Enhancing Learning Outcomes Through Educational Games in Islamic Cultural History at MI Roudlatul Huda Bibrik Jiwan Madiun

[1] [*] **Masrukin A.**

[1] MI Roudlatul Huda Bibrik Jiwan Madiun, Madiun, Indonesia
[1] masrukina71@gmail.com
(corresponding author)*

Abstract. This classroom action research (CAR) aimed to enhance learning outcomes in Islamic Cultural History for fourth-grade students at MI Roudlatul Huda Bibrik Jiwan Madiun through the integration of educational games. Employing a cyclical CAR framework, the study was conducted in two cycles, each comprising four stages: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Educational games were strategically incorporated to foster student engagement, motivation, and active participation in lessons. Data were gathered through pre-tests, post-tests, classroom observations, and reflective journals to assess the impact of the intervention. Findings demonstrated a marked improvement in students' comprehension, retention, and overall academic performance, as evidenced by increased test scores and active classroom involvement. The interactive nature of educational games not only made learning more enjoyable but also facilitated deeper understanding of historical concepts. Furthermore, students exhibited enhanced problem-solving skills, collaboration, and enthusiasm towards the subject. The study underscores the effectiveness of game-based learning in transforming traditional pedagogical approaches, making Islamic education more dynamic and student-centered. These findings provide significant insights for educators aiming to revitalize religious studies by incorporating interactive and student-centered learning strategies that cater to diverse learning preferences. The research highlights how game-based learning can bridge the gap between traditional didactic methods and contemporary pedagogical approaches, fostering a more engaging and cognitively stimulating environment. By showcasing the tangible benefits of educational games in enhancing comprehension, retention, and student motivation, this study contributes to the broader discourse on modernizing instructional techniques to elevate the overall quality and effectiveness of Islamic education.

Keywords: Classroom action research, game, learning outcomes, Islamic cultural history

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education plays a crucial role in the curriculum, aiming to shape students' understanding and appreciation of Islamic teachings (Abdullah, 2015; Asmira, 2024). As a well-established institution committed to excellence in Islamic education, MI Roudlatul Huda Bibrik Jiwan Madiun bears the responsibility of ensuring that instructional methodologies effectively nurture students' intellectual and moral growth. This requires the implementation of pedagogical strategies that go beyond rote memorization, fostering critical thinking, engagement, and a meaningful connection to Islamic principles. However, given the nature of Islamic Cultural History as a subject, it is essential to implement effective teaching strategies to enhance student learning outcomes. In recent years, educational games have gained popularity as an innovative pedagogical approach (Apriliana, 2016; Hidayati et al., 2023; Fatimah et al., 2020). These games offer interactive and engaging learning experiences, which can increase student participation and motivation in the classroom (Slamet et al., 2024a; Utami, 2020; Widodo & Slamet, 2021). Within the context of Islamic Cultural History, educational games serve as an alternative strategy to improve students' comprehension of historical events, key figures, and cultural values in Islamic civilization.

Educational games have the potential to create a more active and engaging learning experience. In Islamic Cultural History lessons, students can directly engage with specially designed games that reinforce their understanding of the material. Through these activities, they can explore historical knowledge in a practical manner, develop problem-solving skills, and enhance critical thinking (Aziz, 2021; Slamet & Fatimah, 2022). In addition to improving comprehension, educational games can help sustain students' interest in the subject. A fun and interactive learning environment encourages students to stay motivated and actively participate in the learning process (Fermina, 2021; Slamet et al., 2024b; Suwarti, 2016; Widodo & Slamet, 2022). Thus, educational games can be an effective tool for fostering student enthusiasm in learning Islamic Cultural History.

Beyond enhancing comprehension and interest, educational games promote collaboration and social interaction among students. In group-based games, students work together, engage in discussions, and support each other in achieving learning objectives (Makarim, 2024; Slamet & Fatimah, 2022; Romsi et al., 2024; Slamet & Basthomi, 2024; Slamet et al., 2025; Slamet & Mukminatien, 2024). This cooperative learning environment fosters essential life skills such as teamwork, communication, and problem-solving, which are valuable both in academics and daily life. Despite these advantages, the integration of educational games in Islamic Cultural History education requires comprehensive research to assess its impact in an evidence-based manner. Conducting rigorous studies with valid and reliable data collection methods, along with appropriate analytical techniques, is necessary to objectively evaluate the effectiveness of educational games in enhancing student learning outcomes. A strong methodological approach will provide a deeper understanding of how game-based learning influences student achievement in Islamic Cultural History.

Although several studies have been conducted in the field of Islamic education, research gaps remain (Ulya & Arifi, 2021; Wahyuni, 2024). Prior studies have primarily focused on conventional teaching methods, while the potential of alternative strategies, such as educational games in Islamic Cultural History at MI Roudlatul Huda Bibrik Jiwan Madiun, remains largely unexplored. Traditional instructional methods in Islamic education often emphasize lectures, textbook readings, and classical discussions (Hidayati, 2024; Slamet, 2024). While these approaches provide a foundational understanding, they may not always effectively enhance student engagement and motivation. There is an urgent need to explore alternative pedagogical strategies that can enrich the teaching and learning process in Islamic Cultural History (Mama, 2020). Despite the growing body of research on

educational games in general, studies specifically examining their impact on student learning outcomes in Islamic Cultural History at the elementary level are still limited.

