JTH

https://jthkkss.com/
e-ISSN 2805-4431
DOI: https://doi.org/10.53797/jthkkss.v3i1.6.2022

Fun Learning for Primary School Students

Mutadin, Ali, Fajrie, Nur*, Ismaya, Erik Aditia & Kurniati, Diah

Muria Kudus University, Jl. UMK North Ring, Gondangmanis, Bae, Kudus – 59327 Central Java, INDONESIA

*Corresponding author email: nur.fajrie@umk.ac.id

Available online 28 June 2022

Abstract: This research aims to explore and understand how the learning while playing method can create a fun and effective learning environment for grade 3 students at SD Negeri 3 Plosorejo, Tawangharjo District, totaling 24 students. The research method used is qualitative with a descriptive approach. Data was collected through observation, interviews and documentation studies.The results showed that the use of educational games, such as mathematical snakes and ladders, significantly increased students' learning motivation. Students showed high enthusiasm and active involvement during learning sessions. Apart from that, students' numeracy skills also improved because of the practical and fun approach applied in this game.These educational games also promote cooperation and communication between students, which is important for their social development. Students learn to interact with their classmates, work in teams, and resolve conflict in a constructive way.This research concludes that the method of learning while playing through educational games not only improves academic results but also develops social skills that are important for students' holistic development. The integration of innovative methods in learning can create a more meaningful and enjoyable learning experience, helping students reach their full potential and preparing them for future success.

Keywords: learning while playing method; educational games; mathematical snakes and ladders; learning motivation; social skills and fun learning.

1. Introduction

Effective learning does not only aim to achieve academic achievement, but it is also important to pay attention to students' emotional and social development. According to previous research, a pleasant learning atmosphere can significantly increase student motivation and engagement in the learning process (Nawafilah & Masruroh, 2020). A positive and interactive atmosphere in the classroom can make students feel more comfortable and motivated to learn. In this context, the learning-by-play method becomes very relevant.

Learning through play has become one of the most effective approaches in primary education. Play is a child's world, and by integrating elements of play in learning, teachers can create a more dynamic and interesting learning environment. When children feel happy and interested, they tend to be more engaged and motivated to learn. Learning that involves educational games, such as the math snakes and ladders game, not only helps students understand academic concepts better but also develop their social skills (Aminah et al., 2022).

This research focuses on the application of learning-by-play method in grade 3 of SD Negeri 3 Plosorejo, Tawangharjo sub-district. The class consists of 24 students with various backgrounds and ability levels. The research aims to explore how this method can be effectively applied to improve students' motivation and learning outcomes. In addition, the study also sought to understand the impact of fun learning on student engagement and motivation.

The use of educational games in learning has been proven effective in various studies. For example, the math snakes and ladders game can be used to teach counting concepts in a fun and interactive way. In this game, students not only learn to count but also practice working together and socializing with their friends (Nurussofa & Astuti, 2023). This approach allows students to learn through direct experience and practice, which is essential for a deeper understanding of concepts.

Fun learning also has long-term benefits for student development. A positive learning atmosphere can help reduce stress and anxiety, which are often barriers to learning. When students feel comfortable and supported in their learning environment, they are more likely to take risks in learning and try new things. This is a key element in the development of critical and creative thinking skills, which are essential in modern education (Sriyanah et al., 2022).

*Corresponding author: nur.fajrie@umk.ac.id

In addition, fun learning can also improve the relationship between teachers and students. Teachers who use creative and fun learning methods tend to be favored by students, which in turn can increase positive communication and interaction in the classroom. A good relationship between teachers and students is an important factor in creating a conducive and supportive learning environment.

This research is expected to make an important contribution to the development of more innovative and enjoyable learning strategies. The results of this study can be used by teachers in various schools to improve the quality of learning and students' well-being. By applying learning through play methods, it is expected that students not only achieve better academic results but also enjoy their learning process, thus creating a holistic and memorable learning experience.

In order to achieve these objectives, this research used a descriptive qualitative approach. Data was collected through observation, interviews, and documentation studies. Observations were made to observe students' interactions during the learning process. Interviews were conducted with the class teacher and some students to get an in-depth perspective of their experiences. Documentation study involved analyzing learning documents and students' work.

