

The Implementation of Traditional Game in Enhancing Students' Motivation

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the implementation of traditional games in English learning and their impact on student motivation at SMPN 20 Kendari. A descriptive qualitative method was used with purposive sampling, involving class 7F students as research subjects. Data were collected through interviews and classroom observations, then analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results show that the Lengko-Lengko game significantly increases students' interest, attention, and participation in learning. The classroom becomes more interactive and enjoyable, encouraging teamwork, responsibility, and student confidence in discussions and asking questions. Beyond academic achievement, the game also strengthens character, promotes positive cultural values, and enhances social relationships among students. Lengko-Lengko proves to be an effective and innovative teaching method that can be applied not only in English lessons but also across other subjects to create meaningful and engaging learning experiences.

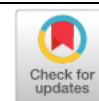
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INTRODUCTION

Teachers, as facilitators, play a crucial role in creating a comfortable and engaging learning environment. One key indicator of this role is the use of interesting and interactive learning media. Creative media not only captures students' attention but also enhances their motivation and participation. According to Muhaimin and Juandi (2023), "Learning media is a tool that can assist the process of transferring knowledge from teacher to student so that learning is more effective." Figna et al. (2020) also emphasize that effective media use positively impacts student comprehension and engagement. With the right tools, educators can design a more integrated and dynamic learning flow that supports both cognitive and emotional development.

Learning media are essential components in the educational process, serving as both physical and nonphysical tools to deliver content effectively, stimulate student engagement, and enhance learning outcomes. These media integrate visual, auditory, and kinesthetic elements, accommodating diverse learning styles and improving knowledge retention. Thalib et al. (2020) demonstrated that traditional game-based outdoor modules significantly foster prosocial behavior in early childhood. Similarly, Durratul Hikmah (2019) emphasized the motivational impact of digital media in language learning, while Petina et al. (2023) highlighted how instructional media promote interaction and creativity in teaching English to young learners. These studies collectively affirm the role of media in creating dynamic and engaging learning environments.

The value of educational media is found in its capacity to hold students' interest and make the content easier for them to comprehend. It is anticipated that the availability of

learning media as a tool would allow educators to design an integrated learning flow. In line with the importance of learning media in increasing the effectiveness of the knowledge transfer process, the aspect of student motivation is also a crucial factor in determining the success of learning. Recently, research conducted by Amrullah approved that traditional game approaches can help improve the effectiveness of students' motivation (Amrullah et al., 2023). According to Sudjana (2005), motivation in learning acts as a psychological drive that influences a person's learning success. Motivation can come from within the individual or from the external environment, such as teacher support and a conducive learning atmosphere.

Student motivation is an important issue in the learning process, because it directly affects students' engagement, persistence, and inclusive academic success (Steinmayr, 2019). Motivation can be divided into two main types, namely intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation, each of which has an important role in encouraging someone to achieve certain goals. Intrinsic motivation comes from within the individual and is driven by personal interest, satisfaction, or curiosity. According to Winkel (1996), intrinsic motivation occurs when someone does an activity because they feel happy and interested, not because of external rewards. Huffman, Vernoy & Vernoy (1997) also stated that intrinsic motivation is the drive to do something for personal satisfaction, without relying on external rewards or punishments.

Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, comes from external factors such as rewards, praise, or punishments. Huffman, Vernoy & Vernoy (1997) explained that extrinsic motivation occurs when someone does an action because of external encouragement, such as a reward or a desire to avoid punishment. Motivation is a critical factor in learning, influencing students' persistence, performance, and engagement. Intrinsic motivation, driven by psychological needs such as autonomy and competence, is particularly effective in promoting deep learning (Vu et al., 2021; Zajda, 2021). Strategies including meaningful feedback, supportive classroom environments, and adaptive teaching techniques have been shown to enhance motivation (Zhang et al., 2024; Hodges et al., 2020). The integration of technology and gamified learning further contributes to interactive and engaging educational experiences (Deterding et al., 2011).

Considering the role of motivation in learning, traditional games emerge as one approach that can support increased student engagement. According to Sujiono (2005), traditional games can develop children's cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects through meaningful play activities. When students feel happy and actively involved, their intrinsic motivation to learn will increase. Traditional games not only provide a fun learning experience, but also strengthen psychological factors that drive academic success. Traditional games also play a role in increasing intrinsic motivation and developing cognitive, social, and motor skills (Trajkovik et al., 2018; Hayati et al., 2017). Sudjana (2005) outlines five key aspects of student motivation: interest and attention to lessons, enthusiasm for task completion, independence and goal-setting, responsibility in fulfilling academic duties, and positive responses to teacher stimuli.

