

STUDENT PARTICIPATION AND TOLERANCE IN EDUCATIONAL GAMES: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The learning process at the elementary school level is still dominated by conventional approaches that are repetitive and lack participation and tolerance of students. In this context, integrating game-based learning media (games) as a strategic alternative to increase participation and tolerance is relevant to the times' progress. This study aims to describe the use of educational games in Civic Education (PKn) learning to increase participation and tolerance of elementary school students. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method at SDI Miftahul Huda Tongas, Probolinggo. Data collection techniques were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation of the Princip, teachers, and fourth-grade students involved in game-based PKn learning. These results indicate that the game-based learning approach makes the learning atmosphere more enjoyable and strengthens the formation of national character by the objectives of the PKn subject at the elementary school level. The increase in participation includes: students answering questions from 30% after the game increased to 80%, group discussions from 40% to 85%, student enthusiasm from 35% to 90%, Cooperation with friends from 40% to 80%, sportsmanship and tolerance with friends from 40% to 80%. While in increasing tolerance, respecting friends from 40% to 80%, respecting opinions from 40% to 80%, reducing conflict from 35% to 85%, openness to cooperation from 40% to 85%, not being selfish from 40% to 80%.

Keywords: Educational Games, Civic Education, Participation, Tolerance, Elementary School

INTRODUCTION

Civic Education learning at the Elementary School level plays a crucial role in shaping students' character to be democratic, participatory, and tolerant. Through this learning, students are expected to be able to understand and internalize civic values from an early age. However, in its implementation, conventional methods such as lectures and memorization still dominate the approach used. (Rambe et al. 2024) This approach tends to be one-way, thus limiting students' active involvement in the learning process. Therefore, student participation in class discussions is low, and their understanding of democracy and attitudes of tolerance in social life are not optimally developed. This condition shows the need for innovation in PKn learning strategies to be more interactive and contextual to improve understanding and application of civic values in everyday life.

In today's digital era, students are more interested in game-based learning methods. Conventional approaches that lack innovation tend to be less effective in increasing the appeal of Citizenship Education (PKn) learning. According to research conducted by Sari, many PKn teachers in schools still use conventional learning methods and do not actively involve students. This can hinder efforts to instill an attitude of tolerance in students. (Sari, Hestiana, and Nurlita 2024). For that reason, the role of teachers is vital in improving the quality of human resources relevant to the times' progress so that the learning process becomes less than optimal in forming character and developing students' social skills according to the demands of the times. Other

researchers say that traditional learning methods, such as lectures and assignments, often make students feel bored and less interested in learning. (Aryana et al. 2024)

At Miftahul Huda Elementary School, it was found that several students were passive in class, so they needed the right strategy so that students could be active in class. As the initial observation of the interview with the fourth-grade teacher, “There were several students who were less active at school and in class in civics learning, and there were still frequent fights between friends in class”. According to research, experts say that the ideal learning process is designed systematically to encourage active student involvement, so their potential can develop optimally. The learning activities carried out by students cannot be separated from their thinking abilities, because the higher the level of activity, the more developed the mindset and cognitive skills they have (Siswa and Dasar 2024).

Therefore, a more adaptive and technology-based learning strategy is needed to improve the effectiveness and relevance of civic education in elementary school environments. A game-based learning strategy is applied as an innovative alternative to overcome the problem of low levels of student participation and their limited understanding of tolerance values in Civic Education (PKn) learning. Experts say that educational games are a pedagogical approach that integrates game elements into learning to increase student involvement, motivation, and participation. In Civic Education (PKn), educational games have significant potential in fostering participatory values and tolerant attitudes among students through various learning mechanisms. One of the main advantages of this approach lies in its ability to optimize student involvement. Multiple studies show that game-based activities can increase learning motivation, attract students’ attention, and encourage their engagement during the learning process. (Anon 2023; Setiawati et al. 2024).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Various studies have highlighted the effectiveness of games in education, which has been widely studied; most of the focus is still limited to specific fields such as mathematics and science. Studies highlight games’ application in learning Citizenship Education (PKn). As experts say, games are oriented towards learning experiences, which aligns with the objectives of PKn, namely, encouraging students to explore values and responsibilities as citizens (Xu et al., 2023). Another opinion says that the use of game media in elementary school learning has a significant impact on increasing student activity interactively. Game media can be used in various subjects, so students are more interested and not bored in learning (Sari et al., 2024). For this reason, as educators, we are expected to be able to bring students to a pleasant atmosphere and without anxiety in learning. There is a lack of empirical case studies examining

the simultaneous development of participation and tolerance through educational games in primary school settings. Furthermore, few studies integrate qualitative case study approaches that provide rich insights into students' behavioral and attitudinal changes during game-based activities.