Given the unique and complex nature of Islamic Cultural History as a subject, further investigation is necessary to assess the effectiveness of educational games in helping students grasp historical events, significant figures, and Islamic cultural values (Musafa'ah, 2023; Widodo & Slamet, 2020). This research aims to determine the extent to which educational games can serve as an effective tool in fostering student interest, engagement, and academic success in Islamic Cultural History. The findings will address existing knowledge gaps and contribute valuable insights to the field of Islamic education by highlighting the potential of educational games as an innovative and effective teaching strategy at MI Roudlatul Huda Bibrik Jiwan Madiun. To bridge these research gaps, this study explores the impact of educational games on student learning outcomes in Islamic Cultural History at MI Roudlatul Huda Bibrik Jiwan Madiun. A Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach was chosen due to its iterative, problem-solving nature, allowing for continuous refinement of teaching strategies based on real-time classroom dynamics. CAR fosters a collaborative framework between researchers and teachers, ensuring that interventions are contextually relevant, directly addressing pedagogical challenges, and adaptable to students' needs. By systematically implementing and evaluating educational game-based interventions, this study aims to generate practical, evidence-based insights for enhancing instructional effectiveness in Islamic education. This research does not merely explore the potential of educational games in enhancing learning outcomes but also seeks to provide practical solutions that can be applied within the context of Islamic Cultural History education at MI Roudlatul Huda Bibrik Jiwan Madiun.

Furthermore, by utilizing a CAR approach, this research strengthens the role of teachers as agents of change in the learning process. Teachers actively participate in designing, executing, and assessing the effectiveness of educational games as a teaching strategy. This engagement provides educators with opportunities to develop their skills and expand their knowledge of innovative instructional techniques. The study also aims to foster a dynamic, interactive, and enjoyable learning environment for students, ultimately making Islamic Cultural History more accessible and engaging. The research findings offer valuable insights for educators and institutions seeking to integrate game-based learning strategies to improve teaching effectiveness. Additionally, this study contributes to the broader discourse on Islamic education, particularly in examining the application of educational games within the framework of Islamic Cultural History at the elementary level. By systematically investigating the role of educational games in Islamic Cultural History, this research pursues a well-defined objective of assessing their impact on student learning outcomes. Through the implementation of CAR, the study is expected to yield significant contributions in addressing existing pedagogical challenges and enhancing the overall learning experience for students. Ultimately, the research findings will provide practical recommendations for integrating educational games as an effective instructional strategy, ensuring that students at MI Roudlatul Huda Bibrik Jiwan Madiun can develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of Islamic Cultural History in an engaging and interactive manner.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Islamic Religious Education plays a crucial role in shaping students' understanding and appreciation of Islamic teachings (Abdullah, 2015; Mama, 2020; Hasmar, 2020). Within the educational curriculum, this subject aims to develop students' comprehension of Islamic principles and enhance their appreciation of the values embedded in these teachings. Previous research has indicated that a strong understanding and appreciation of Islam positively influence students' moral development, ethical conduct, and attitudes in daily life (Asmira, 2024). MI Roudlatul Huda Bibrik Jiwan Madiun is an educational institution committed to providing high-quality Islamic education.

As an Islamic school, MI Roudlatul Huda Bibrik Jiwan Madiun has a central role in ensuring the success of the learning process. With a particular focus on Islamic Cultural History, the school is responsible for delivering knowledge about historical events, prominent figures, and values within Islamic civilization to students. However, given the complexity of Islamic Cultural History as a subject, there is a need for more engaging and effective teaching strategies to improve student learning outcomes.

Furthermore, the use of educational games has gained significant traction in the field of education (Hasan, 2018; Romsi et al., 2024; Ulya & Arifi, 2021). Educational games provide an interactive and enjoyable learning approach that enhances student engagement and interest in the learning process (Fatimah & Slamet, 2022; Jalil, 2024; Utami, 2020). These games serve as a powerful tool for reinforcing students' understanding of historical events, important figures, and the values embedded in Islamic civilization, particularly in the context of Islamic Cultural History. By integrating educational games into the learning process, students become actively involved in their education, acquire knowledge in an engaging manner, and develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter (Rofiqoh, 2021; Slaet & Basthomi, 2024; Suwarti, 2016).

In Islamic Cultural History education, educational games can enrich students' learning experiences by presenting historical content in an interactive manner (Afriani, 2018; Nuurain, 2016). For example, educational games can incorporate virtual simulations of historical events, allowing students to experience firsthand the situations and contexts related to Islamic civilization. This interactive approach helps students visualize historical narratives, making abstract concepts more concrete and memorable. Additionally, educational games can introduce students to significant figures in Islamic history through character-based gameplay, enabling them to understand the roles and contributions of these individuals in shaping Islamic culture (Apriliana, 2016; Ernawati, 2017; Hidayati, 2023; Slamet, 2024; Slamet & Sulistyaningsih, 2021). Through role-playing scenarios or decision-making exercises embedded within these games, students can explore historical dilemmas, analyze different perspectives, and develop critical thinking skills.

The implementation of educational games in Islamic Cultural History education also plays a vital role in reinforcing students' understanding of core Islamic values. Through interactive gameplay, students can learn about ethics, morality, tolerance, justice, and other essential values that are integral to Islamic culture. Unlike traditional rote memorization methods, educational games offer a hands-on learning experience where students can apply these values in simulated real-life scenarios. This practical application fosters a deeper internalization of Islamic principles, encouraging students to integrate these values into their daily lives. For instance, a game focusing on the principles of justice in Islamic history could challenge students to make ethical decisions, helping them develop a moral compass guided by Islamic teachings.

In the context of Islamic Cultural History education at MI Roudlatul Huda Bibrik Jiwan Madiun, incorporating educational games as an alternative teaching method represents an innovative step toward improving student comprehension. Traditional lecture-based approaches often struggle to maintain student interest and engagement, particularly in subjects that require extensive historical analysis. By adopting a more interactive and enjoyable learning approach, educational games can capture students' attention, stimulate their curiosity, and encourage active participation in the learning process. Research has shown that students who engage with educational games demonstrate higher levels of motivation, improved retention of information, and greater enthusiasm for learning (Fatimah & Slamet, 2022; Slamet et al., 2024a, 2024b; Utami, 2020). Moreover, educational games promote collaborative learning and social interaction among students. Many games incorporate team-based challenges that require students to work together, communicate effectively, and strategize to achieve common learning objectives. This cooperative learning environment fosters teamwork and problem-

solving skills, preparing students for real-world situations where collaboration is essential. Additionally, educational games often provide immediate feedback, allowing students to recognize their mistakes and make corrections in real time. This continuous reinforcement enhances the learning experience, helping students retain knowledge more effectively and build a strong foundation in Islamic Cultural History.

