



Verbal Soccer Strategy in Fiqh Learning to Improve Student Motivation in Madrasah

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Abstract

Fiqh learning in Islamic schools still faces the problem of low student motivation and participation due to the dominance of lecture methods that create a monotonous learning atmosphere. This study aims to describe the application of the Verbal Football strategy in Fiqh learning and analyze its contribution to increasing student learning motivation. The study used a descriptive qualitative approach with observation, interview, and documentation techniques with Fiqh teachers and eighth-grade students of Madrasah Al Falah Padang. The results showed that the application of the Verbal Football strategy packaged in the form of learning tools and student worksheets was able to create an interactive learning atmosphere through an educational game format resembling a soccer match, so that students were more active in discussions, involved in group work, motivated to compete healthily, and showed improvements in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Thus, the Verbal Football strategy can be an alternative innovation in Fiqh learning that is effective in increasing student learning motivation in Islamic schools and is relevant to be applied in the broader context of religious education.

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a fundamental role in building human civilization, encompassing social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions. In the Islamic context, education serves not only as a means of transferring knowledge but also as a medium for developing noble morals, strengthening faith, and providing life skills in line with Islamic values (Hamidah et al., 2021; Surbakti et al., 2024). Islamic Religious Education taught in madrasahs encompasses several important subjects, one of which is Fiqh. This subject serves to equip students with an understanding of Islamic law related to worship and daily transactions. Thus, Fiqh is a strategic subject expected to instill awareness of Islamic law while guiding students in religious practices. However, in reality, Fiqh learning often runs less than optimally. Teachers still dominate the classroom through monotonous lectures, while students play a passive role as listeners. This condition results in decreased learning motivation, low engagement in class discussions, and an unbalanced achievement of competencies between cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects (Nasrullah & Muthoifin, 2024).

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The phenomenon of low student motivation in Islamic jurisprudence Fiqh learning demonstrates the urgent need for more engaging, participatory, and enjoyable learning innovations (Mappasessu & Akmal, 2025; Sofi-Karim et al., 2023). The development of modern educational paradigms emphasizes the importance of a student-centered learning approach, where students are placed as the primary subjects of learning. This approach requires teachers to be more creative in selecting strategies, methods, and learning media so that students not only receive knowledge but also actively construct understanding, discuss, and develop social skills (Sari, 2025). One learning strategy considered effective in enlivening the learning atmosphere is Verbal Football. This strategy utilizes the analogy of a soccer game, where students are divided into groups, act like a team, and engage in answering questions, discussing, and developing strategies to win the "match." In this way, the classroom atmosphere is no longer monotonous but rather competitive, interactive, and enjoyable, thus encouraging students to study harder (Khalifa et al., 2020).

The game-based Verbal Football strategy not only offers a fun learning environment but is also relevant to curriculum demands that prioritize holistic student competency development. In the context of Islamic Jurisprudence Fiqh learning, the implementation of this strategy is expected to bridge the gap between theory and practice, as students are not merely memorizing Islamic jurisprudence laws but also practicing critical thinking, collaboration, and healthy competition within the framework of Islamic values. Several previous studies have shown that game-based learning strategies are effective in increasing motivation and learning outcomes in various subjects, but their application in religious studies, particularly in Islamic Jurisprudence Fiqh, remains very limited. This highlights a research gap that needs to be filled, namely by examining in-depth how the Verbal Football strategy can be applied in Islamic Jurisprudence learning in madrasas, and the extent to which this strategy can increase student motivation and engagement in the teaching and learning process. Thus, this research has both practical and theoretical significance for enriching learning innovation in Islamic educational environments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous studies have shown that game-based strategies can improve student motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes. Ginnis, the founder of the Verbal Soccer Strategy, emphasized that this strategy fosters teamwork, communication, and critical thinking skills in an action-packed and energetic atmosphere. demonstrated that the verbal soccer strategy can enhance student learning activities in Social Studies in elementary schools. Similarly, Siska Nerita found that this strategy can improve biology learning outcomes for students at the Islamic Junior High School level, demonstrated improved chemistry achievement in high school through the implementation of a similar strategy (Hammami et al., 2023). These findings demonstrate the consistent effectiveness of the verbal soccer strategy in encouraging students to be more active, motivated, and participate in class. However, despite its widespread use in both science and social science subjects, its application to Islamic Jurisprudence Fiqh learning remains rare (Voss & Kunter, 2020). This raises an important question: can a strategy proven effective in general science also be adapted effectively to Islamic religious learning, which has normative and applicable characteristics?