As such, this research not only provides insight into the application of learning through play but also provides practical guidance for educators in creating a more enjoyable and effective learning environment for primary school students. It is hoped that the findings from this research can be the basis for the development of educational policies that are more inclusive and oriented towards student welfare.

2. Methodology

This study uses a qualitative narrative approach to explore in depth how the learning through play method can be effectively implemented in grade 3 of SD Negeri 3 Plosorejo, Tawangharjo sub-district. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore rich and detailed information about students' learning experiences in their real context.

Data was collected through three main techniques: observation, interviews and documentation studies. Each of these techniques was designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the process and impact of joyful learning.

Observations were made directly in the classroom during the learning session. The researcher observed how students interacted with the subject matter and with their classmates while using the learning through play method. This observation helps the researcher to see firsthand the classroom dynamics, students' reactions to the learning methods used, and how the teacher manages the learning activities. Through observation, the researcher can record various important aspects such as student engagement, enthusiasm, as well as challenges that arise during the learning process.

Interviews were conducted with several parties to gain a more in-depth perspective. The researcher interviewed the class teachers to understand their views on the effectiveness of the learning-by-play method as well as the challenges faced in its implementation. In addition, interviews were also conducted with several students to explore their experiences directly. Students were asked about their feelings towards the learning method used, whether they felt more motivated and how educational games helped them in understanding the subject matter. These interviews were semi-structured, allowing the researcher to explore relevant topics in more depth while still following the prepared interview guide.

Documentation study involves analyzing various documents related to the learning process in the classroom. Documents analyzed include lesson plans, observation notes, and student work such as worksheets and completed projects. This document analysis provides additional context and supports the findings from observations and interviews. Through these documents, the researcher can see how learning methods are planned and executed, as well as the concrete results achieved by students.

The combination of these three data collection techniques allowed the researcher to gain a comprehensive and in-depth picture of the implementation of the learning through play method. By combining data from observation, observation, and documentation study, the researcher can confirm findings, identify important patterns, and provide evidence-based recommendations to improve the quality of learning in the classroom.

This approach also ensures that the data collected has high depth and validity, allowing the researcher to make reliable conclusions about the effectiveness of the learning-by-play method in increasing students' motivation and engagement. Through this research, it is expected to make a significant contribution to the development of more innovative and effective learning strategies in primary schools.

3. Result

This research shows that the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum, which gives teachers autonomy to develop learning, is in line with the need for innovative and fun learning methods. This is especially evident in subjects that students often consider difficult, such as mathematics. The Merdeka Curriculum encourages teachers to be more creative and independent in designing learning that suits the characteristics and needs of students.

Figure 1: Student learning

In this context, the need for innovative and fun learning methods is becoming increasingly important. Mathematics, which is often perceived as an abstract and difficult subject, can become more interesting and easy to understand if taught with the right approach. This research shows that a learning-by-play approach, which integrates game elements in learning, can be an effective solution. By giving teachers autonomy to develop innovative learning, Merdeka Curriculum opens up opportunities for teachers to apply the learning-by-play approach more widely.

This approach not only makes math learning more fun but also increases student motivation and engagement. Teachers can use various educational games, such as math snakes and ladders, picture cards, and game-based math learning applications, to make math learning more interactive and interesting. This is in line with the research of Jannati et al., (2023), which showed that innovative and fun learning methods can improve student learning outcomes in mathematics.

Learning through play has been proven to be a very effective approach in creating a fun and interactive learning atmosphere. Research conducted by Nawafilah & Masruroh (2020) showed that this approach not only increased students' motivation and engagement but also helped them understand academic concepts better.

Learning through play capitalizes on children's natural inclination to play and explore. By integrating elements of play into learning, teachers can create a more interesting learning environment and stimulate students' curiosity. Students no longer feel burdened by monotonous learning, but they feel challenged and motivated to learn through fun activities.

This approach also provides opportunities for students to learn actively and experience the learning process first-hand. Through play, students can experiment, try different strategies and learn from their own mistakes. This hands-on and interactive learning experience helps students understand academic concepts more deeply and meaningfully.

In addition, learning through play can also improve students' social and emotional skills. In games, students learn to cooperate, communicate and solve problems together. They also learn to manage emotions, appreciate differences, and develop self-confidence. These skills are essential for students' success at school and in everyday life.