Despite the promising benefits of educational games, their integration into the curriculum requires careful planning and research to assess their impact on student learning outcomes. Effective implementation depends on selecting games that align with educational objectives, ensuring that they complement rather than replace traditional teaching methods. Teachers play a crucial role in facilitating game-based learning, guiding students through the content, and helping them make meaningful connections between the game experience and the historical material being studied. Additionally, it is essential to consider the cognitive and developmental levels of students when designing or selecting educational games, ensuring that they are appropriately challenging and educationally enriching. Given these considerations, further research is necessary to explore the long-term impact of educational games on student achievement in Islamic Cultural History. While existing studies have highlighted the potential of game-based learning in general education, there remains a gap in research focusing specifically on its application in Islamic education at the elementary level. By conducting in-depth studies on the effectiveness of educational games, educators and policymakers can gain valuable insights into best practices for integrating interactive learning tools in Islamic Religious Education. This research will also contribute to the broader discourse on innovative pedagogical strategies, emphasizing the importance of adapting teaching methods to meet the needs of 21st-century learners.

To date, the use of educational games in Islamic Cultural History education at MI Roudlatul Huda Bibrik Jiwan Madiun offers a promising approach to enhancing student engagement, comprehension, and motivation. By making learning more interactive and enjoyable, these games provide students with a dynamic educational experience that goes beyond passive memorization. The ability of educational games to simulate historical events, introduce key figures, and reinforce Islamic values makes them a valuable tool for enriching the curriculum. Additionally, their capacity to foster collaboration, critical thinking, and ethical reasoning further underscores their educational significance. Moving forward, it is essential to continue exploring innovative teaching strategies that align with the evolving needs of students, ensuring that Islamic Cultural History education remains both meaningful and impactful in shaping students' understanding of their religious and cultural heritage.

METHOD

Research Design and Participants

This study adopted a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design as the primary approach. This design was chosen because it allowed for direct intervention in the learning process of Islamic Cultural History at MI Roudlatul Huda Bibrik Jiwan Madiun. Through CAR, the researcher systematically and continuously observed and analyzed the impact of educational games on students' learning outcomes. The cyclical nature of CAR enabled an iterative process of planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting, ensuring that the intervention was adjusted and refined based on the emerging findings. This approach also provided a structured framework for assessing changes in student engagement, participation, and comprehension over multiple instructional cycles.

The participants of this study consisted of 30 fourth-grade students at MI Roudlatul Huda Bibrik Jiwan Madiun who were enrolled in the Islamic Cultural History subject during the 2021/2022

academic year. The selection of participants was determined through coordination with the school, considering both institutional agreements and the availability of student data. The students represented a diverse range of learning abilities, making them suitable subjects for evaluating the effectiveness of educational games in enhancing comprehension and engagement. By focusing on this specific group, the study aimed to capture the direct impact of the intervention within a real classroom setting, ensuring that the findings were relevant and applicable to similar educational environments.

Data Collection Instruments

Multiple instruments were utilized to ensure a comprehensive assessment of students' learning progress and classroom dynamics during the intervention.

- *Pre-Test:* A pre-test was conducted before the intervention to measure students' initial understanding of the Islamic Cultural History material. This assessment served as a baseline for evaluating the effectiveness of the educational games in improving student comprehension. The pre-test questions covered fundamental concepts, key historical events, and the significance of important figures in Islamic civilization.

- *Classroom Observation:* Observations were carried out to monitor student interactions, engagement levels, and participation during the learning sessions that incorporated educational games. A structured observation guide was used to document specific aspects such as student enthusiasm, collaboration, responsiveness, and the nature of interactions between peers and teachers. The observations provided qualitative insights into the impact of the intervention beyond test scores.

- *Post-Test:* After the intervention, a post-test was administered to assess the improvement in students' learning outcomes. The post-test mirrored the pre-test in terms of content and complexity, allowing for a direct comparison of students' performance before and after the implementation of educational games.

Research Procedure

The study followed a structured procedure, divided into three key phases: preparation, intervention, and evaluation.

- *Preparation Phase:* The researcher collaborated with school administrators and teachers to obtain permission and establish agreements regarding the integration of educational games into the Islamic Cultural History curriculum. In this phase, the researcher also developed data collection instruments, formulated observation guidelines, and ensured that the educational games aligned with the learning objectives. Additionally, the preparation involved selecting and modifying game-based learning tools to match the instructional content, ensuring their suitability for the targeted age group and subject matter.

- *Intervention Phase:* The educational games were introduced as a teaching strategy in the Islamic Cultural History lessons. During the implementation, the researcher closely observed student participation, engagement, and interactions to document behavioral and cognitive responses to the learning activities. The intervention was designed to integrate interactive storytelling, role-playing elements, and problem-solving challenges within the educational games, making the historical content more immersive and relatable for students. The researcher also facilitated discussions and reflections to reinforce the key lessons derived from the gaming experience.

- *Evaluation Phase:* Following the completion of the intervention, the post-test was administered to measure students' academic progress. The test results were analyzed to determine the extent of improvement in students' comprehension of Islamic Cultural History. Statistical comparisons between pre-test and post-test scores were conducted to identify any significant differences in learning outcomes. Additionally, qualitative reflections from classroom observations were reviewed to assess changes in student engagement and motivation.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a well-rounded interpretation of the study's findings.

- *Qualitative Analysis:* Classroom observation data were analyzed thematically to identify patterns in student engagement, collaboration, and behavioral changes throughout the intervention. This analysis helped in understanding how students interacted with the educational games and how these interactions influenced their learning experience. Specific attention was given to students' expressions of enthusiasm, willingness to participate, and problem-solving approaches within the game-based learning environment.

- *Quantitative Analysis:* The pre-test and post-test scores were statistically examined to measure the impact of the educational games on students' learning outcomes. A paired-sample statistical test was conducted to determine whether there was a significant improvement in students' scores after the intervention. This analysis provided empirical evidence on the effectiveness of the educational games in enhancing comprehension and retention of historical knowledge.

