Implementation of Fun Learning Strategy to Increase Students' Motivation in Learning Christian Religious Education at SMP YPPGI Sentani

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Article Info	Abstract
	This study aims to analyse the application of Fun Learning strategy in increasing students' motivation in learning Christian Religious Education (PAK) at SMP YPPGI Sentani. The background of this research departs from the low motivation of students to learn due to the use of monotonous and less interactive learning methods. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, then analysed using an interactive model. The results showed that the application of Fun Learning through prayer and singing simulation activities, group discussions, and educational games such as Quizizz succeeded in increasing students' motivation, participation, and confidence. Students became more enthusiastic, active, and had a deeper understanding of the value of faith. In conclusion, the Fun Learning strategy is effective in creating a fun learning atmosphere, increasing intrinsic motivation, and integrating faith values with meaningful learning experiences.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is the main foundation in shaping the character and personality of learners. In the context of modern education, learning is not only orientated towards the transfer of knowledge, but also on the formation of values, critical thinking skills, and the development of learning motivation (Christina Turner et al., 2024). The paradigm shift from teacher-centred learning to student-centred learning is an urgent need to make the education process more relevant to the demands of the times. (Kyriacou et al., 2008). However, in reality, many educational institutions still maintain conventional methods, leading to boredom and low student motivation.

Learning motivation plays an important role in determining the success of the educational process. Intrinsic motivation, which is the drive to learn that arises from within due to curiosity and personal satisfaction, is stronger than extrinsic motivation that depends on rewards or punishments (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Low motivation to learn is often caused by a learning atmosphere that is monotonous, uninteresting, and lacks space for student participation. This is a big challenge, especially in learning Christian Religious Education (PAK) which demands students' emotional and spiritual involvement.

Christian Religious Education has a central role in shaping students' character and faith. Through PAK, students are expected to be able to live the values of love, responsibility, and truth as the basis for social life (Evans et al., 2020). However, in practice, PAK learning is often still dominated by the lecture method and memorisation of verses, so that the spiritual values taught are not absorbed deeply. This condition results in students only understanding the cognitive aspects of faith, without any authentic spiritual appreciation.

In this context, there is a need for a learning model that is able to integrate the intellectual and spiritual dimensions through an active, creative and fun approach. One of the relevant approaches is Fun Learning. This strategy is rooted in constructivistic and humanistic theories that emphasise that the learning process will be more meaningful if students feel safe, happy, and actively involved (Schöbel, 2020). Through activities such as simulations, educational games, and group discussions, Fun Learning helps students build understanding naturally through experience.

A number of studies support the effectiveness of Fun Learning in increasing learning motivation. Labster (2022) shows that a fun learning atmosphere can significantly increase student focus and participation. The use of game apps such as Quizizz is able to strengthen student engagement and improve their academic attainment (Sakka et al., 2024). Fun Learning not only provides entertainment, but also serves as an effective pedagogical strategy to promote meaningful learning.

At SMP YPPGI Sentani, the challenge of low student motivation in PAK lessons was identified through observation in May 2025. Many students showed symptoms of boredom and lack of enthusiasm for conventional learning. Teachers face difficulties in creating a participatory classroom atmosphere without ignoring the demands of the curriculum. This situation shows a gap between the ideals of faith-based learning and the reality of implementation in the field.

To answer this challenge, this study examines the application of Fun Learning strategies in increasing student motivation in PAK learning at SMP YPPGI Sentani. This approach is expected to create a learning atmosphere that is interactive, contextualised, and based on Christian values. Theoretically, this research enriches the understanding of the relationship between the humanistic approach and increasing learning motivation. Practically, the results of this study are expected to guide PAK teachers in developing innovative and relevant learning models. This research seeks to close the gap between modern pedagogical needs and the spiritual mission of Christian education. Through the application of Fun Learning, PAK learning is expected not only to be cognitively intellectual, but also to foster a spirit of learning rooted in faith and joy.

2. METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design conducted at SMP YPPGI Sentani. This approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of Fun Learning strategy and its impact on students' learning motivation. The research subjects included PAK teachers and students of grades VII-VIII who were directly involved in learning activities. Data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were made to see students' behaviour, responses and participation during the learning process. Interviews were conducted with student teachers and students to explore their experiences with the implementation of Fun Learning strategies, while documentation included field notes, photos of activities, and student reflection results.

Data analysis was carried out using an interactive model according to Matthew B. Miles, (1992), which includes three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was tested through source and method triangulation to ensure the reliability of the findings. Furthermore, the results of the study were analysed based on learning motivation theory and constructivistic approach to assess the effectiveness of Fun Learning strategy in improving students' motivation.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
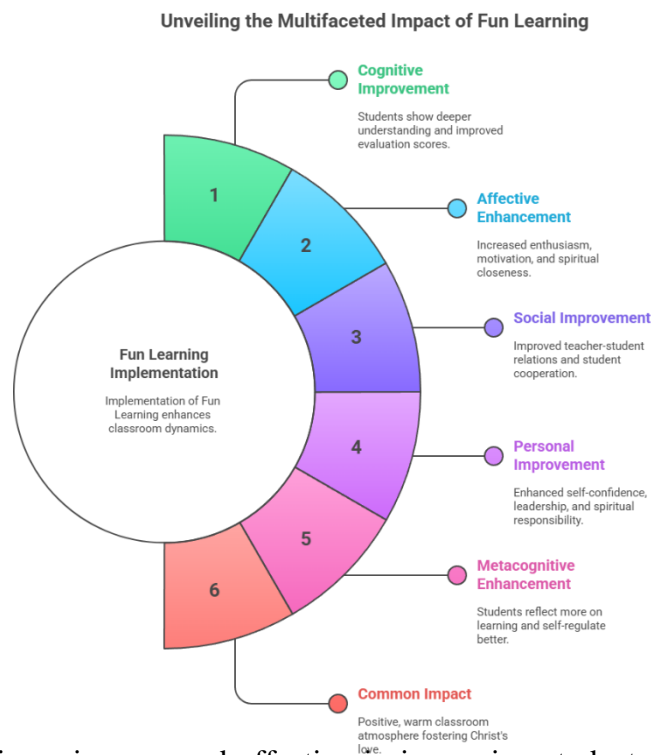### Designing Fun Learning Strategies as an Innovative Solution

