, as cited in Solikhah et al., 2023). Interactive learning methods have also been shown to increase elementary students' learning motivation (Fahrurrazi & Jayawardaya, 2024). One method that can accommodate this need is gamification, namely the application of game elements such as points, levels, challenges, leaderboards, and badges to the learning process (Sukmawati et al., 2021). Gamification is believed to increase students' active participation because it introduces an element of competition that challenges students to achieve (Hakeu et al., 2023).

Rahmadania et al. (2025) found at UPTD SD Negeri 67 Parepare that the learning outcomes of students taught using the gamification method in the Natural and Social Sciences (IPAS) subject were higher than those of students taught conventionally. A similar finding was obtained by Sultan et al. (2025) in the IPAS subject at UPTD SD Negeri 85 Parepare, while Alamanda and Anwar (2024) quantitatively demonstrated that gamification increases student learning activity. These studies reinforce the effectiveness of gamification, yet they remain concentrated on the IPAS subject, whereas its application in Bahasa Indonesia learning at the elementary level, specifically to increase learning motivation, has rarely been examined. This gap is what the present study seeks to address.

The novelty of this study lies in the application of five gamification steps, namely Discovery, Onboarding, Scaffolding, End Game, and Mastery (Ariani, 2020), specifically within Grade V Bahasa Indonesia learning to increase students' learning motivation, a context that has not been widely explored in previous gamification research. The study is grounded in the concept of learning motivation proposed by Uno (2021), who views motivation as an internal drive that shapes particular behavior, and in the gamification elements of points, levels, challenges, leaderboards, and badges (Sukmawati et al., 2021) as the framework for the intervention. Accordingly, this study focuses on the implementation of the gamification method in Bahasa Indonesia learning among Grade V students at UPTD SD Negeri 12 Parepare, and aims to describe the process of

implementing the method and to analyze the increase in learning motivation achieved through its application.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Learning methods*

A learning method is the way or technique a teacher uses to deliver lesson material so that optimal learning outcomes can be achieved. Ramdani et al. (2023) describe it as a tool for creating an effective learning process in which teachers and students interact actively, while Amran and Arismunandar (2025) note that choosing an appropriate method helps students understand the material, particularly when it matches their learning styles. Innovative methods also increase student engagement and support deeper understanding (Jannah et al., 2023). Teachers therefore need to adapt their methods to the characteristics of the students, the type of material, and the learning objectives.

### *Gamification and its elements*

Gamification is commonly defined as the use of game design elements in non-game environments (Ariani, 2020). Yunita and Indrajit (2022) similarly describe it as the integration of game elements and thinking into activities that are not games. Gamification does not mean building a game; instead, it adapts mechanics such as points, levels, challenges, and rewards to create more engaging experiences (Naufal et al., 2024) and to strengthen students' conceptual understanding (Iberahim & Noor, 2020). Several elements can be applied in learning: badges, points, challenges, leaderboards, levels, progress bars, profiles, and feedback (Julianto & Ekohariadi, 2020); points, user levels, challenges, leaderboards, feedback, goals, and badges (Sukmawati et al., 2021); and, in a broader classification, avatars, virtual currency, and surprises (Aditya et al., 2023).

### *Steps of gamification implementation*

Rahayuningsih and Susanti (2022), citing Burke, outline five implementation steps: introducing the narrative (Discovery), determining the flow and objectives of the game (Onboarding), carrying out the game (Scaffolding), evaluation and appreciation (End Game), and reflection and reinforcement of the material (Mastery). Alamanda and Anwar (2024) likewise recommend setting measurable learning objectives, designing a game concept and interactive activities, forming small groups, applying game dynamics such as leaderboards, and evaluating and reflecting on the results, whereas Jusuf (2016) emphasizes dividing material into levels, awarding badges and rewards, forming task groups, and displaying leaderboards. Gamification is reported to stimulate enthusiasm, healthy competition, engagement, persistence, and understanding of the material (Sultan et al., 2025), to improve motivation and engagement (Hakeu et al., 2023), and to make learning more interactive (Iberahim & Noor, 2020).