Research Ethics

The study adhered to ethical research principles, ensuring the confidentiality of student data and securing informed consent from the school administration and parents before conducting the research. Ethical considerations included transparency in communicating the research objectives, procedures, and potential benefits to all stakeholders. Students and their guardians were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without facing any negative consequences. Additionally, the study maintained anonymity in reporting findings, ensuring that no individual participant could be identified from the research results. Throughout the research process, ethical guidelines were strictly followed to uphold the integrity of the study and protect the rights and well-being of the participants.

RESULTS

This CAR was conducted in two cycles at MI Roudlatul Huda Bibrik Jiwan Madiun to examine the impact of educational games on students' learning outcomes in Islamic Cultural History. A total of 30 fourth-grade students participated in the study. The research involved an initial pre-test to assess students' prior knowledge, followed by two cycles of intervention where educational games were incorporated into the learning process. Each cycle concluded with a post-test to measure improvements in students' comprehension and engagement. The findings from this study are analyzed and discussed in detail below.

Pre-Test: Students' Initial Understanding

Before implementing the intervention, a pre-test was conducted to determine students' baseline knowledge of the subject. The test covered fundamental concepts of Islamic Cultural History,

including key historical events, prominent figures, and significant contributions of Islamic civilization.

The results of the pre-test revealed that students' understanding was relatively low, with an average score of 65%. This indicates that most students struggled with the subject matter, likely due to conventional teaching methods that did not effectively engage them. Some students demonstrated basic recognition of major historical events, but they struggled with deeper comprehension, such as the causes and effects of historical developments and the contributions of key figures in Islamic history.

Furthermore, classroom observations during the pre-test indicated that many students lacked enthusiasm and motivation. Several students completed the test quickly without carefully considering their answers, suggesting a lack of intrinsic engagement with the subject. These findings underscore the need for an innovative instructional approach to enhance student learning experiences.

Cycle 1: Implementation of Educational Games

Intervention: Introducing "Kesatria Sejarah Islam"

In the first cycle, an educational game titled *Kesatria Sejarah Islam* (Islamic History Knights) was introduced to make learning more engaging. This game was designed as a quiz-based competition where students answered questions about Islamic history to earn points and progress through different levels. The game encouraged collaborative learning by dividing students into teams, fostering peer interaction and discussion. The instructional process began with a brief review of key concepts, after which students participated in the game. The competitive element of the game encouraged students to pay close attention, as they were eager to earn points and outperform their peers. Additionally, students who struggled with certain topics received support from their teammates, reinforcing cooperative learning.

Classroom Observations: Student Participation and Engagement

Observations during Cycle 1 showed a notable increase in student engagement compared to traditional lecture-based methods. Students actively participated, eagerly answering questions, and demonstrating enthusiasm in discussing historical events. The interactive nature of the game helped students retain information more effectively. Moreover, students who were previously passive during lessons showed more interest. For instance, some students who had difficulty grasping abstract historical concepts found it easier to understand events when they were presented as part of an interactive game. The competitive yet collaborative structure of *Kesatria Sejarah Islam* encouraged teamwork and reinforced positive learning behaviors. However, some challenges were noted. While many students were engaged, a few remained hesitant to participate, possibly due to a lack of confidence. Additionally, some students focused more on the competitive aspect rather than fully comprehending the historical material.

Post-Test Results: Measuring Improvement

Assessing the impact of the intervention requires a comprehensive evaluation of student performance before and after its implementation. In this study, a post-test was conducted at the conclusion of Cycle 1 to measure any improvements in student learning outcomes. The post-test serves as a critical tool for determining the extent to which the intervention has influenced student comprehension and retention of the subject matter. By comparing the post-test results with the initial assessments, valuable insights can be gained regarding the effectiveness of the instructional approach.

This evaluation not only highlights the progress made by students but also provides a foundation for further instructional refinements and future research.

Table 1. Results of Pre-test and Cycle 1

Student	Pre-Test	Cycle 1
Student 1	65	75
Student 2	70	80
Student 3	60	70
Student 4	75	85
Student 5	80	85
Student 6	55	65
Student 7	70	75
Student 8	65	75
Student 9	75	80
Student 10	70	80
Student 11	60	65
Student 12	80	85
Student 13	75	80
Student 14	65	70
Student 15	70	75
Student 16	60	65
Student 17	80	85
Student 18	75	80
Student 19	70	75
Student 20	65	70
Student 21	80	85
Student 22	75	80
Student 23	70	75
Student 24	65	70
Student 25	80	85
Student 26	75	80
Student 27	70	75
Student 28	65	70
Student 29	80	85
Student 30	75	80

The findings of this study reveal a notable improvement in students' learning outcomes following the implementation of educational games in the teaching of Islamic Cultural History. The pre-test results indicated an average student score of 70, serving as a baseline for assessing their initial understanding. Upon completing Cycle 1, the average score increased to 77.5, reflecting a 7.5-point improvement, equivalent to an approximate 10.7% increase from the initial assessment. A more detailed examination of individual student performance highlights significant progress among several students. For instance, Student 1 demonstrated a remarkable improvement of 10 points, translating to a 15.4% increase in their score. Similarly, Student 2 exhibited a 10-point gain, marking a 14.3% improvement, while Student 4 also experienced a substantial enhancement, with their score increasing by 10 points, representing a 13.3% growth. These findings underscore the positive impact of gamification in fostering student engagement and comprehension. Overall, the integration of educational games into Islamic Cultural History instruction has contributed to substantial academic progress. The rise in student scores in Cycle 1 suggests an overall improvement in comprehension, indicating that students were better able to grasp and retain historical concepts through interactive learning. While further analysis is required in Cycle 2 to validate and expand upon these findings, the

preliminary results demonstrate the potential of educational games as an effective pedagogical tool. It is anticipated that continued implementation in Cycle 2 will yield even more pronounced improvements in student learning outcomes, reinforcing the value of game-based learning strategies in enhancing historical literacy.

