



Implementing Joyful Learning Using Arabic Domino Cards to Improve Students' Motivation and Language Understanding

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DOI: <http://doi.org/10.35931/am.v8i2.5509>

Article Info

Received: July 31, 2025

Revised: August 11, 2025

Accepted: August 29, 2025

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Abstract: This research aims to assess the efficacy of the joyful learning method, enhanced through the use of domino cards as a teaching aid, in fostering students' motivation and understanding in Arabic language instruction. Adopting a quantitative approach, the study employed a quasi-experimental design namely, a one-group pretest-posttest format featuring a cohort of 31 eighth-grade students from MTsN 2 Surabaya. Data were gathered through the administration of pretests and posttests, complemented by classroom observations during the learning process. The statistical findings revealed a marked improvement in student outcomes, with mean scores increasing from 29.42 on the pretest to 74.74 on the posttest. The Paired Sample T-Test yielded a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the improvements were statistically significant rather than due to chance. These findings underscore the effectiveness of incorporating game-based elements into instruction, as they help foster a more dynamic, enjoyable, and productive learning environment. As such, the joyful learning approach utilizing domino cards proves to be an innovative and effective pedagogical option for Arabic language education.

Keywords: Joyful Learning, Domino Cards, Learning Motivation, Comprehension, Arabic Language

INTRODUCTION

In today's era of globalization, foreign language skills have become an extremely valuable asset. Mastery of a foreign language enables individuals to interact and communicate more broadly with others (Takwim et al., 2024).

One such strategically important foreign language to learn is Arabic, especially within the context of Islamic madrasah education.

Arabic proficiency not only serves as a communication tool but also plays a crucial role in understanding the Qur'an and various sources of Islamic knowledge. However, in practice, Arabic learning is often perceived by students as difficult and unenjoyable, which ultimately affects their motivation and comprehension during the learning process (Zahrotul et al., 2023).

To overcome these obstacles, teachers can utilize or develop appropriate methods, strategies, and learning media in the process of teaching Arabic speaking skills.

This effort is intended to increase students' interest and provide motivation so that they can communicate in Arabic more effectively (Rohmawati, 2019).

Learning motivation is one of the key factors that determine the success of language acquisition. Highly motivated students tend to be more enthusiastic in participating in learning activities and are more effective in understanding the subject matter (Widodo & Winarti, 2008). Therefore, a teaching method is needed that can simultaneously enhance both students' motivation and understanding. One such method is *joyful learning*, an approach that emphasizes the creation of a fun and meaningful learning environment. Through this approach, a positive classroom atmosphere can be established, allowing students to feel more comfortable and motivated to actively engage in the learning process (Azkiya & Istiqomah, 2025).

The Joyful Learning method is a pedagogical approach that focuses on creating a joyful and low-

pressure learning environment, allowing students to learn more comfortably and enthusiastically. Joyful learning refers to a learning process or educational experience that provides enjoyment and a sense of comfort to students throughout the learning activities (Lia Amelia, 2023). This approach integrates elements of play, entertainment, humor, physical movement, and social interaction to reduce the boredom and stress often associated with traditional teaching methods (Hanani & Yuliastutik, 2023).

The main goal of this approach is to offer a more enjoyable learning experience and to increase student enthusiasm, thereby fostering active engagement in the classroom. With a relaxed and interactive atmosphere, students are expected to absorb Arabic material more easily and without feeling burdened. In practice, this method is often combined with a variety of innovative learning media to enhance the effectiveness of instruction (Azkiya & Istiqomah, 2025).

One form of such innovation is the incorporation of educational games into the learning process. Games in the learning process serve as a medium for students to practice the language skills they have acquired. In addition, games help facilitate the teaching and learning process, enhance language proficiency, thinking ability, and attitude, as well as encourage students to devote their attention, emotions, and thoughts through play activities in accordance with the characteristics and forms of the learning media used (Arifin, 2021).