Research shows that the use of educational games in learning mathematics in primary schools has a significant impact. Games such as math snakes and ladders, illustration picture cards, and mobile app-based math learning have been shown to not only improve students' conceptual understanding but also train their cooperation and social skills.

Math ladder snakes, for example, teach counting concepts and basic math operations in a fun and interactive way. Students learn as they play, moving forward or backward on the game board based on their calculation results. This

makes learning math more interesting and reduces students' fear of math. In addition, the game encourages social interaction as students play together and learn to cooperate.

Illustrative picture cards are also an effective tool in math learning. These cards help students visualize abstract concepts, such as fractions or geometry, in a more concrete way. By using picture cards, students can manipulate mathematical objects and see the relationships between different concepts. This strengthens their understanding and makes math learning more meaningful.

Math mobile learning, which utilizes technology such as smartphones or tablets, is also gaining popularity in math learning. Game-based math learning apps allow students to learn independently and in a fun way. Students can play games that teach math concepts, solve math puzzles, or practice math problems in an interactive way. This not only improves students' conceptual understanding but also trains their problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

Research conducted by Sriyanah et al. (2022) revealed that a positive learning atmosphere created through fun learning, as previously described through the use of educational games, has a significant impact on students' cognitive and emotional development. A positive learning atmosphere can reduce students' stress and anxiety, which often become obstacles in the learning process. When students feel comfortable, safe and supported in their learning environment, they are more likely to take risks in learning, try new things and think outside the box.

This is particularly important in developing critical and creative thinking skills, which are key skills needed in the 21st century. Fun learning focuses not only on delivering subject matter but also on developing students' ability to think independently, analyze information, solve problems, and generate new ideas. By reducing stress and anxiety, students can focus more on the learning process itself, explore various possibilities, and develop their potential optimally.

In addition, a positive learning atmosphere can also increase students' intrinsic motivation. When students feel happy and interested in what they are learning, they will be more motivated to learn more, dig deeper, and strive to achieve better results. This intrinsic motivation is very important as it encourages students to learn independently and continuously, even outside the school environment. Thus, enjoyable learning not only impacts on short-term learning outcomes but also on the development of skills and motivation that will benefit students in the long run.

The active involvement of teachers in creating a positive and enjoyable learning atmosphere is the key to the successful implementation of student-centered learning. Teachers do not only act as information conveyors, but also as

Figure 2: Discussion with the teacher

facilitators and motivators who encourage students to learn actively and independently. To achieve this, teachers need to design creative and interactive learning strategies, which are able to arouse students' interest and curiosity.

Research conducted by Sari et al. (2022) shows that the use of learning media that is interesting and relevant to students' lives can increase their motivation and engagement in learning. Innovative learning media, such as educational games, interactive learning videos, or computer simulations, can make learning more interesting and fun. In addition, the use of learning media relevant to students' lives can help them connect abstract concepts with their real-life experiences, so that learning becomes more meaningful and easy to understand.

Teachers also need to pay attention to students' social and emotional aspects in creating enjoyable learning. Student-centered learning focuses not only on academic achievement but also on developing students' social and emotional skills. Teachers can create a positive and supportive classroom climate, where students feel comfortable to interact, argue and

learn from their mistakes. Thus, joyful learning not only improves students' learning outcomes but also contributes to their holistic development.

In addition to designing interesting learning strategies and media, teachers also need to pay attention to the social and emotional aspects of students to create a pleasant and positive learning environment. Research by Abidin (2024)shows that humor can be one of the effective strategies to create a more relaxed and enjoyable learning atmosphere. The right humor can break tension, reduce stress, and make students feel more comfortable in the learning process.

However, attention to students' social and emotional aspects does not stop at the use of humor. Teachers need to build positive relationships with students, showing empathy and understanding for their needs and feelings. A positive relationship between teachers and students can increase students' confidence, encourage them to be more courageous in asking questions and opinions, and increase their motivation in learning.

In addition, teachers also need to provide appropriate motivation to students. Motivation can be in the form of praise, appreciation or recognition of students' efforts and achievements. Motivation provided effectively can increase students' confidence, encourage them to continue learning and developing, and help them overcome challenges in learning.