### *Learning motivation*

Learning motivation is the driving force, from within or outside the student, that creates desire, enthusiasm, and persistence in learning in order to reach a goal. It is an important aspect of the learning process because it exerts a positive

influence on students (Budiyani et al., 2021), directs their interest toward learning goals (Sulaiman & Nurisman, 2022), and, when strong, increases students' energy and spirit in learning (Lukman et al., 2021). Sardiman (as cited in Setiyaningsih, 2020) defines it as the driving force within students that creates, sustains, and directs learning activities. Uno (2021) identifies six indicators of learning motivation: the desire to succeed, the drive and need to learn, hopes and aspirations for the future, appreciation in learning, interesting learning activities, and a conducive learning environment. Motivation is shaped by factors from within and outside the student, including parenting and the family environment (Harianti & Amin, 2016), and is understood as an internal drive toward learning goals (Fahrurrazi & Jayawardaya, 2024).

#### *Conceptual framework*

The low Bahasa Indonesia learning motivation in Grade V at UPTD SD Negeri 12 Parepare is related to both teacher and student aspects. On the teacher's side, few questions are posed about the material to be taught, interactive methods that create feedback between teacher and students are rarely applied, and enjoyable methods are not varied. Gamification is proposed as the solution because it involves students actively through challenges and rewards, which can raise their motivation to take part in the lesson. As shown in Figure 1, the five gamification steps are implemented over a maximum of three cycles of classroom action research to increase students' learning motivation. The action hypothesis is that if the gamification method is applied correctly and in accordance with its steps, Bahasa Indonesia learning motivation among Grade V students at UPTD SD Negeri 12 Parepare will increase.