The use of games not only livens up the classroom atmosphere but has also been proven to enhance learning efficiency and promote positive student attitudes. For example, in the context of chemistry education, the use of card games and digital media has shown a significant improvement in student performance and retention of learning materials (Sundaram & Ramesh, 2022). This suggests that a similar approach holds great potential when applied to Arabic language learning to achieve more optimal learning outcomes.

Integrating games and interactive elements into Arabic language instruction can foster a more dynamic and enjoyable learning environment, while also increasing students' active participation during classroom activities. Furthermore, this approach contributes to maintaining student engagement and enthusiasm throughout the learning process (Taufiq & Ghani, 2022). A concrete example of the application of innovative learning media is the use of game-based tools such as Arabic Domino Cards. These not only add excitement to the learning process but also help students more easily remember and master Arabic vocabulary.

The domino game method can serve as an effective solution to overcome various learning challenges. Due to its entertaining nature, this approach is effective in boosting students' learning motivation. In the context of Arabic learning, the use of engaging media such as domino

cards plays an important role in implementing the Joyful Learning approach. This medium not only facilitates students' understanding of the material but also creates an interactive and enjoyable classroom environment, which in turn stimulates their enthusiasm for learning (Takwim et al., 2024).

According to a study conducted by Aulia Zahrotul Lillahi Rachman Hidayati and her colleagues, the three types of games implemented were proven to increase learning motivation, active classroom participation, and vocabulary acquisition in Arabic. Although some challenges were noted, such as limited teacher preparation time and less conducive classroom conditions, overall, the method was considered effective in creating a positive, enjoyable, and meaningful learning environment (Zahrotul et al., 2023).

A study by Milki Aan and colleagues found that the use of domino games for vocabulary learning in Islamic boarding schools was both appropriate and effective (Aan et al., 2022).

Research conducted by Shodikul Bahroyni and his team demonstrated that the use of domino card media had a positive impact on the vocabulary mastery of eleventh-grade social science students at MAN 3 Magetan. This media was found to have a strong and significant correlation with students' vocabulary improvement (Bahroyni et al., 2020).

In a study by Dewi Qotrun Nada Najwa and colleagues, it was found that game-based learning methods, such as educational card games, improved student motivation, active engagement, and Arabic vocabulary acquisition. Despite obstacles such as limited teacher preparation and less-than-ideal classroom conditions, the approach remained effective in fostering an enjoyable and meaningful learning atmosphere (Nada Najwa et al., 2023).

Referring to the explanation above, this study aims to evaluate the implementation of the Joyful Learning method through the use of domino card media in Arabic language instruction and to examine its impact on enhancing students' motivation and comprehension. The results of this study are expected to contribute meaningfully to the field of education, particularly in designing more innovative, engaging, and effective strategies for Arabic language learning.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design (pre-experimental design), in which the analysis of the observed phenomenon was conducted through numerical data (Abraham & Supriyati, 2022). Specifically, the One Group Pretest-Posttest Design was used, a method that involves administering a treatment to a single group without the inclusion of a control group for comparison. Assessment was carried out

by comparing the participants' outcomes before and after the treatment (Hastjarjo, 2019). The choice of this method was based on the researcher's objective to evaluate the effectiveness of using domino-based learning media for vocabulary acquisition within a predetermined sample group (Aan et al., 2022).

The research was conducted at MTsN 2 Kota Surabaya, involving a total of 31 students as participants. These students took part in a pre-test and post-test to measure their motivation and comprehension of Arabic language material following the implementation of the Joyful Learning method supported by domino card media (Irviana et al., 2024). This design was considered appropriate as it allowed the researcher to directly assess the impact of joyful learning on students' motivation and understanding, even though it did not include a comparison group.

The data collection techniques included administering tests to evaluate students' comprehension before and after the treatment, as well as conducting observation and documentation during the learning process to monitor student motivation. Instrument validation was carried out by involving two experts in Arabic language education who assessed the validity and appropriateness of both the test instruments and the motivation questionnaires used in this study, ensuring the instruments were valid and reliable prior to data collection.