This study offers innovative contributions to elementary school Civic Education (PKn) learning development. First is integrating games in PKn learning, which was previously applied more to specific subjects. Second is the emphasis on increasing active participation and internalizing student tolerance values, beyond mere cognitive achievement. Third, the development of a contextual educational game model that is oriented towards strengthening civic awareness. Fourth, applying an experimental approach to evaluate the effectiveness of games compared to conventional methods in PKn learning. Experts say that games have the potential to form unique learning patterns that influence the way players think. Games can create a relaxed and motivating learning atmosphere, thus supporting a more effective understanding of the material. (Aryana et al. 2024).

Expert research shows that game-based media can increase interactive student engagement. This media can be implemented in various subjects to create a fun, interactive, and dynamic learning experience. In addition, its use contributes to reducing anxiety and boredom while supporting the development of 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. (Rambe et al. 2024) Other studies argue that game-based learning has proven effective in increasing student activity in the learning process, so this method can be more interactively applied to other subjects. (Pranoto 2020). Another opinion states that there is a positive and significant influence of Games-Based Learning on the Learning Activity of PAK Class XI Students of SMA Negeri 1 Purba, Simalungun regency in the 2024/2025 Academic Year, namely 9.5% (Berutu et al. 2025).

This study aims to describe and analyze the use of Educational Games in civics learning to increase participation and tolerance of elementary school students, as experts say that. Game-based learning approaches are effective in helping students understand complex concepts such as citizenship and social justice. Through contextual simulations, students are trained to develop critical reflection, empathy, tolerance, and collaborative skills in solving problems from various perspectives (Flatekval, 2021). The benefits of this research can enrich the scientific treasury related to the implementation of educational games in civics learning in elementary schools and support the development of education that emphasizes strengthening social values and character building through innovative approaches and offering alternative learning strategies that

encourage active student participation, facilitating the internalization of tolerance values through interactive and contextual learning experiences.

METODOLOGY

This research uses a descriptive qualitative research method with a case study type. In the qualitative method (Sugiyono, 2017), the data collected is descriptive and analyzed in depth through the researcher's interpretation of the observed phenomena. (Rambe et al. 2024) This research was conducted at Miftahul Huda Elementary School, Tongas District, Probolinggo Regency, which implemented quiz games in civics learning. The study subjects were 25 fourth-grade students, fourth-grade teachers, and the principal. The school was selected based on initial observations that showed low participation and tolerance in civics learning. The research process was carried out through several systematic stages: planning, data collection, data analysis, and interpretation. (Rambe et al. 2024).

Data collection techniques in this study were conducted through in-depth interviews to gather information directly from informants, participant observation to obtain a contextual understanding of the situation being studied, and documentation studies used to complete and verify data from relevant written sources. 1) Interview, The researcher conducted intensive interviews with grade IV teachers of Miftahul Huda Elementary School who integrate game media in the civics learning process to increase participation and tolerance. The interview technique used was semi-structured, which allows flexibility in exploring information more deeply from informants (Moleong, 2019). 2) Participant Observation, the researcher also conducted participatory observation during the learning activities. 3) Documentation, 4) Questionnaire. Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted descriptively and qualitatively by following the stages of Miles & Huberman (1994), namely: 1) Data Reduction, 2) Data Presentation, 3) Drawing Conclusions and Verification. Data Validity: 1) Technique Triangulation, 2) Source Triangulation, 3) Member Check, 4) Prolonged Engagement.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Overview of Initial Conditions of Participation and Tolerance in Civics Learning

In previous learning, teachers tended to use conventional approaches such as lecture methods, question and answer sessions, and assignments as the main strategies in the learning process. Although these methods can convey information directly, their effectiveness in building students' conceptual understanding is still limited. This can be seen from the tendency of students to only receive material passively without showing the ability to develop or reflect on

knowledge in depth. Based on interviews with grade IV teachers, students are less active in group discussions, rarely ask or answer questions, are less focused on the teacher's explanation of the material, if given assignments, tend to do it themselves, and sometimes do not do it and copy other friends' work. Participation in civics learning and tolerance is also lacking towards their friends.