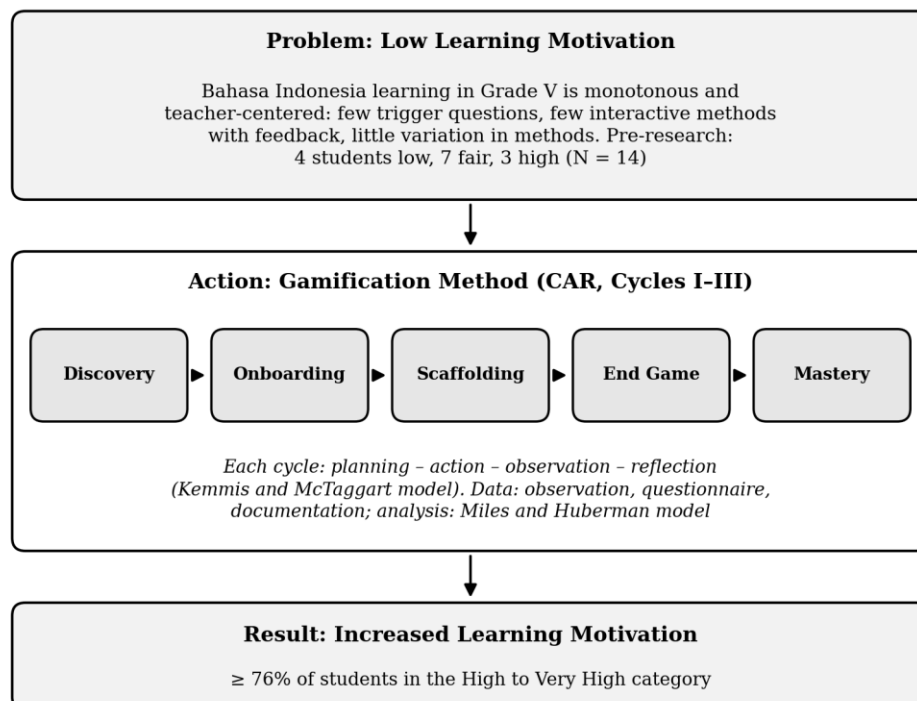


**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework**

## METHODOLOGY

### *Research design*

This study employed a qualitative approach with a classroom action research (CAR) design. The qualitative approach was chosen because it emphasizes meaning-making, reasoning, and definition within a particular context (Kamaruddin et al., 2022) and relates to understanding processes based on facts found in the field (Bado, 2021). CAR was selected because it aims to improve the quality of the learning process to be more effective, efficient, creative, and innovative (Parnawi, 2020), with an emphasis on improving instructional procedures and practices within the classroom (Wibowo, 2023). The design followed the Kemmis and McTaggart model, which was developed from Kurt Lewin's model (Adhani et al., 2017), with each cycle consisting of four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The study was planned to run for a maximum of three cycles, and the implementation of action was to be stopped once the success indicators had been achieved.

### *Participants, time, and location*

The research subjects were one teacher and 14 Grade V students at UPTD SD Negeri 12 Parepare, consisting of 7 male and 7 female students. The subjects were determined purposively based on the results of preliminary observation, which indicated low Bahasa Indonesia learning motivation in the class. The research was conducted during the even semester of the 2025/2026 academic year at UPTD SD Negeri 12 Parepare, located on Jalan Chalik, Sumpang Minangae, Bacukiki Barat Subdistrict, Parepare City, South Sulawesi Province. The actions for Cycles I, II, and III were carried out on 19, 21, and 26 May 2026, respectively.

### *Instruments and data collection*

Data were collected through three techniques: observation, questionnaires, and documentation. Observation sheets were used to observe teacher and student activity at each step of gamification. The learning motivation questionnaire was developed based on the six motivation indicators of Uno (2021), elaborated into 18 checklist statement items and completed by students at the end of each cycle. Documentation in the form of photographs and videos was used as supporting evidence for the implementation of the action. Data trustworthiness was ensured through technique triangulation (observation, questionnaires, and documentation) and source triangulation (teacher, students, and researcher), so that the data obtained could be scientifically accounted for.

### *Data analysis*

Data were analyzed descriptively and qualitatively using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Budiasni & Darma, 2020). The success of the learning process was calculated by comparing the score obtained to the maximum score (Equation 1) and interpreted using the categories in Table 1. Learning motivation was analyzed with the same formula, and the proportion of students who succeeded was calculated using Equation 2.

$$\text{Score (\%)} = (\text{Score obtained} \div \text{Maximum score}) \times 100\% \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

$$\text{Success (\%)} = (\text{Successful students} \div \text{All students}) \times 100\% \dots\dots\dots (2)$$

Success in the learning process was defined as reaching the good category (76%–100%), and success in learning motivation was determined if at least 76% of students achieved a score of at least 61%, which corresponds to the high to very high categories.

Table 1. Success Criteria for the Learning Process and Learning Motivation

| Aspect              | Score interval (%) | Category  |
|---------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Learning process    | 76–100             | Good      |
|                     | 60–75              | Fair      |
|                     | 0–59               | Poor      |
| Learning motivation | 81–100             | Very High |
|                     | 61–80              | High      |
|                     | 41–60              | Fair      |
|                     | 21–40              | Low       |
|                     | 0–20               | Very Low  |

## RESEARCH RESULT

### *Pre-research condition*

Prior to the intervention, the results of preliminary observation and the pre-research questionnaire administered to 14 Grade V students showed that 4 students had low learning motivation, 7 students were in the fair category, and 3 students were in the high category. This confirmed the need for corrective action in Bahasa Indonesia learning through the gamification method.

### *Teacher activity, student activity, and learning motivation*

In Cycle I, teacher activity in carrying out the gamification steps reached 57.14%, categorized as poor, because the teacher had not optimally provided a trigger question at the Discovery step and had not clearly explained the reward target at the Onboarding step. Student activity reached 66.1%, categorized as fair. The learning motivation questionnaire showed an average of 62.7% (fair category), with 7 of 14 students (50%) reaching the high category.