The research procedure began with administering a pre-test to the 31 students to identify their initial levels of motivation and understanding of Arabic material. This was followed by the implementation of the Joyful Learning method, aided by specially designed domino card media for Arabic instruction.



Figure 1 Design of Arabic Domino Cards

The procedure for using the Arabic domino card learning media was carried out in several stages. *First*, the students were divided into four large groups. *Second*, each group was given a set of domino cards prepared by the teacher. *Third*, one card was placed at the center of the

table as the starting card. *Fourth*, the game began with the card marked *start*. *Fifth*, the players took turns connecting the cards by matching the sides with the corresponding vocabulary. *Finally*, once all the cards were arranged, the group that finished first was declared the winner.



Figure 2 Implementation of Learning Using Arabic Domino Card Media



Figure 3 Final Arrangement of the Arabic Domino Card Game

After the learning sessions, a post-test was given to evaluate the extent of improvement in both motivation and comprehension. The data obtained from the pre-test and post-test were then analyzed using descriptive statistics and the paired sample t-test to determine the significance of the observed improvements. The instrument validation by two education experts involved a review and revision process based on their feedback to ensure the instruments accurately measured the intended variables.

The research hypotheses were formulated as follows:

- H_0 (Null Hypothesis): The implementation of the Joyful Learning method supported by domino card media does not result in a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test outcomes regarding students' motivation and comprehension of Arabic material.

- H_1 (Alternative Hypothesis): The implementation of the Joyful Learning method using domino card media results in a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test outcomes, indicating an improvement in students' motivation and comprehension of Arabic material.

Thus, this study aims to assess the effectiveness of the Joyful Learning method supported by domino card media in enhancing the motivation and understanding of students at MTsN 2 Kota Surabaya.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

To determine the effectiveness level of the Joyful Learning method supported by Arabic domino card media on students' motivation and comprehension in Arabic language learning, quantitative data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistical techniques. This analysis was used to present the mean scores, data distribution (standard deviation), and standard error values from the students' pretest and posttest results. This information provides an initial overview of the changes in students' scores before and after the intervention and serves as a foundation for subsequent significance testing.

The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of the Joyful Learning method utilizing Arabic-language domino card media in enhancing students' motivation and understanding. The data collection process involved administering a pretest prior to the intervention and a posttest after the learning sessions to a group of 31 eighth-grade students.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistical Test Results

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Prerest	29.4194	31	15.10358	2.71268
	Posttest	74.7419	31	17.93501	3.22122

The results of the descriptive statistical analysis presented in Table 1 indicate that the average pretest score was 29.42 with a standard deviation of 15.10, while the average posttest score significantly increased to 74.74 with a standard deviation of 17.94.

This substantial improvement in the mean scores between the pretest and posttest reflects the evident effectiveness of the joyful learning method based on educational games such as domino cards. In the context of educational psychology, an enjoyable learning environment has been proven to simultaneously stimulate students' cognitive and affective domains, directly influencing their intrinsic motivation and ability to comprehend learning material. Learning infused with game elements provides a more contextual, interactive, and meaningful experience, thereby encouraging students

to be more actively engaged in absorbing and processing information.

These findings show a significant improvement in students' learning outcomes after participating in instruction using the joyful learning method supported by domino card media. The score increase not only demonstrates the success of the learning process but also indicates that students were able to comprehend the material more effectively after being involved in engaging, participatory activities (M. Baihaqi et al., 2023).

In addition, the comparison between the pretest and posttest mean scores shows an increase of 45.32 points. This considerable difference suggests that joyful learning methods have a clearly positive impact on student understanding (Dalle et al., 2018). The use of domino card media enables students to learn collaboratively while playing and discussing, resulting in a more dynamic and less monotonous classroom atmosphere.

This improvement indicates a substantial difference in students' level of understanding after experiencing the joyful learning method with domino card media. From an educational standpoint, this aligns with the principle that creating a fun learning environment can foster students' intrinsic motivation, which in turn contributes to greater learning effectiveness (Baihaqi, Mahmudah, et al., 2025). Such an approach helps students avoid the pressures of one-way learning and instead provides them space to explore and emotionally engage with the material (Ummat et al., 2024).