Cycle 2: Refining the Intervention

Reflection on Cycle 1 and Adjustments

After the first cycle, a structured reflection session was conducted with both students and teachers to collect comprehensive feedback on the effectiveness of the game-based learning approach. Students overwhelmingly expressed enthusiasm for the interactive format; however, some noted that certain questions were too simplistic or repetitive, which limited their ability to engage in deeper critical thinking. Teachers observed a noticeable increase in student participation and motivation, yet they also highlighted a concern that some students were more focused on winning the game rather than truly internalizing the historical concepts. Additionally, while the competitive aspect stimulated excitement, it sometimes overshadowed collaborative learning and meaningful discussions.

In response to these insights, several modifications were implemented in Cycle 2 to enhance cognitive engagement and ensure a more balanced learning experience. The intervention was refined to incorporate higher-order thinking questions that required analysis and synthesis of historical events rather than mere recall of facts. More complex historical scenarios were introduced, prompting students to evaluate cause-and-effect relationships and draw connections between different time periods. To foster deeper understanding, structured group discussions were added after each game round, allowing students to articulate their reasoning, justify their choices, and engage in peer-to-peer learning. Furthermore, students were encouraged to explain their answers in detail rather than simply selecting the correct option, reinforcing comprehension and critical thinking while maintaining the interactive and enjoyable nature of the learning process.

Classroom Observations: Deepening Comprehension

Observations in Cycle 2 showed an even greater improvement in student engagement and comprehension. Students were more confident in articulating their thoughts, and class discussions became richer. The modifications in the game mechanics encouraged critical thinking, as students now had to justify their answers, which strengthened their understanding of historical events. Moreover, previously hesitant students became more active participants. The structured discussions after each round of the game provided them with a safe space to clarify their thoughts and build confidence. The integration of complex questions also helped bridge the gap between memorization and analytical thinking.

Post-Test Results: Significant Progress

The post-test conducted at the end of Cycle 1 served as a crucial indicator of student progress following the implementation of the intervention. This assessment aimed to measure the extent of improvement in students' understanding and retention of the material compared to their initial performance. By analyzing the post-test results, a clearer picture emerges regarding the effectiveness of the instructional strategy, offering insights into areas of growth and potential refinements for future learning activities. The significance of this evaluation lies in its ability to provide empirical evidence on the impact of the intervention, reinforcing the role of innovative teaching methods in enhancing student engagement and academic achievement.

Table 2. Results of the Tests

Student	Pre-Test	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
Student 1	65	75	85
Student 2	70	80	90
Student 3	60	70	80
Student 4	75	85	90
Student 5	80	85	95
Student 6	55	65	70
Student 7	70	75	80
Student 8	65	75	80
Student 9	75	80	85
Student 10	70	80	85
Student 11	60	65	70
Student 12	80	85	90
Student 13	75	80	85
Student 14	65	70	75
Student 15	70	75	80
Student 16	60	65	70
Student 17	80	85	90
Student 18	75	80	85
Student 19	70	75	80
Student 20	65	70	75
Student 21	80	85	90
Student 22	75	80	85
Student 23	70	75	80
Student 24	65	70	75
Student 25	80	85	90
Student 26	75	80	85
Student 27	70	75	80
Student 28	65	70	75
Student 29	80	85	90
Student 30	75	80	85

The findings of this study indicate a significant improvement in students' learning outcomes in Islamic Cultural History after the implementation of educational games as a teaching strategy. The pre-test results revealed an average student score of 70, serving as a baseline to assess their initial comprehension. In Cycle 1, there was a substantial increase in students' academic performance, with the average score rising to 77.5, reflecting a 7.5-point improvement, equivalent to a 10.7% increase from the pre-test scores. This initial gain suggests that gamified learning methods successfully enhanced student engagement and comprehension of historical content. As the study progressed into Cycle 2, students demonstrated an additional increase in their performance, with the average score climbing to 82.5. This represents a further 5-point improvement (6.5%) from Cycle 1, emphasizing the cumulative effect of educational games in reinforcing students' understanding of Islamic Cultural History. Notably, several students exhibited considerable individual progress throughout the intervention. Student 1, for example, achieved an impressive total improvement of 20 points, corresponding to a 30.8% increase from the pre-test to Cycle 2. Likewise, Student 2 demonstrated a 20-point gain, marking a 28.6% improvement, and Student 4 recorded a 15-point enhancement, translating to a 20% increase in their overall performance. These substantial gains highlight the effectiveness of interactive learning techniques in fostering deeper engagement with historical narratives and concepts. However, not all students exhibited the same degree of progress. For instance, Student 11 experienced a more modest increase, with a 10-point gain (16.7%) from the pre-

test to Cycle 2. While this growth is still positive, it suggests that some students may require additional support or differentiated instructional approaches to fully benefit from game-based learning strategies. Despite these variations, the overall trend indicates that the majority of students experienced noteworthy advancements in their comprehension of Islamic Cultural History, reinforcing the pedagogical value of educational games in improving learning outcomes. The progression from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2 further supports the argument that educational games serve as an effective tool for fostering historical literacy. The initial improvements observed in Cycle 1 were consolidated and expanded in Cycle 2, demonstrating the long-term benefits of sustained gamified learning. Through interactive engagement, students not only developed a stronger grasp of historical events, key figures, and cultural values in Islamic history but also exhibited increased motivation and participation in the learning process.

From a pedagogical standpoint, these findings provide strong evidence that educational games can serve as a transformative instructional method in Islamic Cultural History, moving beyond passive knowledge transmission to active, student-centered learning. Traditional lecture-based approaches often struggle to maintain student engagement, particularly in subjects that require the internalization of complex historical narratives and abstract cultural values. By incorporating interactive learning strategies, educational games address these challenges by immersing students in contextualized scenarios where they must analyze historical events, make decisions, and engage in critical discussions. This hands-on approach promotes cognitive engagement, enhances recall through experiential learning, and encourages students to construct meaningful connections between historical events and their broader significance in Islamic civilization. The findings from this study reinforce that game-based learning is not merely an engaging supplement but a robust pedagogical strategy that directly contributes to academic success. The consistent improvement in test scores from the pre-test through Cycle 2 highlights that the structured integration of educational games fosters a more profound understanding of historical concepts. Unlike traditional rote memorization, which often leads to superficial knowledge retention, game-based learning encourages students to actively process information, apply their knowledge in problem-solving situations, and articulate their reasoning during group discussions. Moreover, the integration of higher-order thinking questions and scenario-based learning in Cycle 2 further strengthened students' analytical abilities, as they were required to interpret historical contexts, evaluate cause-and-effect relationships, and draw informed conclusions.