The research gap becomes increasingly apparent when reviewing the

existing literature. First, most studies focus on improving students' cognitive learning outcomes, while aspects of motivation, affective engagement, and social skills, even though these aspects are crucial in religious education, remain understudied. Second, the majority of research is conducted on general subjects such as science, social studies, or chemistry, leaving the scope of research in Islamic jurisprudence Fiqh very limited. Third, in the context of madrasas, which typically have an Islamic values-based curriculum, studies on the application of game-based learning are relatively limited, despite the crucial role madrasas play in preparing a generation of knowledgeable and moral Muslims. Fourth, in the international literature, there are still few publications discussing learning strategies based on local culture or popular games adapted for religious education. This situation demonstrates a significant opportunity for research to broaden the horizon of pedagogical innovation in Islamic education. Therefore, a study of the application of verbal soccer strategies in Islamic jurisprudence learning is not only relevant but can also provide a new contribution to enriching the literature on contemporary Islamic education.

Based on the background and research gaps that have been explained, this study aims to describe and analyze the implementation of the Verbal Football strategy in Islamic Jurisprudence learning in madrasas, as well as evaluate its impact on students' learning motivation. In more detail, the objectives of this study are: (1) to explain how teachers plan the implementation of the verbal football strategy in Islamic Jurisprudence learning; (2) to describe the process of implementing the strategy in an interactive, competitive, and collaborative classroom atmosphere; and (3) to assess its contribution to increasing students' learning motivation, both in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. This study is expected to provide practical contributions in the form of alternative innovative learning strategies for Islamic Religious Education teachers, so as to increase student participation, involvement, and enthusiasm for learning. On the other hand, this study also provides theoretical contributions in expanding the literature on the effectiveness of game-based learning in religious subjects, so as to enrich the global discourse on Islamic learning innovations that are relevant to the needs of education in the modern era.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive approach (Rahman et al., 2024; Rambe et al., 2024; Rosyadi et al., 2024; Engkizar et al., 2025). The qualitative approach was chosen because this study seeks to deeply understand the phenomenon of Islamic Jurisprudence learning by implementing the Verbal Football strategy in madrasas, rather than simply measuring numbers or quantitative variables. Qualitative research provides space for researchers to explore the experiences of teachers, students, and the dynamics of classroom interactions as they exist (natural settings). In this context, the study was conducted to describe how the planning, implementation process, and results of the Verbal Football strategy can influence student learning motivation. Qualitative descriptive research is deemed appropriate because its focus lies in efforts to describe phenomena in detail, contextually, and comprehensively without artificial intervention from the researcher (Kasmar et al., 2019). The research location was determined at a junior high school, namely Madrasah Al Falah Padang, which was chosen purposively because this madrasa faces problems with student learning motivation in the Fiqh

subject as evident from the still low average grades and a learning atmosphere that tends to be monotonous. The research subjects included eighth-grade Fiqh teachers and students participating in the learning. Teachers were positioned as key informants because they have the authority to plan and implement learning strategies, while students became the main participants because they directly experienced the implementation of the verbal football strategy. The number of students involved in this study was adjusted to the number of classes studied, thus enabling researchers to obtain rich and varied data regarding their learning experiences.

Data collection techniques were carried out through several methods, namely observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted by directly observing the Fiqh learning process in the classroom when the Verbal Football strategy was implemented. Through these observations, researchers were able to record teacher and student activities, interactions between students, and the classroom atmosphere created during the game. In-depth interviews were conducted with teachers and selected students to explore their experiences, perceptions, and opinions regarding the strategy's effectiveness (Rahman et al., 2025). Documentation was used to supplement the data, in the form of grade notes, activity photos, syllabi, lesson plans, and learning tools used by teachers. The collected data were analyzed using the Miles & Huberman interactive analysis model, which includes three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Rambe, 2025). In the data reduction stage, researchers sorted, summarized, and selected data relevant to the research focus, namely student learning motivation through the implementation of the verbal football strategy. Next, the data were presented in the form of descriptive narratives and interview excerpts to facilitate understanding. The final stage was inductive conclusion drawing, namely summarizing patterns, themes, and main findings based on empirical data in the field.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Planning the Implementation of Verbal Football Strategies

Planning is an important foundation before implementing a strategy. Verbal Football in Islamic Jurisprudence learning at Madrasah Al Falah Padang. Teachers begin by compiling learning materials in the form of a syllabus, Lesson Plan, teaching materials, and student worksheets. At this stage, teachers formulate learning objectives that align with the core competencies and indicators specified in the curriculum, covering the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains (Moorhouse, 2024). This planning not only emphasizes the delivery of material but also aims to create a fun, competitive, and collaborative learning atmosphere, in accordance with the characteristics of game strategies. Teachers realize that conventional methods, which tend to be one-way, quickly make students bored, so innovative strategies are needed that can stimulate active participation and emotional involvement of students. With careful planning, teachers aim for learning to not only produce a strong understanding of Islamic Jurisprudence concepts but also be able to stimulate students' continuous learning motivation (Derakhshan et al., 2021).

