

The Use of Small Games to Enhance Students' Engagement in Physical Education at SDN 25 Betung

Alexander^{1*}, Widya Handayani², Siti Ayu Risma Putri³

¹ SDN 25 Betung, Banyuasin

^{2,3} Universitas PGRI Palembang

*Corresponding author: chaneltaekwondo19@gmail.com

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan minat siswa dalam Pendidikan Jasmani, Olahraga, dan Kesehatan (PJOK) dengan menerapkan permainan kecil di SD Negeri 25 Betung. Penelitian ini menanggapi rendahnya partisipasi dan antusiasme siswa dalam pembelajaran PJOK, yang seringkali monoton dan berpusat pada guru. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan metode penelitian tindakan kelas (PTK) yang dilakukan dalam dua siklus. Penelitian ini melibatkan 33 siswa kelas empat dari SD Negeri 25 Betung. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi observasi, kuesioner minat, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan peningkatan signifikan dalam minat belajar siswa, dari 62,4% pada siklus pra (kategori memadai) menjadi 83,7% pada siklus II (kategori sangat tinggi). Hasil ini menunjukkan bahwa permainan kecil dapat menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang menarik, meningkatkan partisipasi siswa, dan mendorong motivasi intrinsik dalam pembelajaran PJOK. Permainan kecil berfungsi sebagai strategi pembelajaran berpusat pada siswa yang efektif.

Kata kunci: Permainan kecil, kegiatan pendidikan, pendidikan jasmani, pendidikan dasar

Abstract

This study aims to enhance student interest in Physical Education, Sports, and Health (PJOK) by implementing small games at SD Negeri 25 Betung. This study addresses the low student participation and enthusiasm in PJOK learning, which is often monotonous and teacher-centered. This study employs a quantitative approach using the classroom action research (PTK) method conducted in two cycles. The study involved 33 fourth-grade students from SD Negeri 25 Betung. Data collection techniques include observation, interest questionnaires, and documentation. The results indicated a notable rise in students' learning interest, increasing from 62.4% in the pre-cycle (adequate category) to 83.7% in cycle II (very high category). The results indicate that small games can create an engaging learning environment, enhance student participation, and promote intrinsic motivation in PJOK learning. Small games serve as an effective student-centered learning strategy.

Keywords: Small games, educational engagement, physical education, primary education

1. INTRODUCTION

Physical Education, Sports, and Health (PJOK) play a crucial role in elementary education. This subject allows students to develop physical abilities, motor skills, and social-emotional attitudes in a balanced way. Physical education activities can promote core values like responsibility, cooperation, independence, discipline, tolerance, honesty, and self-confidence (Maesara, 2025). Pendidikan jasmani penting untuk menumbuhkan nilai karakter seperti disiplin, tanggung jawab, dan kerja sama (Nurkadri, 2025). According to Smith (2025), physical education aids physical development and reinforces character. Insanisty (2025) noted that Physical Education is crucial for developing students' soft skills, including teamwork, communication, and cooperation. PJOK learning emphasises gestures and

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contributes to character development, including discipline, cooperation, and responsibility, which are essential in daily life. Peserta didik harus memiliki nilai karakter seperti disiplin, tanggung jawab, kerja sama, dan sportivitas, dengan guru PJOK sebagai fasilitator. Peserta didik harus memiliki nilai karakter seperti disiplin, tanggung jawab, kerja sama, dan sportivitas, dengan guru PJOK sebagai fasilitator (Roehatul, 2025). Radhi dan Warni (2025) menyatakan bahwa PJOK penting untuk mengembangkan kemampuan fisik, psikis, dan motorik siswa serta memperkuat karakter seperti sportivitas dan kerja sama. Wahyuningsih (2023) noted that PJOK learning consistently reminds students to adhere to game rules to foster values of discipline, honesty, sportsmanship, and responsibility. Sports activities teach children values like sportsmanship, teamwork, perseverance, and self-responsibility (Penjakora et al., 2021). Moreover, a structured approach to sports learning effectively teaches essential life skills (Pradana, 2021). Sukmadinata (2021) states that physical education serves as a tool for character development through experiential learning in physical activity. PJOK educates the body and shapes students' personality and morals.

