

Analysis of Junior High School Student Activity through Story, Game, and Song-Based Learning

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Abstract: This study uses a qualitative descriptive technique to investigate the learning activities of junior high school students using Story-Based Learning, Game-Based Learning, and Song-Based Learning. An key measure of successful learning is student activity, which involves behavioral, emotional, and cognitive involvement. However, especially in English language classrooms, traditional teaching approaches can restrict students' engagement and drive. Therefore, to develop more dynamic and student-centered learning environments, creative instructional tactics are required. Twenty junior high school students from a private school participated in this study. Semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and learning activity documentation were used to gather data. To find trends in student engagement, interaction, and emotional reactions during the learning process, the gathered data was subjected to a thematic analysis. The results show that story-based learning improves students' understanding, communication skills, and self-assurance. Motivation, teamwork, and active participation in class activities are all greatly enhanced by game-based learning. Song-based learning promotes vocabulary recall and fosters a fun learning environment that motivates students to engage more fully. Additionally, combining these three strategies encourages greater zeal, focused attention, and constructive emotional involvement. In general, junior high school students' learning activities are effectively enhanced by the relevant, interactive, and student-centered learning experiences offered by story-based learning, game-based learning, and song-based learning.

Keywords: *Student activities, game-based learning, song-based learning, story-based learning, qualitative method, junior high school.*

INTRODUCTION

Particularly when it comes to junior high school English instruction, student learning engagement is widely acknowledged as a key predictor of successful classroom instruction. The degree to which students participate in the learning process in terms of behavior, emotion, and cognition is reflected in the learning activity. Cognitive engagement is the application of strategies and mental effort, emotional engagement is interest and delight, and behavioral engagement is task involvement. These three factors impact how well students meet learning objectives and how thoroughly they comprehend the course materials. Students that are actively involved tend to be more motivated, more persistent, and perform better academically, according to research. Students' eagerness to interact and practice their language abilities is also associated with engagement. Learning takes on significance and sustainability when students are involved. This demonstrates that student engagement encompasses both mental and emotional engagement in addition to physical participation. Sihotang and Simanjuntak

(2023) assert that increasing student involvement is essential to enhancing learning outcomes and classroom participation.

In English language classrooms, motivation and learning efficacy are strongly correlated with engagement. Pupils are more likely to enjoy learning activities, stay focused, and remember new information for extended periods of time when they are emotionally and cognitively engaged. Additionally, engagement promotes interaction between students and teachers, which is crucial for the development of communication skills. Positive learning experiences that lower anxiety and boost confidence in using English are produced by high engagement. Additionally, motivated students often exhibit autonomous learning practices and take ownership of their education. These qualities enhance language proficiency and provide meaningful learning. Academic attainment and classroom dynamics are strongly impacted by participation, according to educational psychology studies. Engagement improves motivation, teamwork, and perseverance in learning tasks, according to (Julieth et al., 2024). Therefore, one of the main objectives of teaching English should be to promote engagement.

Many junior high school English classes continue to use traditional teacher-centered methods despite the significance of engagement. These methods typically place a strong emphasis on textbook-based learning, memorizing, and lecturing. These approaches restrict students' ability to engage, communicate, and actively participate. Instead of actively creating knowledge, students frequently become passive consumers of information. Learning becomes less meaningful in passive learning environments because students become less motivated and interested. Students may thus find it difficult to improve their communication abilities and self-assurance when speaking English. Additionally, traditional approaches limit students' ability to collaborate and be creative. Students' willingness to participate is adversely affected by this learning problem. Teacher-centered instruction often results in low student involvement and little classroom interaction, according to (Hasyim & Sari, 2025).

Students' intellectual and emotional growth may be adversely affected by low involvement and passive learning habits. Boredom, nervousness, and a lack of confidence in their ability to learn English are common among students who do not participate actively. Students' willingness to talk, ask questions, and develop language abilities is hampered by these emotional obstacles. Students' motivation to finish learning assignments is also diminished by emotional distress. Learning outcomes become inadequate as a result. Passive classrooms cannot facilitate the ongoing practice and engagement necessary for language acquisition. Therefore, maintaining learning motivation requires emotional engagement. According to (Hasyim & Sari, 2025), students' motivation to participate and their vocabulary proficiency in English learning are greatly influenced by their emotional comfort and satisfaction.

Students' understanding and emotional engagement are greatly improved by story-based learning. Stories give pupils relevant and realistic contexts that aid in their comprehension of vocabulary and language structures. Students can relate course materials to real-world experiences by using narratives. Additionally, storytelling exercises foster imagination, creativity, and effective communication. Pupils get greater self-assurance when voicing their thoughts and opinions. Learning is more recalled when one is emotionally invested in the narrative. Storytelling also promotes social awareness and empathy. These advantages encourage meaningful education. According to (42.+artikel+jurnal+iqbal+icoe+2025.Pdf.Crdownload, n.d.), students' motivation, comprehension, and involvement in learning English are all enhanced by story-based instruction.