Based on previous research about the advantages of traditional games, it encouraged the researcher to look more deeply into traditional games in Southeast Sulawesi. According to Indah in the book entitled *Permainan Tradisional Bumi Anoa* (Sulawesi Tenggara), there are 38 traditional games and 17 of them are explained in detail based on research results in four districts or cities. Referring to this, the researcher conducted an observation related to the research in one of the junior high schools in Kendari and found that one of the teachers of English tried to implement a traditional game from the Buton tribe called *Lengko-lengko*. *Lengko-lengko* is a game of shaking a number of small snails in a coconut shell. In the Butonese language, *Lengko-lengko* means shaking. This game is usually played in groups. Each group consists of two people. The equipment needed is a coconut shell that is cut in half and a number of small sea snails.

This game is used as a learning medium in English subjects with the aim of increasing students' motivation through a fun and interactive local cultural approach. Although previous studies, such as those conducted by Trajkovik et al. (2018) and Adi et al. (2022), have

demonstrated the positive impact of traditional games on students' motivation and academic achievement in elementary school settings, there is a lack of empirical research focusing on the specific application of traditional games in the context of English language teaching. In particular, the specific impact of traditional games on students' motivation in learning English, especially in an educational setting such as in one of the junior high schools in Kendari, has not been extensively explored or documented. This study aims to fill this gap by providing a focused examination of how the traditional game *Lengko-lengko* enhances students' motivation in English classes.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method as outlined by Suardi (2023), emphasizing an in-depth analysis of observed phenomena through a descriptive approach to achieve a comprehensive understanding. The research design aims to analyze the implementation of traditional games by teachers in English learning to enhance students' learning motivation. This approach was selected for its effectiveness in capturing direct and detailed insights from practitioners, while also considering the limited time and resources available for the study.

Respondents

The sampling technique used in this study was purposive sampling, a method commonly applied in qualitative research. According to Stratton (2024), purposive sampling allows researchers to select participants based on specific characteristics, experiences, or criteria that align with the objectives of the study. In this research, the subjects were purposively selected from grade 7F students at SMPN 20 Kendari, as they were directly involved in learning activities that incorporated the traditional game *Lengko-lengko*. A total of fifteen students were chosen for interviews, as this number was considered sufficient to represent a range of perspectives and experiences within the class, enabling the researcher to obtain rich and meaningful data.

Instruments

The research instruments included participant observation and interview. Observations were conducted by recording interactions in class using observation guides and video recordings to ensure accuracy, while interview, were conducted to obtain students' responses regarding their learning motivation after participating in traditional games. The type of interview used in this study was a *semi-structured interview*, which involves open-ended questions guided by a flexible framework, allowing the researcher to explore participants' answers more deeply and adapt the conversation based on context.

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Procedures

Data collection in this study was carried out through two main stages: observation and interview. The researcher conducted direct observation in class 7F at SMPN 20 Kendari to examine how traditional games were implemented in the learning process, taking detailed notes using observation guides and video recordings to capture classroom dynamics and interactions more accurately. Subsequently, the researcher conducted semi-structured face-to-face interviews with students lasting 5–10 minutes to explore their experiences and perspectives regarding the use of traditional games in enhancing learning motivation. The collected data were manually transcribed, thoroughly reviewed, coded, and thematically analyzed to identify relevant patterns and insights.

Data analysis

Data analysis followed the Miles et al (2014) framework, including data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The reduced data were arranged to facilitate conclusions, with pattern analysis and causal flows carried out during the process. To ensure reliability, triangulation was applied by verifying data through various methods such as observation and interviews. This steps ensures accurate data and produces in-depth insights regarding the implementation of traditional games in enhance students' learning motivation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This study aims to explore how the implementation of the traditional game *Lengko Lengko* can enhance students' learning motivation in English language instruction at the junior high school level. The analysis is conducted through a triangulation method, combining in-depth student interviews and direct classroom observations to ensure the validity and consistency of the findings.

Students' Interest and Attention to the Lesson

Interview data revealed that most students felt more engaged in the lessons when traditional games were incorporated. Topics such as *About Me* and *Favorite Food* were especially appealing because they allowed students to connect the material with their personal experiences. Students expressed curiosity and enthusiasm, saying that learning felt more enjoyable and less monotonous. FD shared, "I really liked the *About Me* topic because I could introduce myself in English," showing emotional engagement through self-expression. SN added, "I was interested in the food topic because I learned many food names in English," reflecting cognitive interest in relevant vocabulary. AN's comment, "Yes, I felt more interested because the game was unique and not boring," highlights how interactive methods can sustain attention and make learning more dynamic. These quotes demonstrate that when students find the content personally meaningful and the method enjoyable, their interest and focus naturally increase.