Effective physical activities help students grasp the significance of maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle. Organised sports activities enable students to direct positive energy and enhance cognitive and emotional skills through practical field experience. According to Rusman (2020), PJOK learning should facilitate the acquisition of movement skills while promoting moral values like sportsmanship and camaraderie. Prasetyo and Wahyudi (2022) noted that the creative and contextual PJOK learning model enhances student motivation and participation by offering an enjoyable and meaningful learning experience.

PJOK learning in elementary schools is often monotonous and primarily focused on technique. Teachers often rely on traditional instruction-centered methods, which can reduce engagement and stifle student creativity. Consequently, students' interest and motivation in learning often decrease, hindering the primary objective of PJOK to provide enjoyable learning and promote positive character development. Integrating moral and social components in physical education programs enhances students' competencies, fostering holistic development (Jadwiszczak et al, 2025). Physical education imparts values, ethics, and character by acknowledging individual learning possibilities (Syafruddin et al., 2022). Widyanto and Wulandari (2024) noted that PE, via activities like teamwork and sportsmanship, helps internalise character values such as discipline, cooperation, responsibility, and respect. Structured physical education fosters teamwork, discipline, responsibility, and respect, indicating its role in character development beyond physical fitness (Nurafiaty et al., 2025). PJOK learning emphasises physical, cognitive, and character development in students, highlighting moral values (Bahri & Yulianto, 2025). Physical Education, Sports, and Health (PJOK) fosters holistic development by focusing on physical, moral, and social growth (Nurfauziah, 2025). Rahmawati, Hidayat, and Kurniawan (2023) indicate that students' low interest in PJOK is partly due to limited learning methods and insufficient use of age-appropriate educational games for elementary school children. Permana (2025) noted that sports and physical education foster attitudes and behaviours such as teamwork and cooperation, aiding in students' holistic development. PJOK aims to enhance motor skills while promoting character traits like discipline, cooperation, responsibility, and sportsmanship (Hamzah & Yusuf, 2025). Yaumulhak et al. (2024) noted that integrating sports values in physical education enhances students' moral development by engaging them in activities that promote physical and moral competencies. A holistic approach in Physical Education improves physical skills and fosters character traits like responsibility, cooperation, and sportsmanship (Purnomo et al., 2025). Siregar et al. (2025) noted that systematic design of PJOK activities can foster sportivism and teamwork while

enhancing physical skills. Innovations through small game activities should be implemented to enhance the liveliness, interactivity, and student-centredness of PJOK learning.

Similar conditions were observed at SD Negeri 25 Betung. Initial observations indicate that most students exhibited low enthusiasm during PJOK learning. Learning activities often focus on formal exercises like row-marching, basic gymnastics, or repetitive technique drills, lacking engaging game variations. This learning pattern leads to student boredom and decreased motivation for active involvement. Some students exhibit passivity, lack focus on the teacher's instructions, and may opt to sit or avoid physical activity for various reasons. One-way, less engaging learning diminishes students' enthusiasm, particularly in movement-based subjects like PJOK.

Elementary school-age children are typically active, enjoy movement, and prefer learning through direct experience. Susanto (2021) states that elementary school students experience rapid motor and social development, making play and movement activities essential for them. Hidayat and Pratama (2022) noted that sports lessons are popular among children as they offer opportunities for expression and peer interaction. The low enthusiasm of students for PJOK is not due to a lack of interest in sports, but rather the unengaging learning methods that do not align with children's developmental characteristics. A varied and engaging learning approach, including small games, is necessary to enhance student enthusiasm and engagement effectively.

Small games are a straightforward form of physical activity with significant educational value. Small games enable students to acquire fundamental movement skills like running, jumping, throwing, and catching, essential for mastering other sports skills. Small games enhance not only physical abilities but also cognitive and social skills in students. Hasibuan (2021) states that small games effectively enhance cooperation, thinking speed, movement coordination, and emotional engagement among students in learning activities. Small games serve as an engaging and effective learning tool.