Overall, the incorporation of educational games into the teaching of Islamic Cultural History significantly enhances student learning outcomes by promoting deeper comprehension, increased motivation, and sustained knowledge retention. The findings suggest that gamification not only facilitates engagement but also cultivates essential academic skills such as critical thinking, collaborative learning, and independent inquiry. This study underscores the need for continued refinement of game-based learning strategies, ensuring that they align with curriculum objectives while maintaining a balance between entertainment and rigorous educational content. By leveraging the cognitive and social benefits of gamification, educators can create a more dynamic and effective learning environment that fosters long-term academic success in Islamic education.

DISCUSSION

The study aimed to examine the impact of educational games on students' learning outcomes in Islamic Cultural History at MI Roudlatul Huda Bibrik Jiwan Madiun. The findings indicate that educational games significantly enhance students' understanding of historical concepts, figures, and cultural values in Islamic civilization. This aligns with previous research by Slamet et al (2024a) and Slamet and Mukminatien (2024), who found that integrating game-based learning into education fosters student engagement and motivation. In the context of Islamic Cultural History, where abstract historical narratives often pose comprehension challenges, educational games provide an interactive

and immersive alternative that facilitates deeper learning. The study further corroborates existing literature suggesting that alternative teaching strategies, such as educational games, contribute to improved learning outcomes (Romsi et al., 2024; Wahyuni, 2024; Widodo et al., 2022). The increase in students' scores from the pre-test to Cycle 2 demonstrates a clear trajectory of enhanced comprehension and retention following the implementation of game-based learning approaches (Ernawati, 2017; Hidayati, 2024; Slamet & Basthomi, 2024).

The data collected throughout the study reflects a progressive improvement in students' academic performance. During the pre-test, students exhibited a baseline average score of 70, indicating a moderate understanding of the subject matter. Following the implementation of educational games in Cycle 1, the average student score rose to 77.5, representing a 7.5-point increase (10.7%). This initial surge suggests that the integration of interactive learning methods successfully engaged students and improved their grasp of historical content. The momentum continued into Cycle 2, where students' average scores further increased to 82.5, marking an additional 5-point improvement (6.5%) over Cycle 1. These figures demonstrate that game-based learning not only offers short-term cognitive gains but also fosters sustained improvement in comprehension over time. A closer examination of individual student performance highlights varied levels of improvement. Some students showed exceptionally high progress, while others experienced more moderate gains. For instance, Student 1 demonstrated a remarkable 20-point increase (30.8%) from pre-test to Cycle 2, while Student 2 achieved an equivalent 20-point gain (28.6%). Similarly, Student 4 recorded a substantial 15-point improvement (20%). These figures illustrate that for a significant portion of the student population, game-based learning is an effective tool for reinforcing knowledge and enhancing critical thinking skills. However, there were also students who displayed lower yet still positive growth patterns. Student 11, for instance, exhibited a more modest 10-point increase (16.7%), suggesting that while the game-based approach was beneficial, some students may require additional support or differentiated instruction to maximize their learning potential. These findings support previous studies by Ulya and Arifi (2021) and Slamet and Fatima (2022), which emphasize that educational games, when implemented effectively, serve as an engaging instructional tool that fosters increased student participation and interest in learning. This is particularly important in Islamic Cultural History, a subject that relies heavily on textual sources and chronological narratives, which can sometimes be challenging for students to internalize (Apriliana, 2016; Mubin, 2018; Suwarti, 2016). By incorporating educational games into the curriculum, students were able to actively interact with historical content, visualize complex events, and engage in collaborative problem-solving, all of which contributed to enhanced retention and understanding. Furthermore, the interactive nature of these games helped cultivate critical thinking skills, historical inquiry, and analytical reasoning, essential competencies for interpreting historical events beyond rote memorization.

Additionally, this study underscores the pedagogical value of educational games in fostering a dynamic and participatory learning environment. Traditional methods of teaching Islamic Cultural History, which often involve lectures and textbook-based instruction, may not always align with the diverse learning preferences of students. The integration of educational games as an alternative instructional strategy provided students with an opportunity to experience historical events in a more engaging and tangible manner. This aligns with findings by Makarim (2024), and Slamet & Fatimah (2022), who emphasized that alternative instructional techniques, such as gamified learning, positively influence student performance and motivation. Moreover, the study reveals that the positive impact of educational games extends beyond knowledge acquisition. The structured yet interactive nature of these games allowed students to develop key soft skills, such as teamwork, strategic thinking, and decision-making. By engaging in collaborative tasks, role-playing activities, and historical simulations, students were not only absorbing historical facts but also internalizing the broader cultural, social, and ethical dimensions of Islamic history. This experiential learning approach resonates with the constructivist perspective, which suggests that students construct knowledge more

effectively when they actively engage with the material rather than passively receiving information. The steady improvement in student performance from pre-test to Cycle 2 further suggests that educational games can serve as a long-term instructional enhancement rather than a one-time intervention. Given the consistent upward trend in student scores, it is evident that gamified learning not only initiates immediate cognitive engagement but also reinforces knowledge retention over time. This is a crucial finding, as it highlights the sustainability of game-based learning as an educational tool that can be integrated into broader pedagogical frameworks (Afriani, 2018; Hidayati et al., 2023; Musfa'ah et al., 2022; Widodo & Slamet, 2020, 2021, 2022).