Observations supported these findings. From the first session, students showed excitement and anticipation toward game-based activities. Their attention to instructions improved over time, as they quickly understood the rules and followed the teacher's guidance with growing accuracy. Triangulation confirms that the *Lengko Lengko* game significantly enhanced student engagement—both cognitively and emotionally—by making the learning experience more relatable and enjoyable. The interview quotes fall under the category of student interest and attention because they illustrate how meaningful content and interactive strategies can spark motivation and help maintain focus throughout the learning process.

Students' Motivation in Completing Tasks

Game-based learning significantly boosted students' motivation to complete tasks. Many described the activities as enjoyable, stimulating, and collaborative. The playful nature of the tasks transformed the learning experience into something more engaging and less intimidating. AP shared, "I felt more excited because there was a puzzle," highlighting how the element of challenge sparked curiosity and made the task feel like a rewarding quest rather than a routine assignment. Aira Dian Putri added, "I was excited because the task felt like a game, not just reading a book," which reflects how gamification helped shift the perception of learning from passive consumption to active participation. MN stated, "I was motivated to complete the task because it was easier to understand the material through games," suggesting that the interactive format helped clarify concepts and made abstract ideas more tangible. MR expressed, "I felt excited because it was fun and I could work together with my groupmates," emphasizing the social dimension of game-based learning, where collaboration and peer interaction enhanced engagement and built a sense of shared purpose.

Observational data supported these student reflections. Learners participated with enthusiasm, took initiative, and even devised creative strategies to solve problems during gameplay. Their active involvement indicated a strong sense of intrinsic motivation—driven not by external rewards but by genuine interest and enjoyment. The triangulated data from interviews, classroom observations, and student work suggest that traditional games can foster a dynamic and positive learning environment. When students are emotionally and socially engaged, they are more likely to approach tasks with energy and persistence. These findings reinforce the value of interactive, student-centered approaches that prioritize enjoyment, collaboration, and meaningful learning experiences.

Students' Responsibility Toward Tasks

Responsibility emerged as a consistent theme across both student interviews and classroom observations. Students demonstrated a clear understanding of their roles within

their groups and expressed a strong sense of accountability for completing their assigned tasks. They recognized that the success of the group relied on each member's active participation. AP stated, "Saya bertanggung jawab dalam bagian saya yaitu mengerjakan soal," indicating a personal commitment to fulfilling their specific role. YB added, "My friends and I are trying to complete the assignment," which reflects a collective effort and shared responsibility among group members.

Additional student reflections further reinforced this theme. SK shared, "I feel responsible because I have a group assignment and I want to complete it," highlighting a sense of ownership and intrinsic motivation to contribute meaningfully. NA remarked, "I feel responsible because if I don't actively participate, my group might fail," which reveals an awareness of the consequences of disengagement and the importance of teamwork in achieving group success. These statements suggest that students were not only aware of their individual responsibilities but also deeply invested in the overall performance of their teams.

Observational data supported these insights. Students consistently worked both independently and cooperatively, requiring minimal prompting from the teacher. Group roles were carried out effectively, and collaboration became increasingly structured and supportive. Students showed initiative, helped one another, and maintained focus throughout the activities. Triangulated data from interviews, observations, and classroom documentation indicate that the Lengko Lengko game fostered not only academic engagement but also a strong sense of social responsibility. Through interactive gameplay, students learned to depend on one another, take ownership of their tasks, and contribute to a shared goal – skills that are essential for both classroom success and broader life contexts.

Students' Response to Teacher Stimulation

Students reported increased confidence in asking questions and participating in discussions during game-based learning. The use of traditional games created a more relaxed and collaborative atmosphere, making students less hesitant to seek help and more willing to share ideas with peers and teachers. Many students expressed that they didn't give up easily when facing difficulties; instead, they chose to ask questions or work together with their group.

NA stated, "I became more active in discussions because we had to work together to solve the problems," highlighting how group dynamics encouraged active participation. YB added, "I asked the teacher when there was a question I didn't understand," reflecting a growing comfort in seeking clarification directly. Siti Nur Aisyah shared, "I didn't give up when facing difficulties and asked the teacher in front of the class," showing persistence and initiative.

Additional statement from ADP and AA further reinforce these findings. ADP said, "I became more active in discussions because we had to help each other to solve the problems," emphasizing the importance of mutual support. AA noted, "I became more active in asking questions and discussing because we had to work together to solve the problems. If someone didn't understand, we helped each other," illustrating how collaboration fostered deeper engagement and peer learning.

Observations supported these student reflections. Learners responded promptly to teacher instructions, engaged in dynamic group discussions, and demonstrated increased verbal interaction. Their confidence in expressing opinions and clarifying doubts grew steadily across sessions. Triangulated findings from interviews, observations, and documentation indicate that traditional games can serve as effective scaffolding tools. They enhance students' responsiveness to teacher input and promote deeper cognitive engagement. Through collaborative play, students learn to think critically, ask questions, and build understanding together – skills that extend beyond the classroom.