Small games are crucial for fostering an interactive and collaborative learning environment. Game activities enable students to communicate, strategise, and adhere to agreed-upon rules. These values are crucial to the purpose of physical education, emphasising physical fitness alongside character development and moral values. Rahmawati and Putra (2022) noted that game activities in PJOK learning promote responsibility, honesty, and sportsmanship as students engage in social processes requiring cooperation and respect. Small games positively influence the personality and social attitudes of elementary school students.

Small games in PJOK learning may serve as an innovative approach to rekindle students' interest in education. Game-based learning offers an engaging and suitable educational experience for active elementary school children. Kurniawan and Lestari (2023) assert that integrating games in PJOK learning enhances students' physical participation and boosts their intrinsic motivation and confidence. Small games serve as an effective strategy to enhance student engagement physically, socially, and emotionally in physical education.

This research is titled "The Application of Small Games to Enhance Students' Learning Interest in PJOK at SD Negeri 25 Betung." This research aims to enhance the learning environment for elementary school students by making it more engaging and enjoyable. Small games are a relevant solution to address students' low interest in PJOK learning, which

has become monotonous and focused on formal exercises. A game-based approach fosters enthusiastic learning among students by incorporating competitive and challenging activities that align with their developmental characteristics.

This study aims to detail the application of small games in PJOK learning at SD Negeri 25 Betung and to evaluate their effectiveness in enhancing student interest in learning. This research aims to provide practical insights for PJOK teachers in selecting innovative and effective learning strategies. This research aims to inform schools in creating a student-centered active learning model for PJOK, emphasizing not only physical aspects but also enhancing student motivation, engagement, and participation in all activities.

2. METHOD

This research uses a Classroom Action Research (PTK) approach which aims to improve and improve the learning process in a sustainable manner through real actions in the classroom. PTK was chosen because it is able to provide direct solutions to problems that arise in daily learning practices. According to Suharjono (2020), PTK is a reflective approach carried out by teachers to improve the quality of learning through an action cycle that involves planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Thus, this study not only focuses on the final results, but also on the learning process that takes place, so that teachers can assess the effectiveness of the implementation of small games directly in the field.

The model used in this study refers to the framework that has been developed by Kemmis and McTaggart, which is still the basic reference in the implementation of modern PTK. However, to adapt to the context of 21st century learning, the model was adapted in accordance with the views of Wibowo and Lestari (2021) who emphasized the importance of collaboration, critical reflection, and innovation in each cycle of action. This research was carried out in two cycles, where each cycle consisted of two meetings. Each cycle is carried out systematically so that researchers and teachers can identify obstacles, improve learning strategies, and assess the increase in students' learning interest in a more measurable and sustainable manner.

The subjects of the study were all grade IV students of SD Negeri 25 Betung, which amounted to 33 people (17 male students and 16 female students). This population was chosen because at this level students already have basic motor skills that are quite developed and are easily directed to participate in small games. The instruments used in this study include:

1. Student learning activity observation sheet, to observe student participation and involvement during learning.
2. The student learning interest questionnaire contains 20 statements on a Likert scale of 1–5 that measure four indicators of learning interest: interest, attention, engagement, and happiness.
3. Documentation, in the form of photos of activities and notes of teachers during the learning process.

The data was analyzed in a quantitative descriptive manner by calculating the percentage of increase in inter-cycle learning interest scores. Formula used:

$$P = \frac{\text{Score obtained}}{\text{Maximum score}} \times 100\%$$

Table 1. *Learning Interest Assessment Criteria*

Range (%)	Category
81–100	Very high
61–80	Tall
41–60	Enough
21–40	Low
≤20	Very low

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Pre-Cycle Conditions

Before the action was taken, the researcher carried out initial observations to find out the real conditions of PJOK learning at SD Negeri 25 Betung. Based on the observation results, student learning activities are still dominated by teachers' instruction, while student involvement in learning activities is relatively low. Many students seem less enthusiastic about participating in physical activities and only move when asked by the teacher. This situation shows that learning is still conventional and has not facilitated the child's natural need to move and play actively.