In Cycle II, after the teacher improved the delivery of learning objectives as a “main mission” and clarified the game rules, teacher activity increased to 85.7% (good category) and student activity increased to 74.2% (fair category). Students’ learning motivation increased to an average of 70.2% (high category), with 10 of 14 students (71.4%) reaching the high category.

In Cycle III, the teacher consistently carried out all gamification steps, linked the mission to students’ real-life situations, guided each group evenly at the Scaffolding step, and provided more varied rewards at the End Game step. Teacher activity reached 92.8% and student activity reached 88.7%, both categorized as good. Students’ learning motivation reached an average of 87.3% (very high category), with 13 of 14 students (92.8%) reaching the high to very high category. This exceeded the established success indicator of at least 76%, and the intervention was therefore stopped at this cycle. The recapitulation of teacher and student activity across the three cycles is presented in Table 2, and the distribution of students’ learning motivation in Table 3.

Table 2. Recapitulation of Teacher and Student Activity in Cycles I–III

| Cycle | Teacher activity (%) | Category | Student activity (%) | Category |
|-------|----------------------|----------|----------------------|----------|
| I     | 57.14                | Poor     | 66.1                 | Fair     |
| II    | 85.7                 | Good     | 74.2                 | Fair     |
| III   | 92.8                 | Good     | 88.7                 | Good     |

Table 3. Recapitulation of Students' Learning Motivation in Cycles I–III

| Cycle | Average motivation (%) | Category  | Students in the high to very high category |
|-------|------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------------|
| I     | 62.7                   | Fair      | 7 of 14 (50%)                              |
| II    | 70.2                   | High      | 10 of 14 (71.4%)                           |
| III   | 87.3                   | Very High | 13 of 14 (92.8%)                           |

#### *Implementation of the gamification steps*

At the Discovery step, the teacher introduced the narrative or context of the lesson through objectives framed as a “main mission.” The Onboarding step was carried out by determining the flow, objectives, rules, and mission of the game and by forming learning groups. The Scaffolding step was implemented through various learning challenges that utilized gamification elements such as a point system and gradual guidance. The End Game step involved evaluating achievement on the leaderboard and giving appreciation to the group or students with the best progress, while the Mastery step involved joint reflection and reinforcement of the material at the end of the lesson.

#### *Divergent findings*

Overall, the research data did not show any significant anomalies, as teacher activity, student activity, and learning motivation increased consistently in every cycle. Nevertheless, the increase in student activity in Cycle II (74.2%) was not yet fully proportional to the increase in teacher activity (85.7%). This indicates that the teacher's improved strategy had not been evenly followed by increased engagement among all students in that cycle, before both aspects increased in a more balanced manner in Cycle III.

## DISCUSSION

This classroom action research was conducted to address the low Bahasa Indonesia learning motivation of Grade V students at UPTD SD Negeri 12 Parepare through the implementation of five gamification steps, namely Discovery, Onboarding, Scaffolding, End Game, and Mastery. The data show a consistent pattern of improvement across the three aspects observed, namely teacher activity, student activity, and learning motivation, with the success indicator of at least 76% fully achieved only in Cycle III, at which point the intervention was stopped.

This pattern of improvement reflects the psychological mechanism underlying each gamification step. Referring to the Discovery, Onboarding,

Scaffolding, End Game, and Mastery framework described by Ariani (2020), each step is designed to meet a different psychological need of students. The Discovery step fosters curiosity through an initial mission and challenge, the Onboarding step builds a sense of competence through clear rules and group formation, the Scaffolding step nurtures a sense of progress through gradual guidance and instant feedback, while the End Game and Mastery steps provide recognition and meaningfulness through rewards and reflection. This is consistent with the motivation indicators of Uno (2021), in which appreciation and interesting learning activities, such as games, help sustain students' drive to learn. In Cycle I, the teacher had not yet optimally carried out the first two steps, so teacher activity only reached 57.14% and learning motivation remained in the fair category. After the teacher improved the delivery of learning objectives as a main mission and clarified the game rules in Cycle II, both teacher activity and learning motivation increased. The most significant improvement occurred in Cycle III, when the teacher consistently carried out all gamification steps, linked the mission to students' real-life situations, guided each group evenly, and provided more varied rewards at the End Game step.