Encouraging students' active participation in learning is also an important aspect that needs to be considered by teachers. Teachers can use various strategies to encourage students' active participation, such as group discussions, project-based learning, or presentations. By actively participating in learning, students not only learn to express their opinions and ideas but also learn to respect others' opinions, cooperate, and solve problems together.

The research conducted at SD Negeri 3 Plosorejo provides concrete evidence of the effectiveness of applying the learning-by-play method in improving students' motivation and learning outcomes. The results of this study are in line with previous research that emphasizes the importance of motivation and active involvement of students in learning (Suhendar & Yanto, 2023).

At SD Negeri 3 Plosorejo, the application of this method has significantly changed the dynamics of the classroom. Students no longer passively receive information, but they become more active, enthusiastic and involved in learning activities. They feel happy and challenged to learn through educational games, such as math snakes and ladders or illustration picture cards. This shows that fun learning not only increases students' motivation but also has a positive impact on their learning outcomes.

The increase in student motivation and learning outcomes is inseparable from the role of the teacher in creating a positive and supportive learning environment. Teachers at SD Negeri 3 Plosorejo not only act as teachers but also as facilitators and motivators. They design interactive learning, use interesting learning media, and provide constructive feedback to students. Thus, students feel supported and motivated to study harder and achieve better results.

Research conducted by Sriyanah et al. (2022) shows that enjoyable learning not only has an impact on improving students' learning outcomes, but also provides a broader positive impact on their overall well-being. Students who engage in enjoyable learning tend to feel more comfortable and motivated in their learning environment. They feel supported and valued, which in turn boosts their confidence and self-esteem.

In addition, fun learning can also improve students' social relationships. When students feel happy and engaged in learning, they are more likely to interact positively with their classmates. They learn to cooperate, communicate effectively and appreciate differences. This can help students develop important social skills, such as empathy, tolerance and the ability to resolve conflicts constructively.

The relationship between teachers and students can also be improved through fun learning. Teachers who create a positive and fun learning atmosphere tend to be favored by students. Students feel more comfortable to ask questions, share ideas and actively participate in learning. This can enhance positive communication and interaction between teachers and students, which in turn can create a more conducive learning environment and support students' holistic development.

In this context, the driving teacher has a very crucial role. They are not only agents of change who encourage the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum, but also the driving force in creating fun and meaningful learning for students. Activator teachers are those who have an innovative spirit, are open to change, and have a high commitment to improving the quality of learning.

Master teachers act as learning leaders in their schools. They not only master the subject matter but also have a deep understanding of pedagogy and learning psychology. As such, they can design and implement learning strategies that suit students' needs and interests, including applying the proven effective learning through play method.

In addition, lead teachers also act as drivers of the learning community in the school. They share their knowledge and experience with their fellow teachers, encourage collaboration and create a positive and supportive learning environment. By sharing good practices and innovative ideas, they can inspire their colleagues to continue learning and developing, thus improving the overall quality of learning.

Last but not least, teacher advocates also act as motivators for students and fellow teachers. They provide encouragement, support and inspiration to students to reach their full potential. They also provide encouragement and motivation to fellow teachers to innovate and improve their learning. As such, they become catalysts for change that encourage a positive, fun and meaningful learning environment for all involved.

This research provides strong evidence of the importance of playful learning in improving students' motivation, engagement and learning outcomes. By implementing learning through play, teachers can create a positive learning

environment that supports students' holistic development. Fun learning focuses not only on academic achievement but also on developing students' social, emotional and cognitive skills. Through the use of interesting and relevant learning media to students' lives, teachers can arouse students' interest and curiosity, so they are more motivated and engaged in the learning process. In addition, by paying attention to students' social-emotional aspects, teachers can create a positive and supportive classroom climate where students feel comfortable, safe and motivated to learn.

4. Discussion

This study shows that the use of snakes and ladders math game as an innovative learning media has a very positive impact on grade 3 students of SD Negeri 3 Plosorejo. The results of this study are in line with various previous studies showing that a fun and interactive learning approach can increase students' learning motivation, concept understanding, and social skills (Bukit et al., 2023; Cendana & Siswanto, 2022; Jannati et al., 2023; Khainur et al., 2024; Sari et al., 2022; Suhendar & Yanto, 2023).