Therefore, a strategy is needed to increase student participation and tolerance in civics learning using group-based educational games through card games. This research was conducted at SDI Miftahul Huda Tongas, in Tongas District, Probolinggo Regency. SDI Miftahul Huda is one of the private elementary schools actively implementing character education strengthening programs through intracurricular and extracurricular activities. The study subjects were 25 fourth-grade students, 15 boys and 10 girls. Learning facilities are adequate, with LCD projectors, internet connections, and other supporting devices enabling technology-based learning, such as educational games.

B. Civics Learning Using Educational Games

The research aims to increase student participation and tolerance in innovative Civics (PKn) learning by integrating educational game media. The implementation of game steps in planned learning results in an increase (Dianti 2016; Rambe et al. 2024; Syahada and Sundi 2024). The learning design is arranged by inserting game activities relevant to the PKn content, including 1) Selection of types of educational games recommended by the PKn material for grade IV, namely the Cultural Diversity Card Game and the Hero Picture Game. Both types of games were chosen to stimulate cognitive and affective involvement of students in understanding national values and tolerance, important figures in Indonesian history, 2) Preparation of a learning implementation plan that integrates educational games into the learning process, 3) Preparation of observation sheets to measure student participation and tolerance during learning, 4) Preparation of supporting media such as number cards, quiz boards, laptops.

The use of educational game media in the Citizenship Education (PKn) learning process shows significant effectiveness in increasing student participation. This media not only creates a more enjoyable and engaging learning atmosphere but also strengthens social interaction and cooperation between students. Various studies indicate that integrating educational games in learning can increase students' intrinsic motivation and active involvement, and increasing students' interest and understanding of this material is an important determinant in achieving optimal learning outcomes. (Ismila and Iskandar 2023; Retnasih, Nabilla, and Zahro 2024)

The use of educational games in Civics subjects is carried out in several meetings with the following stages: 1) Introduction: The teacher provides apperception and explains the learning objectives 2) Core Activities: The teacher divides students into small groups, explains how to play educational games and the rules related to the material to be studied, students start playing educational games while working on Civics questions, the teacher provides motivation and guidance during the game. 3) Closing: The teacher and students discuss the answers to the game's results, provide reflections on learning, and reinforce the material.

Educational games have been proven to improve students' conceptual understanding of the material. Educational games are not only entertaining and fun but also act as reflective media that encourage students to examine these findings. This indicates that the use of educational games can build a more interactive learning atmosphere and encourage collaboration between students, indirectly increasing their involvement in discussions and other learning activities. (Apriliani, Putri, and Unzzila 2024; Sarah et al. 2024). Educational games have the potential to encourage increased motivation and active involvement of students during the learning process, which can then have a positive impact on their learning outcomes. (Fauzi et al. 2023; Supriyaddin, Prayudi, and Putra 2023) Thus, integrating games into learning not only enriches the learning experience but also strengthens students' analytical thinking capacity in reflecting on citizenship issues.

Observation results during the learning process showed that group-based educational games could create a more dynamic and collaborative learning atmosphere. Students appeared enthusiastic and actively participated in each game session, showing a high interest in the Civics material that was packaged interactively. Interactions between group members took place constructively, showing increased tolerance in communication, cooperation, and the ability to solve problems collectively.

Students' responses to this method were generally very positive. They stated that learning through games was not only fun, but also made it easier to understand abstract concepts such as the values of Pancasila and the contributions of national heroes. Some students could even relate the playing experience to everyday situations, indicating knowledge transfer and civic values internalization. These findings indicate that the educational game-based approach is not only cognitively practical, but also impacts the affective and social aspects of students, by the objectives of Civics learning, which emphasize the formation of character and national attitudes.

Support for the effectiveness of using educational games in civics learning has also been found in various studies. According to (Ningtyas, 2024; Wa Souvi Raaziqal Ningtyas, 2024). Shows that the use of educational games can increase enthusiasm and participation in student

learning, as well as collaborative learning methods that involve cooperation in the learning process of small groups and teams. In addition, other studies, namely . Show that the use of the Pancasila quartet card game media is efficacious in improving students' understanding of the application of Pancasila values in everyday life.