Students' Enjoyment and Satisfaction in Learning

All students expressed feelings of joy and satisfaction during game-based learning. They enjoyed the collaborative nature of the activities and felt proud when they succeeded in tasks. The sense of achievement and shared experience contributed to a positive emotional atmosphere in the classroom. Farhat Dadi stated, I feel satisfied and happy because the game

can be played together with others.” This shows that the social aspect of the game was a key factor in enhancing enjoyment. Playing together allowed students to bond, communicate, and support one another, which fostered a sense of unity and collective engagement in the learning process. Nur Alam added, “I’m happy because I can learn while playing and don’t feel pressured” Her statement highlights how game-based learning helped reduce academic stress, making the classroom feel more relaxed and enjoyable, while still maintaining educational value.

Further insights came from MR, who shared, “I feel happy when playing because it helps me improve my agility, and I feel satisfied when completing tasks correctly.” This quote reflects how the game not only stimulated physical agility but also provided intellectual satisfaction. MR’s experience shows that the game encouraged active participation and sharpened both motor and cognitive skills, leading to a sense of accomplishment when tasks were completed correctly. Meanwhile, AAK expressed, “I feel happy when playing, especially when I get the highest score, and I also feel glad when I answer questions correctly” His response emphasizes the motivational power of competition and recognition. Earning the highest points and answering correctly gave him a sense of pride and reinforced his confidence in his abilities.

Observations during the activity supported these student statements. Laughter, cheering, and high levels of enthusiasm were consistently visible throughout the session. Even when faced with challenges, students remained focused and persistent, showing resilience and emotional investment in the learning process. Triangulation of data from interviews, observations, and documentation confirms that the Lengko Lengko game created a learning environment that was not only academically effective but also emotionally fulfilling. It supported students’ well-being, encouraged positive attitudes toward learning, and transformed the classroom into a space of joyful exploration and meaningful achievement.

Discussion

The integration of the traditional game Lengko-Lengko into English language instruction at the junior high school level has proven to significantly enhance students’ learning motivation. This improvement is evident across the five dimensions outlined by Sudjana (2005): interest and attention, enthusiasm in task completion, responsibility, responsiveness to teacher stimulation, and enjoyment in learning. Students showed greater engagement than in conventional methods, aligning with Winkel’s (1996) theory of intrinsic motivation and Zajda’s (2021) cognitive engagement model, which emphasize the importance of personal relevance. Vygotsky’s (1978) social constructivist theory further supports this, highlighting how traditional games foster interaction and experiential learning within the zone of proximal development.

The game-based environment encouraged both competition and collaboration, boosting students’ enthusiasm and participation. Huffman, Vernoy, and Vernoy (1997) explain that motivation can stem from both intrinsic enjoyment and extrinsic rewards, both of which were present in Lengko-Lengko. Deterding et al. (2011) emphasize gamification elements like challenges and feedback, while Ryan and Deci’s (2000) Self-Determination Theory shows that motivation thrives when autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled—needs naturally met through traditional games. Students also demonstrated increased responsibility, understanding their roles and contributing to group success, which reflects Bandura’s (1986) social learning theory and Sujiono’s (2005) emphasis on character development through games.

Students responded more actively to teacher input, asked questions, and engaged in discussions, consistent with Sudjana’s (2005) view of motivated learners and supported by Zhang et al. (2024), who highlight the impact of supportive feedback. Amrullah et al. (2023) note that traditional games create a safe, expressive learning space, while symbolic interactionism (Mead & Blumer) explains how social exchanges shape meaning and motivation. Enjoyment and satisfaction emerged as the most dominant factor, reinforcing Maslow’s (1943) humanistic theory that fulfilling psychological needs leads to meaningful learning. Practically, this approach not only boosts motivation but also nurtures character,

social skills, and cultural appreciation. Despite challenges like time constraints and varying participation, flexible strategies and teacher training can ensure the continued success of traditional game-based learning.

CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of the traditional game Lengko-Lengko in English language learning at SMPN 20 Kendari has proven effective in enhancing students' learning motivation, as evidenced by improvements in attention, enthusiasm, responsibility, responsiveness to the teacher, and overall enjoyment during the learning process. The game created a fun and engaging classroom atmosphere that was relevant to students' daily lives, encouraged group collaboration, and boosted their confidence in discussions and asking questions, thereby supporting contextual, interactive, and student-centered learning. However, this study has several limitations, including a short implementation period, varying levels of student participation, and challenges in integrating the game into the curriculum. To ensure sustainability and effectiveness, collaboration with teachers and institutional support is essential. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers receive training in game-based learning methods and that further research be conducted to evaluate long-term impacts, expand participant coverage, and examine the role of schools in supporting culturally rooted learning approaches.

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