One of the key findings of the study was a significant increase in students' learning motivation. This can be seen from students' enthusiasm during game sessions, increased participation in class discussions, and greater interest in math. The intrinsic motivation built through the math snakes and ladders game encourages students to be more engaged and persistent in learning (Yulianti et al., 2019).

The math snakes and ladders game has also proven effective in helping students understand mathematical concepts in a more practical and fun way. This learning-by-play approach allows students to learn through hands-on experience, which strengthens their understanding of the material being taught (Sari et al., 2022). The test results showed a significant improvement in students' numeracy skills after several game sessions.

In addition to academic aspects, the math snakes and ladders game also has a positive impact on students' social development. Social interactions during the game help students develop communication, cooperation and empathy skills. Students learn to respect their friends' opinions, work together in teams and resolve conflicts in a constructive way. This is in line with research showing that game-based learning can improve students' social skills (Siswanto et al., 2023).

The use of the math snakes and ladders game also had an impact on increasing students' confidence in dealing with math problems. Students become more willing to try, not afraid to make mistakes, and more actively participate in class discussions. This self-confidence is an important factor in academic success and daily life (Farin Hanifatun Nuha & Kartika Yuni Purwanti, 2023).

The results of this study have important implications for educational practices in primary schools. Teachers are advised to continue integrating innovative learning methods such as educational games in their curriculum. By creating a fun and interactive learning environment, teachers can help students reach their full potential. In addition, it is important for schools and education policy makers to support the use of innovative learning methods that have been proven effective in improving student learning outcomes.

5. Conclusion

This discussion confirms that learning through play, particularly through the use of educational games such as math snakes and ladders, can have a significant positive impact on students' motivation and learning skills. This research shows that an approach that integrates game elements in the learning process can create a more dynamic, interactive and fun learning environment. This is very important as learning motivation is one of the key factors that influence students' academic success.

Through the use of educational games, students not only learn academic concepts in a more engaging way, but also develop a range of important skills that will be useful throughout their lives. In the context of math learning, snakes and ladders games help students understand and master numeracy concepts better. Students are actively involved in learning activities, show significant improvement in math test results, and exhibit greater confidence in solving math problems. This approach allows students to learn through direct experience, which strengthens their understanding and makes learning more meaningful.

In addition, learning involving games also contributes to the development of students' social skills. During games, students learn to communicate, cooperate and resolve conflicts in constructive ways. Such social skills are essential for students' holistic development, helping them build positive relationships with classmates and teachers and preparing them to interact in a wider social environment in the future. The positive interactions formed during the game also create a more harmonious and supportive classroom atmosphere, which in turn increases student engagement and participation in learning activities.

The research also highlights the importance of creativity and innovation in educational practice. Teachers play a key role in designing and implementing fun and effective learning methods. By incorporating educational games in the curriculum, teachers can make the learning process more interesting and relevant for students. Moreover, this approach also helps teachers to identify students' needs and interests, so they can customize their teaching strategies to meet the individual needs of each student.

However, the implementation of learning through play also faces some challenges. Teachers need to be trained to design and manage educational games effectively. In addition, support from the school and parents is needed to create a

conducive learning environment. Therefore, it is important for schools to provide the necessary resources and training for teachers so that they can integrate this innovative learning method successfully.

Overall, the results of this study provide strong evidence that learning through play through educational games such as math snakes and ladders can bring significant benefits to students. This approach not only improves academic outcomes but also develops social and emotional skills that are important for students' holistic development. By continuing to integrate innovative methods in learning, we can create more meaningful and enjoyable learning experiences for students, helping them reach their full potential and preparing them for future success.

Through fun and interactive learning, we not only help students to learn more effectively but also build a strong foundation for lifelong learning. This is an important step in creating a more inclusive and student welfare-oriented education system, which will ultimately produce individuals who are smart, creative and ready to face the challenges of the future.

References

Abidin, A. A. (2024). *Teacher Strategies In Creating Fun Learning For Class Iv Students Of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*. *11*, 236–246.