These findings are consistent with the studies of Rahmadania et al. (2025) at UPTD SD Negeri 67 Parepare and Sultan et al. (2025) at UPTD SD Negeri 85 Parepare, which demonstrated that the gamification method improves student learning outcomes in the IPAS subject. The points, rewards, and leaderboard elements applied at the End Game step in this study are also in line with the findings of Hakeu et al. (2023), who showed that gamification-based learning media increase students' active participation because they introduce an element of competition that challenges students to achieve. In a similar vein, Jusuf (2016) emphasized that gamification can create a more engaging and interactive learning process, thereby increasing students' motivation to participate. Likewise, Mukarromah and Agustina (2021) found that gamification provides room for creativity that broadens student engagement in learning, while Alamanda and Anwar (2024) quantitatively demonstrated that gamification increases student learning activity. The consistency of these findings strengthens the conclusion that the increase in Bahasa Indonesia learning motivation in this study is not an isolated finding but is in line with patterns also found in other gamification-based learning contexts at the elementary school level.

The findings also contribute to the development of interactive and enjoyable learning methods, as emphasized by Ramdani et al. (2023), who state that a learning method functions as a tool for creating an effective learning process in which teachers and students interact actively. Practically, the results can serve as a reference for teachers in designing Bahasa Indonesia instruction that integrates gamification elements such as points, levels, challenges, leaderboards, and badges (Sukmawati et al., 2021) to increase student learning motivation. For schools, the findings can serve as a basis for policy in supporting the implementation of innovative, game-based learning methods in the classroom.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The implementation of the gamification method in Bahasa Indonesia learning among Grade V students at UPTD SD Negeri 12 Parepare was carried out through five steps, namely Discovery, Onboarding, Scaffolding, End Game, and Mastery, and was implemented well, showing improvement in every cycle. Teacher activity increased from 57.14% (Poor) in Cycle I to 85.7% (Good) in Cycle II and 92.8% (Good) in Cycle III, while student activity increased from 66.1% (Fair) to 74.2% (Fair) and reached 88.7% (Good) in Cycle III. Students' learning motivation also increased from an average of 62.7% (Fair) in Cycle I to 70.2% (High) in Cycle II and 87.3% (High) in Cycle III, with 13 of 14 students (92.8%) reaching the high to very high category, exceeding the established success indicator of at least 76%.

This study provides a theoretical contribution by extending the application of the Discovery, Onboarding, Scaffolding, End Game, and Mastery gamification framework to Bahasa Indonesia learning in elementary school, a domain that has previously been more widely examined in the IPAS subject. Methodologically, it enriches empirical evidence on the relationship between the teacher's consistency in carrying out the gamification steps and the increase in student learning motivation. Practically, teachers are recommended to pay attention to time and classroom management and to select simple yet meaningful forms of reward when implementing the method, while schools are recommended to provide full support to teachers in facilitating innovative learning methods in the classroom.

## **ADVANCED RESEARCH**

This study has limitations in terms of the limited scope of subjects, confined to a single class of 14 students, and the duration of the intervention, which only lasted three cycles within a single subject, so the findings cannot be broadly generalized. In addition, managing time and classroom conditions, which tended to become noisy during the implementation of gamification, remained a challenge for the teacher. Future research is recommended to expand the research subjects to other classes or schools, to apply the gamification method to different subjects or school levels in order to test the consistency of its effectiveness on student learning motivation, and to integrate interactive digital media to enrich the variety of game elements used.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

The authors would like to thank the principal, the Grade V teacher, and the students of UPTD SD Negeri 12 Parepare for their participation and cooperation during the research, as well as the lecturers of the Elementary School Teacher Education Study Program, Universitas Negeri Makassar, for their guidance and support.

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