Theoretically, this approach aligns with Piaget's and Vygotsky's constructivist theory, emphasizing the importance of active learning experiences and social interactions in building understanding. Through educational games, students receive information passively and are actively involved in the learning process, building knowledge through direct experience and collaboration with peers.

C. Increasing Student Participation Using Educational Games

Student participation in elementary schools is an important aspect of education that can influence character formation and social relationships between students. Student participation in various educational activities involves academic aspects and the development of social attitudes, tolerance, and citizenship. Civic Education, for example, equips students with the knowledge and skills needed to actively participate in society. (Ramadhan, 2024; Sarah et al., 2024). Through collaborative learning models, students can be taught to be more active in their lessons, thereby increasing their participation and interest in learning. (Apriliani et al., 2024; Tambun, 2022) One approach to increasing tolerance in education is to develop a curriculum that emphasizes tolerance values. Learning models that focus on these values have succeeded in creating a more inclusive learning environment. Research shows a gap between teacher expectations and student conditions, resulting in a lack of tolerance in student interactions. (Dermawan & Maulana, 2023; Pertiwi et al., 2021). Therefore, educators need to take a better approach by introducing relevant materials and appropriate methods to achieve this goal.

Data from the observation sheet indicated a quite striking increase in student participation. In the early learning phase before the integration of educational games, only about 40% of students showed active participation, either by asking questions, answering questions, or being involved in class discussions. However, participation increased significantly to 80% after implementing educational game media. Students appeared more enthusiastic in participating in the learning process, showed courage in expressing opinions, and actively contributed to group work. These changes reflect that the game-based approach can create a more inclusive learning environment and stimulate students' emotional and cognitive involvement.

Based on the observation results, there was an increase in student participation at each meeting:

Observed aspects games	Before educational games	After educational games
Answering questions	30%	80%
Involved in group discussions	40%	85%
Enthusiastic and attentive	35%	90%
Working together with friends	40%	80%
Sportsmanship and tolerance with friends	40%	80%

D. Increasing Tolerance of Students Using Educational Games

The tolerance attitude of elementary school students is an important component in forming individual character that can form harmonious social relationships. The attitude of tolerance among students includes respect and appreciation for differences in the school environment and contributes to a conducive learning atmosphere, as expressed by ((Heriawati and Manik 2023; Mustikaati et al. 2023)). This is very important because education in elementary school is the initial stage where fundamental values about respecting differences are taught.

An effective learning process greatly fosters a tolerant attitude among students. Anggraeni explained that discussion and case study methods in Civic Education (PKn) learning in elementary schools can help students understand the concept of tolerance through direct experience. (Anggraini, Adenta, and Ichwansyah 2024; Wati and Anggriani 2024) In addition, Sari et al. emphasized that character education in tolerance must be taught early on so that students can build this attitude as part of their identity. (Auliadi, Dewi, and Furnamasar 2021; Sari et al. 2024; Wati and Anggriani 2024). By creating an inclusive and conducive classroom climate and providing role models from teachers, students can more easily internalize the values of tolerance in their daily lives. (Alim and Tirtoni 2023; Elita, Maulida, and Wahyuni 2024).

Observations also noted an increase in tolerant behavior among students during the implementation of group games. In the game's dynamics, students showed mutual respect, could share roles, and work together without any dominance of specific individuals. Several minor conflicts that arose during group interactions were successfully resolved democratically through discussion and deliberation, without direct intervention from the teacher. In addition, positive changes were observed in several previously individualistic students who began to show openness and the ability to collaborate in groups.

This shows that game-based learning enriches cognitive aspects and strengthens social values and citizenship characteristics such as tolerance, empathy, and cooperation. Through games and group discussions, students begin to show mutual respect and respect for opinions and help friends in trouble. As experts say, playing games is more interesting for students than

listening to long lectures in class. (Pranoto 2020; Solihati 2024). Some students who were initially passive became more active during the game session. Observed behavior:

Observed aspects	Before educational games	After educational games
Respecting friends from different backgrounds	40%	to 80%
Respecting differences of opinion	40%	80%
Reducing minor conflicts	35%	85%
Openness to cooperation	40%	85%
Sportsmanlike and not selfish	40%	80%

Researchers conducted interviews with three groups of informants, namely class teachers, students, and principals, to obtain more comprehensive data on the effectiveness of civic education learning based on educational games. This interview aims to capture direct perspectives from implementers, participants, and policy makers at the education unit level. A grade IV teacher revealed that the use of educational games in learning positively impacts student understanding, especially in material related to the values of togetherness and tolerance. According to him, this approach can bridge students' difficulties in understanding abstract concepts through concrete and contextual media. In addition, games are also considered to be able to stimulate social interaction and cooperation between students more naturally.