In addition to preparing the equipment, teachers also prepare supporting media such as scoreboards, test papers, and explanations of game rules that are easy for students to understand. This learning strategy requires the involvement of all

students, so teachers emphasize heterogeneous group formation. This is intended to ensure that each group contains students with varying academic abilities, allowing them to support and collaborate with one another. Teachers strive to create an equitable environment, where no group is dominated by high-achieving students, and no group is comprised solely of low-achieving students. This balanced division is expected to foster solidarity, enhance cooperation, and foster a sense of collective responsibility among students (Kokkinos & Gakis, 2021). With these steps, it is hoped that the classroom atmosphere will be more conducive, mutually supportive, and foster healthy competition.

Teachers also considered how to integrate Islamic values into this planning, considering that the Fiqh subject is not just a conceptual understanding but also the application of sharia law in everyday life. Therefore, in addition to academic goals, the planning also targets the development of students' morals, discipline, and social skills (Ziernwald et al., 2022). Teachers hope that through this game, students will not only be motivated to learn but also learn to respect rules, behave in a sporting manner, and instill the values of togetherness as taught in Islam. One teacher stated in an interview.

"...I want the children to not only be able to answer fiqh questions, but also to learn sportsmanship, honesty, and courage. Through this strategy, they can feel like they're learning while playing, but still taking it seriously."

Thus, learning planning is not only academic, but also supports the formation of students' Islamic character.

Verbal Football Strategy Implementation Process

Implementation of strategy Verbal Football The game is conducted systematically and resembles the flow of a soccer match. The teacher begins by providing a thorough explanation of the rules of the game, the mechanics of answering questions, how to score goals, and the consequences for incorrect answers or violations (Dewi et al., 2021). This explanation aims to ensure students understand the rules of the game and are disciplined in following the agreed-upon rules. Afterward, the teacher divides students into two large teams, each led by a captain chosen by group consensus. With a group leader, students more easily develop answer strategies and simultaneously learn about leadership and coordination within the group. After preparation, students are given time to read a worksheet containing a summary of the Fiqh material. This stage serves as a warm-up and ensures students understand the material before entering the game. The game begins with a coin toss to determine which team gets the chance to win kick-off. The team that gets the first turn must answer the teacher's question within a certain time limit. If the answer is correct, the team keeps the ball and continues attacking with the next question (Arthars et al., 2024; Silva et al., 2021). However, if the answer is incorrect, the ball passes to the opposing team, who has the opportunity to counterattack by answering the question. This mechanism fosters a healthy competitive atmosphere, as each team strives to provide the best answer possible to score a goal for their team.

During the game, the teacher plays a dual role as facilitator and referee. As a facilitator, the teacher provides direction, motivates students, and ensures that each group member is actively involved. As a referee, the teacher maintains order,

regulates the game, and provides objective assessments of answers (Silva et al., 2021). The classroom atmosphere becomes more lively, full of enthusiasm, and fosters cooperation and sportsmanship, as one student said.

"...Usually, I get bored quickly studying Islamic jurisprudence, but now it feels exciting because it's like playing real football. I want to take my turn quickly so I can score."

This expression demonstrates that the learning process is no longer monotonous, but rather dynamic and enjoyable. In this way, the Verbal Football strategy has been proven to significantly reduce boredom and increase student participation (Xu et al., 2020).

Results of Applying Verbal Football Strategy

Implementation of strategy Verbal Football has a positive impact on student motivation and learning outcomes. Cognitive-wise, students appear to grasp the material more quickly because the learning process is conducted actively through group discussions, questions and answers, and practice exercises packaged in a game format (Aderibigbe et al., 2023). This differs from the lecture method, which tends to make students passive. With healthy competition, students are encouraged to study more seriously so they can answer questions correctly and bring victory to their team, the teacher emphasized.

"...The children have become more responsive. While many used to remain silent, now they're competing to answer."