The results of the student learning interest questionnaire at the pre-cycle stage showed an average score of 62.4%, which is included in the "adequate" category. This indicates that most students do not have a strong motivation to participate in PJOK activities. Some students admitted that they felt bored because of the monotonous activities, while others felt less confident in their physical abilities. Based on the results of a brief interview with PJOK teachers, learning activities tend to focus on basic technique exercises such as running and throwing without fun game variations. This condition becomes an important basis for designing actions in the next cycle. A learning approach is needed that is able to attract students' interest and foster the spirit of learning through the experience of play. Therefore, the researchers decided to implement a small game-based learning model, which is expected to stimulate students' active participation while enhancing a fun learning atmosphere.

3.2 Cycle I

The implementation of actions in Cycle I is focused on the application of several simple small games that are easy to understand and in accordance with the characteristics of elementary school students. The types of games applied include "Scrambling Balls," "Rubber Relays," and "Catch the Tail." Each game is designed to train speed, cooperation, agility, and the ability to set strategies. The teacher acts as a facilitator who provides brief explanations, motivates students, and supervises the course of the activity so that it runs safely and orderly.

The results of the observation showed an increase in physical activity and student participation in the learning process. Students look more excited and enthusiastic about participating in each game. The percentage of students' interest in learning increased to

74.2%, which is in the "high" category. Students who were previously passive began to show initiative to take part in the game, while students who were active increasingly showed a competitive spirit and good cooperation with their classmates. However, in the implementation of the first cycle, several obstacles were still found. Some students were confused about the rules of the game, so there was a technical error during the game. In addition, time management is not optimal because transitions between games require adjustments. Based on the results of reflection with the teacher, it was concluded that the initial explanation needed to be made more detailed and the visualization of the game rules needed to be displayed so that students could understand more easily. This becomes the basis for the refinement of the action in the next cycle.

3.3 Cycle II

The implementation of Cycle II is focused on improving learning strategies based on the results of reflection from cycle I. Teachers provide clearer and more interesting explanations of the rules of the game through direct demonstrations. In addition, teachers also conduct short reflection sessions at the end of the learning to evaluate students' playing experiences and provide positive feedback. The games used at this stage are "Run Take the Flag" and "Throw Target", which are designed to train coordination, speed, and precision of movement. The results of the observation showed a significant increase in student interest and involvement during the activity. Almost all students actively participated, showed happy expressions, and interacted enthusiastically. The average value of interest in learning increased to 83.7%, which is in the "very high" category. Students also appear to be more confident and show a sense of responsibility towards the rules of the game. Learning activities become more lively, dynamic, and student-centered.

Based on the final reflection, it can be concluded that the application of small games is effective in increasing students' interest in learning PJOK. In addition to fostering enthusiasm and togetherness, this approach also provides opportunities for students to learn while playing. The increase that occurred from pre-cycle to cycle II shows that small games are able to become a learning medium that suits the developmental needs of elementary school-age children.

Table 2. Data on student learning interest results in each cycle (in percentage %)

Learning Interest Indicators	Pra-Cycle (%)	Cycle I (%)	Cycle II (%)	Change Description
1. Enthusiastically participating in PJOK activities	60	72	85	Significant increase after small game implementation
2. Active participation in every activity	58	73	84	Students are more involved in games and teamwork
3. Attention to the teacher's explanation	65	76	86	Learning focus increases with clear direction

4. Initiative and courage to try	61	71	82	Students begin to dare to take on roles and be responsible
5. Happy expression and motivation to participate in PJOK	68	79	89	Game activities increase the fun of learning
Rata-rata (%)	62,4	74,2	83,7	There has been an increase from the : high → very high category

Based on the table above, it can be seen that all indicators of learning interest have increased from pre-cycle to cycle II. In the pre-cycle stage, the average student interest in learning only reached 62.4% (sufficient category). After the implementation of small game-based learning in cycle I, the average score increased to 74.2% (high category). Then, in the second cycle it increased again to 83.7% (very high category).

The largest increase occurred in the indicator of "expression of happiness and motivation to follow PJOK", from 68% to 89%. This shows that the small game approach has succeeded in creating a fun learning atmosphere, according to the characteristics of elementary school-age children. In addition, the indicators of "active participation" and "trying initiative" also increased significantly, reflecting changes in students' positive behavior towards PJOK activities.