From the students' perspective, civics learning packaged through educational games is more enjoyable and not boring. Students stated that they felt more enthusiastic about following the lessons and found it easier to understand the contents of the material. This shows that the game-based approach can increase learning motivation and create a more dynamic and inclusive classroom atmosphere. Meanwhile, the principal expressed his support for implementing this learning model. He considered that educational game media aligns with the school's vision and program, emphasizing strengthening character based on Islamic values. According to him, this strategy not only supports students' cognitive achievements but also strengthens the formation of character and moral values that align with the mission of progressive Islamic education.

Documentation of learning activities collected through photos, videos, and student work results provides empirical evidence supporting observations and interview findings. Visual documentation and learning artifacts show students' active involvement in the educational game-based civics learning process, both from cognitive, affective, and social aspects. Photos of activities show students collaboratively completing various game challenges designed to instill values of togetherness and tolerance. Students' facial expressions recorded in the video documentation show enthusiasm, joy, and high motivation during the learning process. This indicates that game media creates a fun learning atmosphere and facilitates active participation and positive social interactions among students.

In addition, the results of students' reflective writing show that they can internalize the values of tolerance that are the focus of the Civics material. Student reflections contain a deep understanding of respecting differences, working together in groups, and solving problems peacefully. This finding strengthens the argument that educational game-based learning can be an effective medium for developing critical thinking skills while forming citizenship character in elementary school students.

The results of the study above indicate that educational games can be a very effective learning medium to increase active participation and tolerance among students in Civic Education (PKn) subjects. This finding aligns with the constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes that students build knowledge through active and meaningful experiences. The application of various types of educational games conveys teaching materials and encourages the development of students' social skills. This activity teaches students to empathize, cooperate, and communicate better. Furthermore, this study supports the findings that have been presented. (Isa et al. 2022; Setiawati et al. 2024) This states that a game-based approach effectively increases students' learning motivation and is important in strengthening their character values. Thus, the application of educational games in PK learning focuses on cognitive aspects and the development of social attitudes and moral values that are essential for student development.

E. Obstacles and solutions to implementing educational games

Several obstacles need to be considered when developing and using educational games. These obstacles can come from various aspects, including technical, pedagogical, and social aspects that affect the effectiveness of implementing educational games in the learning process. From a technical perspective, many educational games experience problems in terms of accessibility. Not all students have adequate devices or stable internet access to play technology-based educational games, such as mobile games or web applications. Moreover, integrating educational games into the curriculum must also consider these limitations so all students can participate without obstacles. (Septiana and Ginanjar 2023; Supriyaddin et al. 2023).

In addition, the lack of training for teachers in using educational game technology is also a significant obstacle. Many teachers are unfamiliar with new technologies, resulting in a lack of understanding of how to use educational games effectively. (Anggraeni and Supriyono 2024; Suryaningrum 2022) During the implementation, several obstacles also occurred, including some students who were still confused about the game's rules at the beginning. Learning time felt lacking because students were very enthusiastic about the game. The solution was for the teacher

to re-explain the game rules slowly and conduct a simulation before starting to play. The teacher divided the time between playing and discussing the game's results.

CONCLUSION

The use of educational games in Citizenship Education (PKn) learning at SDI Miftahul Huda Tongas, Probolinggo, shows a significant increase in student participation and tolerance. Based on the results of observations before the implementation of education, there has been an increase of 40% to 50%, while the attitude of tolerance has also increased by around 35-55%.

Through educationally designed game media, students become more enthusiastic, actively participate in learning activities, and can work together in groups. These results indicate that the game-based learning approach makes the learning atmosphere more enjoyable and strengthens the formation of national character by the objectives of the Civics subject at the elementary school level.

For further research, it is recommended that more varied educational game media be developed, specifically tailored to the characteristics of each subject at the elementary school level. Further research also needs to be conducted through larger-scale trials involving more students and schools so that the results are more representative. In addition to being oriented towards strengthening 21st-century skills, the development of this game media can also be directed to measuring its effectiveness in other aspects, such as increasing learning motivation, social collaboration, and character building of students.

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