From an affective perspective, there was an increase in students' motivation, courage, and self-confidence. They were more enthusiastic about participating in lessons, no longer shy about asking questions, and encouraged each other within the group (Wei & Luo, 2025). This was reflected in the interview results, as one student stated.

"...I'm more enthusiastic about studying Islamic jurisprudence because I can play while I learn. I used to be shy about answering questions, but now I'm more confident because my friends are supportive. "In fact, another student added "...When there are lessons like this, the class feels exciting, not boring, and I want to quickly take turns answering."

This statement indicates a positive change in students' attitudes toward Islamic jurisprudence learning. Meanwhile, from a psychomotor perspective, students practiced obeying rules, working together, and respecting the role of each group member. This was evident in their involvement in maintaining team cohesion, supporting their teammates while answering questions, and demonstrating good sportsmanship in both winning and losing (Thalgi, 2025). The teacher also emphasized this in the interview.

"...With the Verbal Soccer strategy, I see the children are more compact and braver. They are more active than usual if I only use the lecture method."

The results of daily tests show an increase in the number of students achieving the Minimum Completion Criteria, strengthening the evidence that this strategy is effective in increasing student motivation and learning outcomes.

Discussion

The findings of this study strengthen the theory student-centered learning which emphasizes the importance of the active role of students in the learning process. Verbal Football successfully shifted the teacher's role from the center of learning to a facilitator who guides, assists, and provides space for students to be more creative. This aligns with Ginnis's opinion that game-based strategies create an interactive, competitive, and enjoyable classroom atmosphere. Thus, students become not only objects of learning but also subjects who actively contribute to the learning process (Han, 2025; Zulkefli & Jamil, 2024). One student said.

"...Learning Fiqh in this way has made me understand Islamic law better, and it feels like learning while playing but still being serious."

The results of this study align with previous studies conducted in social studies, biology, and chemistry. The similarities lie in increased student participation, learning motivation, and academic outcomes (Orozco et al., 2024). However, the uniqueness of this study lies in its context: Islamic jurisprudence Fiqh learning, which has rarely been explored through game-based innovations. Thus, this study fills a significant gap in Islamic education literature, which has traditionally emphasized conventional methods such as lectures or memorization. The teacher corroborated this by stating,

"...I feel like this strategy can be used in other subjects as well. It makes the kids more engaged, and it makes it easier for me to explain the material."

Furthermore, this game-based learning is able to integrate Islamic values into classroom activities. Sportsmanship, honesty, cooperation, and responsibility are cultivated in the games. Verbal Football This aligns with Islamic teachings on brotherhood, discipline, and etiquette in learning. In other words, this strategy impacts not only cognitive achievement but also the development of students' character and religious values (Dogan & Yucel-Toy, 2022). This demonstrates that creative learning innovations do not conflict with the substance of religious education but can instead be an effective means of instilling Islamic values in a more enjoyable and meaningful environment.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Verbal Football strategy in Islamic Jurisprudence Fiqh learning effectively increases students' motivation, participation, and learning outcomes in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Students grasp the material more quickly, become more courageous, confident, and demonstrate sportsmanship and togetherness. Furthermore, this learning approach integrates Islamic values such as honesty, brotherhood, discipline, and responsibility, thus impacting not only academic achievement but also the development of students' religious character. However, this study has limitations, including its limited sample size in one madrasah, its focus on Islamic Jurisprudence

Fiqh, and its relatively short implementation time, which only reflects short-term impacts. These conditions mean that the results cannot be widely generalized and cannot explain the long-term effects of implementing this strategy. Based on these limitations, this study recommends several things. First, Islamic Religious Education teachers can use the Verbal Football strategy as an innovative learning alternative to increase student motivation, especially for materials considered difficult or boring. Second, schools or madrasahs should support teachers by providing training or workshops on game-based learning strategies to optimize their implementation. Third, future researchers are advised to expand the scope of their research by involving more schools, different subjects, and different courses, as well as examining the long-term impact on motivation and academic achievement. Thus, this strategy has the potential to make a significant contribution to enriching learning models in madrasahs and modern schools, which demand creativity, active participation, and the integration of Islamic values into the educational process.

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Author Contribution

Mella Ika Putri: Writing-Preparation of original manuscript, Conceptualization, Visualization, **Ahmad Sabri:** Investigation, Methodology, Improve Language, **Juliana Batubara:** Improve Content, Data accuracy.

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Ethical Clearance

The place or location studied has agreed to conduct research and is willing if the results of this study are published.

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