The implications of these findings are significant within the context of Islamic education, particularly in the teaching of historical and cultural subjects. As this study provides empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of educational games, it lays the groundwork for future research exploring the optimization of game-based learning models in religious education. Specifically, further studies could examine which types of educational games yield the highest learning gains, the optimal duration and frequency of gameplay in instructional settings, and the long-term cognitive and motivational impacts of game-based learning in historical education. By refining and expanding upon these insights, educators and curriculum developers can design more effective and engaging instructional strategies tailored to the needs of diverse learners.

Overall, this study highlights the transformative role of educational games in enhancing student learning outcomes in Islamic Cultural History. The findings demonstrate that gamified learning significantly improves student comprehension, fosters engagement, and supports deeper historical inquiry. As a pedagogical strategy, educational games provide an innovative and effective alternative to traditional teaching methods, ensuring that students are not only absorbing historical information but also actively engaging with and internalizing the cultural and ethical dimensions of Islamic civilization. Given these positive results, it is recommended that educational institutions integrate game-based learning into their curriculum to maximize student understanding, promote active participation, and cultivate a lifelong appreciation for Islamic history and heritage.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the integration of educational games in teaching Islamic Cultural History at MI Roudlatul Huda Bibrik Jiwan Madiun has a significant positive impact on students' comprehension. This aligns with previous research highlighting the role of game-based learning in enhancing student engagement and motivation. The results suggest that incorporating alternative instructional strategies, such as educational games, into Islamic education curricula can make learning more interactive, engaging, and participatory. By actively involving students in historical simulations, role-playing, and problem-solving activities, educational games help reinforce their understanding of historical events, key figures, and cultural values in Islamic civilization. Moreover, this approach transforms passive learning into an experiential process, where students not only absorb historical knowledge but also develop critical thinking, collaboration, and analytical skills. However, while this study contributes valuable insights, certain limitations must be acknowledged. The research was conducted in a single Islamic educational institution and focused exclusively on comprehension-based learning outcomes. Therefore, broader generalizations should be made with caution, and future research should explore how game-based learning influences other aspects of student development, such as ethical reasoning, historical empathy, and spiritual values.

To build upon these findings, Islamic educational institutions and educators are encouraged to consider game-based learning as an effective pedagogical tool for teaching Islamic Cultural History. Designing well-structured, contextually relevant, and interactive games can further enhance students' understanding and retention of complex historical narratives. Additionally, further research

could investigate the long-term impact and sustainability of educational games in religious education. Exploring their influence on students' moral development, ethical decision-making, and behavioral attitudes toward historical learning would provide a more holistic understanding of their pedagogical value. Furthermore, studies could examine the integration of digital game-based learning with traditional teaching methods to create a balanced and comprehensive educational approach. By doing so, educators can foster a more engaging, meaningful, and transformative learning experience, ensuring that students not only gain historical knowledge but also internalize the cultural and moral lessons embedded within Islamic history.

AKNOWLEDGMENTS

REFERENCES

Afriani, A. (2018). *Implementasi strategi board games pada mata pelajaran sejarah kebudayaan Islam dalam meningkatkan pemahaman dan kemampuan berpikir siswa di MTs NU Ibtidaul Falah Dawe Kudus tahun pelajaran 207/2018* (Doctoral dissertation, IAIN KUDUS).

Apriliana, A. C. (2016). *Pengaruh self efficacy dan minat belajar terhadap prestasi belajar siswa kelas X pada mata pelajaran sejarah kebudayaan Islam di MAN Prambon tahun pelajaran 2015/2016* (Doctoral dissertation, IAIN Kediri).

Asmira, M. (2024). The role of information technology in teaching English to Islamic higher education learners: Assessing digital literacy skills. *English Language and Literature in Education Journal*, *2*(2), 74-88. https://doi.org/10.63011/thakjg96

Ernawati, R. (2017). *Pengaruh metode kerja kelompok terhadap hasil belajar siswa pada mata pelajaran Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam kelas XI IPS di MAN 2 Lombok Tengah tahun pelajaran 2016/2017* (Doctoral dissertation, UIN Mataram).

Fatimah, S., Elzamzami, A. B., & Slamet, J. (2020). Item analysis of final test for the 9th grade students of SMPN 44 Surabaya in the academic year of 2019/2020. *JournEEL (Journal of English Education and Literature)*, *2*(1), 34-46.

Fermina, F. (2021). *Pelaksanaan pembelajaran dengan metode edutainment pada mata pelajaran sejarah kebudayaan Islam* (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Muhammadiyah Palangkaraya).

Harahap, M. S. (2020). *Meningkatkan motivasi belajar siswa melalui strategi pembelajaran spasial visual flash card pada mata pelajaran sejarah kebudayaan Islam materi dinasti Umayyah kelas VII MTs Al-Jam'iyatul* (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara).

Hasmar, A. H. (2020). Problematika pembelajaran sejarah kebudayaan Islam di madrasah. *Jurnal MUDARRISUNA: Media Kajian Pendidikan Agama Islam*, *10*(1), 15-33.

Hayat, S. (2021). *Kesulitan belajar daring siswa kelas X Mipa pada mata pelajaran Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam di MAN Kota Surabaya* (Doctoral dissertation, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya).

Hidayati, D. (2023). Assessment of project-based learning: Evaluating its impact on students' writing proficiency and academic outcomes. *English Language and Literature in Education Journal*, *1*(1), 1-11. https://doi.org/10.63011/ep6nnx37

Hidayati, D. (2024). Integrating student self-assessment as a key instrument for achieving need-supportive learning outcomes. *English Language and Literature in Education Journal*, *2*(2), 24-41. https://doi.org/10.63011/jxnqsj70

Hidayati, D., Novianti, H., Khansa, M., Slamet, J., & Suryati, N. (2023). Effectiveness project-based learning in ESP class: Viewed from Indonesian students' learning outcomes. *International Journal of Information and Education Technology*, *13*(3), 558-565.