Students' motivation and behavioral engagement are greatly increased by game-based learning. Playing games introduces challenges, rewards, and competitiveness, all of which make learning fun. Pupils are inspired to engage in active participation and teamwork. Additionally, games foster critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Students can engage in enjoyable and participatory language practice through games. Playing group games promotes communication and cooperation. Pupils become more determined and concentrated on finishing assignments. These circumstances enhance the efficacy of learning. According to Palupi (2025), game-based learning boosts student motivation, teamwork, and engagement in the classroom.

Emotional involvement and language retention are greatly enhanced by song-based learning. Songs employ rhythm, melody, and repetition to make learning new words easier for kids.

Additionally, music lowers anxiety by fostering a calm learning environment. Singing and language exercises make students feel more at ease. Songs enhance the fun and engaging nature of learning. Pronunciation and listening abilities are also enhanced. A strong emotional bond with music increases motivation to learn. These benefits facilitate ongoing education. Rahmawati (2024) highlights that vocabulary acquisition and student motivation are enhanced by song-based learning.

This study is to explore how junior high school students' learning activities are influenced by Story-Based Learning, Game-Based Learning, and Song-Based Learning. The behavioral, emotional, and cognitive involvement of students in English classrooms is the main emphasis of this study. This study aims to provide a detailed description of students' learning experiences through the use of a qualitative descriptive method. It is anticipated that the results would enhance theoretical knowledge of creative teaching methods. In practical terms, this study offers teachers advice on how to apply interactive and student-centered teaching strategies. Additionally, it provides suggestions for raising learning quality and classroom engagement. In the end, this research encourages the creation of engaging and pleasurable English learning settings.

METHODOLOGY

Using Story-Based Learning, Game-Based Learning, and Song-Based Learning, this study used a qualitative descriptive research approach to provide a comprehensive picture of junior high school students' learning activities. The qualitative descriptive approach was chosen because it enables researchers to describe students' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement in real-world learning environments and investigate naturally occurring classroom events.

During the second semester of the school year, this study was carried out at MTs Riyadlul Tholibin Lingsuh, a private junior high school. Twenty eighth-grade students who were actively engaged in English language learning activities made up the participants. The important informant for further information on classroom implementation and student reactions was the English teacher.

In order to record learning activities without interfering with the teaching process, the researcher observed classroom instruction as a non-participant. Over the course of two weeks, six learning sessions were used to gather data.

The researcher watched classroom instruction as a non-participant in order to document learning activities without interfering with the teaching process. Six learning sessions were used to collect data over the period of two weeks. Thematic analysis was used to examine the gathered data in order to find trends in student participation and learning activities. To confirm the validity and reliability of the results, data verification was carried out by triangulating observation, interview, and documentation data.

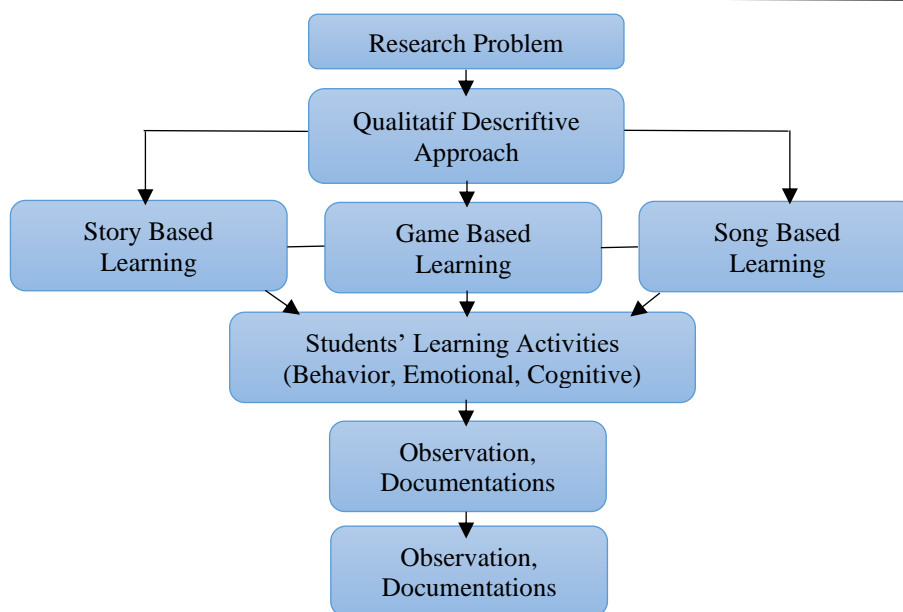


Figure 1. Research Design

Table 1. Observation Instrument Indicators

Parameter	Value (<i>t</i>)
Behavior Engagement	Activeness, Participation, Collaboration
Emotional Engagement	Enthusiasm, Interest, Enjoyment
Cognitive Engagement	Understanding, Idea Expression, Reflection
Learning Interaction	Student–Student, Student–Teacher
Learning Atmosphere	Fun, Focused, Supportive

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results show that the use of story, game, and song-based learning significantly increased students' behavioral engagement. The majority of students actively engaged in learning activities during classroom observations, including responding to inquiries, doing assignments, working with classmates, and offering to perform in front of the class. During traditional training, these behaviors were rarely seen. During Game-Based Learning activities, where students showed greater levels of passion and willingness to participate in classroom tasks, the increase in involvement was especially noticeable.