Students' motivation in PAK learning is low. Students appear passive, bored and find it difficult to concentrate when the teacher uses the lecture method. This condition indicates students' weak emotional involvement in the learning process. PAK teachers also recognise that traditional approaches are no longer relevant to the characteristics of digital generation students who are more responsive to interactive activities (Ravika, 2023).

Based on further observations, teachers and researchers designed the implementation of Fun Learning strategies through varied activities such as simulations, group discussions, and technology-based educational games. The main objective is to create an active, creative and fun learning atmosphere. Learning activities are carried out by arranging the classroom to make it more comfortable, using visual media, and giving awards to students who actively participate.

The first implementation is through the simulation of spiritual discipline, namely prayer and singing activities at the beginning and end of learning. This activity aims to foster spiritual closeness and gratitude before starting the learning process. Initially, students seemed awkward leading prayers and hymns, but after being given training and positive support, they began to show more confidence.

The implementation of this simulation had a significant impact on increasing students' spiritual motivation. They felt closer to God and showed renewed enthusiasm in following the lessons. This activity also helped build solidarity among students as they learnt to appreciate their different abilities in leading prayers and hymns.

The next strategy is group discussion. The teacher divides students into small groups to discuss faith themes such as Bible characters and moral values. This activity allows students to learn to work together, express their opinions, and listen to the views of others. This process develops communication skills, critical thinking, and social responsibility.

Unveiling the Multifaceted Impact of Fun Learning

Group discussions proved effective in increasing student motivation and participation. Based on observations, students who were previously passive began to dare to speak and argue with group mates. Interview results showed that they felt they understood the material better because learning together felt lighter and more fun. The third method applied was the use of Quizizz educational media. This media combines elements of games and competitions that encourage students to actively participate (Pontoan & Kamagi, 2023). Through interactive quizzes, students compete to answer questions quickly and precisely. The class atmosphere becomes more lively, with laughter and enthusiasm.

Based on the observation results, the use of Quizizz significantly increased student participation. They became more focused, challenged to get the best score, and understood the material more easily. Educational games improve motivation and learning outcomes through gamification (Wismiati et al., 2025).

Improved Learning Outcomes and Positive Classroom Atmosphere

Evaluation of learning outcomes showed an increase in the average score of students compared to before the implementation of Fun Learning. In addition, interviews with teachers and students showed that the learning atmosphere became more positive. Teachers assessed that students were easier to discuss with, while students claimed to feel valued and not afraid to participate.

An analysis of the application of the three methods shows that the success of Fun Learning depends on students' emotional and spiritual engagement. When students feel accepted, safe and joyful, their intrinsic motivation grows naturally. This is in line with the Self-Determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) which emphasises that autonomy, competence and social connectedness increase learning motivation.

The implementation of Fun Learning also shows a change in the dynamics of the teacher-student relationship. The teacher no longer acts as the centre of knowledge, but as a facilitator who guides students to find the meaning of faith through experience (Busthan, 2023). This approach is in line with constructivistic theory which states that knowledge is built through active interaction with the environment.

Another impact that emerged was an increase in students' self-confidence. Through activities such as prayer simulations and educational games, students learn to perform in public, express opinions, and lead their peers. This aspect not only strengthens learning motivation, but also builds leadership character and spiritual responsibility.

The implementation of Fun Learning successfully changed the classroom atmosphere to be more participatory and reflective. Fun Learning not only increases participation, but also encourages reflection and conscious learning. The Conscious Learning model and reflective approach in active learning showed an increase in students' ability to plan, evaluate and regulate the learning process, as well as more frequent self-reflection (Ferdiansyah & Nahirah, 2025; Lanza et al., 2025). Students no longer just listen, but actively build understanding through interaction, games and faith reflection. Teachers also gained new experiences in designing learning that integrates faith values with creative approaches.

The results of this study reinforce previous findings that fun learning can improve students' motivation and learning outcomes (Labster, 2022). In the context of PAK, this strategy not only improves academic outcomes, but also deepens the spiritual and social dimensions of learners. Thus, Fun Learning becomes a contextualised strategy for value-based education.

Fun Learning is an effective and relevant pedagogical approach for Christian education. Through fun activities, students not only learn to understand the material, but also live the value of faith and build positive character that reflects the love of Christ.

4. CONCLUSION

This research shows that the application of Fun Learning strategy is effective in increasing students' learning motivation in PAK learning at SMP YPPGI Sentani. Through creative and fun activities such as spiritual simulation, group discussion, and educational games, students become more active, confident, and enthusiastic in learning. Theoretically, the results of this study support constructivistic theory and intrinsic motivation that meaningful learning is born from emotional and spiritual involvement. Practically, the findings provide recommendations for PAK teachers to develop learning models that are contextualised, innovative, and rooted in Christian faith values.

This research supports constructivistic theory and intrinsic motivation that meaningful learning comes from emotional and spiritual engagement. Practically, the findings provide recommendations for PAK teachers to develop learning models that are contextualised, innovative, and rooted in Christian faith values.

5. LITERATURE

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