Jalil, A. (2024). The SQ3R method for enhancing reading comprehension among 8th-grade students at SMP Islam Insan Kamil Wonoayu. *English Language and Literature in Education Journal*, *2*(2), 89-105. https://doi.org/10.63011/fj1ayc38

Makarim, M. N. (2024). Enhancing speaking skills through guessing games: A study on descriptive texts at SMP Sunan Ampel Porong. *English Language and Literature in Education Journal*, *2*(1), 40-52. https://doi.org/10.63011/xqkamd21

Mama, N. (2020). *Strategi guru dalam meningkatkan motivasi belajar siswa di MTs Putri Ma'arif Ponorogo pada mata pelajaran sejarah kebudayaan Islam* (Doctoral dissertation, IAIN Ponorogo).

Mubin, M. (2018). *Pengaruh pemberian motivasi guru terhadap hasil belajar siswa pada mata pelajaran sejarah kebudayaan Islam di MA Ma'arif 1 Punggur* (Doctoral dissertation, IAIN Metro).

Musafa'ah, A. (2023). Improving the ability of the 6th grade students at SDN Petemon X/358 Surabaya to write descriptive texts using four-square technique. *English Language and Literature in Education Journal*, *1*(1), 35-43. https://doi.org/10.63011/byn00j25

Musfa'ah, A., Slamet, J., & Arbi, A. P. (2022). Pelatihan pembuatan video pembelajaran berbasis KineMaster untuk pendidik di SDN Petemon X/358 Surabaya. *Jurnal Abdidas*, *3*(4), 748-755.

Nurain, R. Y. (2016). *Pemilihan strategi pembelajaran sebagai upaya guru sejarah kebudayaan Islam dalam meningkatkan motivasi belajar siswa kelas VII Di MTs Miftahul Huda Ngreco, Kandat, Kab. Kediri Tahun Pembelajaran 2015-2016* (Doctoral dissertation, IAIN Kediri).

Ulya, A., & Arifi, A. (2021). Media game edukasi Quizizz dalam pembelajaran sejarah kebudayaan islam sebagai upaya meningkatkan hasil belajar siswa. *Edulab: Majalah Ilmiah Laboratorium Pendidikan*, *6*(1), 80-94.

Rofiqoh, A. P. (2021). *Upaya peningkatan hasil belajar siswa pada mata pelajaran sejarah kebudayaan Islam menggunakan aplikasi Quizizz di Kelas XI semester genap MA Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo tahun ajaran 2020/2021 (Ptk Online)* (Doctoral dissertation, IAIN PONOROGO).

Romsi, A., Widodo, J. P., & Slamet, J. (2024). Empowering slow learners: Gamification's impact on students' engagement and academic performance in an LMS for undergraduate students. *International Journal of Information and Education Technology*, *14*(2). https://doi.org/10.18178/ijiet.2024.14.2.2040

Slamet, J. (2024). Potential of ChatGPT as a digital language learning assistant: EFL teachers' and students' perceptions. *Discover Artificial Intelligence*, *4*(1), 46. https://doi.org/10.1007/s44163-024-00143-2

Slamet, J., & Basthomi, Y. (2024). Assessing gamification-based LMS for EFL students: A self-directed learning framework. *Studies in Linguistics, Culture & FLT*, *12*(2). https://doi.org/10.46687/CVHT3942

Slamet, J., Basthomi, Y., Ivone, F. M., & Eliyanah, E. (2024a). Unlocking the potential in a gamification-based MOOC: Assessing autonomous learning and self-directed learning behaviors. *Teaching and Learning Inquiry*, *12*, 1–20. https://doi.org/10.20343/teachlearninqu.12.19

Slamet, J., Basthomi, Y., Ivone, F. M., & Eliyanah, E. (2024b). Utilizing an SDL approach in designing a gamification-based MOOC to enhance autonomous learning. *Journal of Information Technology Education: Research*, 23, Article 10. https://doi.org/10.28945/5278

Slamet, J., Basthomi, Y., Ivone, F. M., & Eliyanah, E. (2025). Promoting autonomous learning in ESP courses through a gamified MOOC platform: A self-directed learning framework. *Journal of Educators Online*, *22*(2). https://doi.org/10.9743/JEO.2025.22.2.7

Slamet, J., & Fatimah, S. (2022). Quizizz application-based English learning materials assessment instrument development. In *International Conference on Art, Design, Education and Cultural Studies (ICADECS)* (Vol. 4, No. 1).

Slamet, J., & Mukminatien, N. (2024). Developing an online formative assessment instrument for listening skill through LMS. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, *17*(1), 188-211. Retrieved from https://so04.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/LEARN/article/view/270382

Slamet, J., & Sulistyaningsih, S. (2021). Students' difficulties in answering "structure and written expression" TOEFL-like at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo. *E-Structural*, *4*(01), 17-27.

Suwarti, N. (2016). *Pembelajaran berbasis edutainment pada mata pelajaran sejarah kebudayaan Islam di madrasah aliyah negeri 3 Banyumas* (Doctoral dissertation, IAIN Purwokerto).

Wahyuni, D. S. (2024). Utilizing Facebook for teaching speaking skills through student activities in recount texts. *English Language and Literature in Education Journal*, *2*(1), 31-39. https://doi.org/10.63011/4ajv6523

Widodo, J. P., & Slamet, J. (2020). Students' perception towards Google Classroom as e-learning tool (A case study of master of English education of the second semester at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo). *Magister Scientiae*, *2*(48), 99-109.

Widodo, J. P., & Slamet, J. (2021, December). Lecturers' perspectives through e-learning by using Moodle for post-graduate students at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo. In *International Seminar on Language, Education, and Culture (ISoLEC 2021)* (pp. 167-171). Atlantis Press.

Widodo, J. P., & Slamet, J. (2022, January). Developing LMS through Moodle in teaching 'article writing for journal' for post graduate students. In *2nd International Conference on Education and Technology (ICETECH 2021)* (pp. 7-13). Atlantis Press.

Wulandari, I. (2016). Penerapan model teams games tournament (TGT) menggunakan media teka-teki silang dalam pembelajaran sejarah untuk meningkatkan keaktifan dan hasil belajar siswa kelas X2 di sma islam 1 Surakarta tahun pelajaran 2014/2015.