These conclusions were drawn from many classroom observations made over the course of six learning sessions. When learning materials were given in the form of games, stories, and songs, observation sheets revealed that students became more responsive, engaged, and interactive. This suggests that engaging and interactive learning environments promote greater behavioral engagement among students. This outcome is consistent with constructivist learning theory by (Anten et al., 2024), which holds that students actively create knowledge by participating in worthwhile activities: Constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes that learning is more successful when students actively participate in creating information through meaningful activities, is supported by the results. Active student participation is encouraged by the contextual and immersive learning settings that story, game, and song-based learning offer.

The findings show that when the three learning strategies were used, pupils showed favorable emotional reactions. When engaging in class activities, students were more upbeat, confident, and

passionate. In particular, song-based learning produced a laid-back and entertaining learning environment that lessened students' apprehension when speaking English. Interview data showed that when activities included songs and stories, students felt more at ease sharing their thoughts and were less fearful of making mistakes. Students' desire to join in conversations and performances, as well as their grins and laughter, all demonstrated emotional engagement. This emotional support promoted perseverance in learning and sustained attention.

This finding is consistent with Affective Learning Theory by (Allen & Ph, 2010), which highlights the importance of motivation, attitude, and emotion in the learning process: These results are consistent with affective learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of good emotions in boosting motivation, self-assurance, and learning retention. Students' emotional connection to learning activities is strengthened in a fun and encouraging learning environment.

Additionally, the study discovered increases in pupils' cognitive engagement. Pupils were more attentive, had a greater understanding of the course materials, and showed an enhanced capacity for English-language idea expression. Because narratives offered significant settings that improved comprehension and memory, story-based learning was especially successful in assisting students in understanding lesson content (Blown, 2024).

Compared to earlier traditional sessions, students' worksheets and reflective answers demonstrated a better grasp of vocabulary and sentence structures through documentation analysis. Students were better at drawing conclusions, summarizing data, and relating what they had learned to real-world situations, according to thematic analysis. According to these results, contextual learning techniques assist meaningful learning as opposed to rote memory by improving cognitive processing and deeper understanding.

Students' involvement and cooperation were greatly enhanced by the incorporation of game-based learning. Students had to cooperate, exchange ideas, and work together to solve difficulties when playing group games. During assignments, students were seen negotiating responses, supporting one another, and encouraging their colleagues.

This cooperative learning setting enhanced social interaction and communication abilities, fostering a classroom culture that prioritized cooperation and support among students. Social constructivist theory by (Wibowo et al., 2025), which holds that knowledge is created via social interaction and shared experiences, is reflected in such interactions.

A comprehensive learning experience that catered to a variety of learning styles, including visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners, was made possible by the integration of story-based learning, game-based learning, and song-based learning. Increased enthusiasm, persistent attention, and meaningful participation during the learning process were the outcomes of integrating these tactics. In order to concurrently improve behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement, this study suggests a revision of the current engagement theory by (Miliszewska & Horwood, n.d.) highlighting the integration of narrative, play, and music as a single instructional paradigm. This integrated approach shows that active engagement and good emotions improve cognitive understanding, which maximizes learning efficacy. Overall, the results show that story, game, and song-based learning successfully improve junior high school students' learning activities and offer engaging, fun, and student-centered learning opportunities.

CONCLUSION

Using a qualitative descriptive technique, this study examined the learning activities of junior high school students using Story-Based Learning, Game-Based Learning, and Song-Based Learning. The results show that these three teaching methods successfully raise students' emotional, cognitive, and behavioral involvement in English classes. Pupils showed increased interest, enhanced comprehension, increased confidence in their ability to express themselves, and increased participation in class activities. A fun and engaging learning environment that promoted meaningful student participation and sustained attention was produced via the use of stories, games, and music.

The findings further support the idea that integrating various methods results in comprehensive learning opportunities that support a variety of learning preferences and foster teamwork. Song-based learning promoted vocabulary retention and emotional comfort in learning, game-based learning boosted motivation and teamwork, and story-based learning assisted students in understanding lesson content through relevant situations. The favorable changes in student involvement and classroom interaction thus provide a clear answer to the research questions about how these techniques affect students' learning activities.

A number of useful suggestions are put forth in light of these findings. To create engaging, entertaining, and student-centered learning environments, English teachers are urged to frequently incorporate narrative, game, and song-based learning into their lesson plans. It is advised that schools assist educators by offering pertinent educational materials, online resources, and professional development courses that emphasize creative teaching methods. To enhance empirical data and investigate the long-term effects of these tactics on students' academic progress, future researchers are encouraged to carry out additional studies with larger samples, varying educational levels, or mixed-method approaches.

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Authorship Contribution Statement

Maelani: As conceptualization, design, analysis, writing
Nurfadillah & Munawaroh: As editing/reviewing, supervision

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