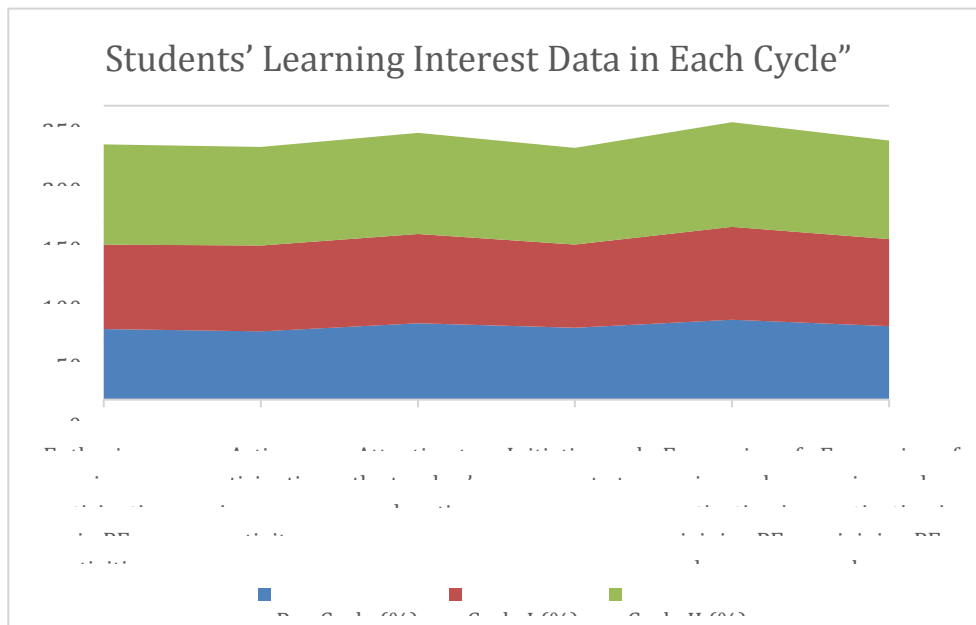


Figure 1. Data on Student Learning Interest Results in Each Cycle

Thus, this data proves that the learning model through small games not only increases students' interest in learning, but also strengthens affective and social aspects, such as cooperation, sportsmanship, and a healthy spirit of competition. The results of this study are in line with the theory of learning motivation from Deci & Ryan (2000) which states that a pleasant learning experience can increase students' intrinsic motivation.

In the context of PJOK, small games are an effective medium to foster students' sense of joy and emotional involvement. This finding is also consistent with Putra's (2021) research which states that the application of small games can increase student active participation by up to 25% compared to conventional learning. Through competitive but fun activities, students more easily receive motor learning naturally without feeling overwhelmed. In addition, the results of this study strengthen the opinion of Husdarta (2018) that small games are able to create challenging and entertaining learning situations, thereby increasing students' attention and concentration during learning. The increase from 62.4% to 83.7% shows that the implementation of small games not only has an impact on fun, but also on improvements in cognitive and affective aspects, such as understanding rules, teamwork, and sportsmanship. Thus, this approach is in line with the principles of the Independent Curriculum, which emphasizes active, collaborative, and contextual learning.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The application of small games in PJOK learning at SD Negeri 25 Betung has proven to be effective in increasing students' interest in learning. Based on the results of the two-cycle research, there was a significant increase from the sufficient category to very high. Students show better enthusiasm, attention, and engagement during the activity. Small games can be used as an alternative to active learning strategies that are able to foster a fun learning atmosphere, strengthen social interactions, and develop students' motor skills naturally.

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it is suggested that PJOK teachers can routinely integrate small games in the learning process to increase students' interest and active participation. The school is also expected to provide support in the form of providing adequate facilities, infrastructure, and time so that the implementation of game-based learning can run optimally. In addition, researchers are further advised to develop similar research focusing on the influence of small games on other aspects, such as motor skills and physical fitness of students, so that the benefits of the application of small games in PJOK learning can be known more comprehensively.

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