Aminah, S., Ramawani, N., Azura, N., Fronika, S., Meitha Hasanah, S., & Salsabillah, T. (2022). Pengaruh Metode Belajar Sambil Bermain Terhadap Perkembangan Kognitif Anak Usia Sekolah Dasar. *Science and Education Journal (SICEDU)*, *1*(2), 465–471. https://doi.org/10.31004/sicedu.v1i2.66

Bukit, S., Marcela, E. D., & Ernawati, E. (2023). Teacher's Strategy to Create Fun Learning in Elementary School. *Journal Corner of Education, Linguistics, and Literature*, *2*(3), 244–249. https://doi.org/10.54012/jcell.v2i3.129

Cendana, W., & Siswanto, E. (2022). Peningkatan Motivasi Belajar Siswa Kelas 1 Sekolah Dasar Melalui Pemberian Apresiasi Secara Sinkronus. *Cendekiawan*, *4*(1), 43–49. https://doi.org/10.35438/cendekiawan.v4i1.252

Farin Hanifatun Nuha, & Kartika Yuni Purwanti. (2023). The Effect of Game Based Learning Assisted by Fun Card Puzzle on the Conceptual Understanding of Class 5th Elementary School Students. *International Journal of Scientific Multidisciplinary Research*, *1*(5), 527–538. https://doi.org/10.55927/ijsmr.v1i5.4754

Jannati, P., Ramadhan, F. A., & Rohimawan, M. A. (2023). Peran Guru Penggerak Dalam Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Di Sekolah Dasar. *Al-Madrasah: Jurnal Pendidikan Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*, *7*(1), 330. https://doi.org/10.35931/am.v7i1.1714

Khainur, L., Suhari, & Yuliantini, S. (2024). Strategi Guru Kelas Memotivasi Siswa Kelas Vi Untuk Melaksanakan Salat Duha Di Sd Negeri 18 Sadayan. *Netizen: Journal Of Society And Bussiness*, *1*(3), 135–143.

Nawafilah, N. Q., & Masruroh, M. (2020). Pengembangan Alat Permainan Edukatif Ular Tangga Matematika untuk Meningkatkan Kemampuan Berhitung Anak Kelas III SDN Guminingrejo Tikung Lamongan. *Jurnal Abdimas Berdaya : Jurnal Pembelajaran, Pemberdayaan Dan Pengabdian Masyarakat*, *3*(01), 37. https://doi.org/10.30736/jab.v3i01.42

Nurussofa, R., & Astuti, H. P. (2023). Pengembangan Media Pembelajaran Permainan Ular Tangga Untuk Meningkatkan Motivasi Belajar Matematika Siswa Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Pembelajaran Dan Matematika Sigma (Jpms)*, *9*(1), 22–28. https://doi.org/10.36987/jpms.v9i1.4183

Sari, E. R., Yusnan, M., & Matje, I. (2022). Peran Guru Dalam Meningkatkan Keaktifan Belajar Siswa Melalui Media Pembelajaran. *Jurnal Eduscience*, *9*(2), 583–591. https://doi.org/10.36987/jes.v9i2.3042

Siswanto, J., Nuroso, H., Hariyanti, D. P. D., & Wardana, M. Y. S. (2023). Stimulasi Alat Permainan Edukatif dan Peran Orang Tua dalam Tumbuh Kembang Anak di TK Kuncup Sari Semarang. *E-Dimas: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat*, *14*(4), 829–836. https://doi.org/10.26877/e-dimas.v14i4.17266

Sriyanah, N., Efendi, S., & Satriana, A. (2022). Pentingnya Belajar Sambil Bermain Merangkai Origami Pada Anak Masa Endemi Di Sd Inpres Tamamaung Iii Makassar. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat*, *2*(2), 239–244.

Suhendar, A. W., & Yanto, A. (2023). Pembelajaran Matematika Menyenangkan di SD Melalui Permainan. *POLINOMIAL: Jurnal Pendidikan Matematika*, *2*(1), 18–23.

Yulianti, E., Agustri, S., Nur, E. L., & Sari, D. R. (2019). Sosialisasi Aplikasi Pembelajaran Matematika Berbasis Android Pada Sd Negeri 39 Palembang. *Jurnal Abdimas Mandiri*, *3*(1), 53–62. https://doi.org/10.36982/jam.v3i1.778