To test the significance of the observed differences, a Paired Sample T-Test was conducted. This method was chosen because it compares two paired data sets namely, the pretest and posttest results both collected from the same group of subjects. Thus, it is an appropriate statistical test to determine whether the observed differences are statistically significant or merely coincidental. The results of this test reveal whether the descriptively observed improvements are statistically meaningful.

Table 2. Paired Sample T-Test Results

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences			t		df (2-tailed)		
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	pre test - post test	-45.31	16.02371	2.87794	-51.2	-39.4	15	3.00	.000

r	pos	225	001	450	74
1	ttes	8	2	4	8
t					

Based on the data presented in Table 2, the mean difference between the pretest and posttest scores was -45.32 with a standard deviation of 16.02. The calculated t-value was -15.748 with 30 degrees of freedom (df), and the significance value was 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). Since this significance value is below 0.05, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant difference between students' pretest and posttest results. Moreover, the 95% confidence interval ranged from -51.20 to -39.45, further reinforcing the significance of the difference, indicating that it did not occur by chance.

These findings are consistent with previous research, which has demonstrated that the implementation of innovative instructional methods combined with interactive media significantly enhances student motivation and academic achievement (Almelhes, 2024).

The Joyful Learning method not only contributes to creating a comfortable learning environment but also plays an essential role in stimulating students' intrinsic motivation. When learning occurs in an enjoyable atmosphere, students tend to absorb information more easily, understand the material better, and retain it for longer periods. This condition is especially beneficial in Arabic language instruction, which demands mastery of vocabulary (*mufradat*), understanding of sentence structure (*nahwu*), and application of grammar rules (*shorof*).

The use of domino card media in Arabic language learning has proven effective in reducing the pressure often experienced with conventional teaching methods. This game-based media presents content in a more visual, practical, and interactive format, making it easier for students to understand abstract concepts. Moreover, the act of playing fosters emotional engagement, which indirectly enhances memory and content mastery.

The use of card media in teaching Arabic vocabulary has shown positive effects in strengthening conceptual understanding and improving students' literacy skills (Zubaidilah & Hasan, 2019). In addition to boosting learning outcomes, this method also succeeds in creating a joyful and dynamic learning environment. It promotes students' active involvement in every learning activity, fostering a more interactive and collaborative classroom (Taufiq & Ghani, 2022).

The integration of game-based media, such as Arabic-language domino cards, has been shown to significantly improve Arabic vocabulary acquisition and stimulate students' motivation to learn. Experimental research has found that students learning through game-based media achieved significantly higher outcomes

compared to students in control groups taught using conventional methods (Khaira et al., 2021).

Equally important, learning activities involving game-based media encourage the development of social dynamics in the classroom, including cooperation, communication, and peer discussion. These are key aspects of collaborative learning, which help build a positive classroom ecosystem. Through this approach, students not only acquire knowledge independently but also learn through positive interaction and knowledge exchange with their peers.

Overall, the findings of this study reinforce previous research which has shown that educational game-based approaches such as the use of domino cards within the Joyful Learning method not only effectively enhance students' understanding of the material but also provide a memorable and enjoyable learning experience (Baihaqi, Syarifah, et al., 2025). This aligns with the principles of modern education, which emphasize the active role of students as central agents in the learning process, viewing learning as a contextual social activity focused on students' direct experiences.

The success of using domino card media in learning is also greatly influenced by students' active engagement and the teacher's creativity in managing the classroom. Teachers play a vital role in designing instructional strategies so that the media serves not just as entertainment, but as a structured tool for achieving learning objectives effectively (Mulyadi et al., 2015). The use of domino cards has been shown not only to improve learning outcomes but also to enhance student motivation, encourage active participation, and foster collaborative involvement in the learning process. The effectiveness of this media has been supported by various studies showing increased average academic performance and student motivation after its implementation across multiple subjects, including mathematics, languages, and social sciences (Hairunisa & Abdurahman, 2024).

For instance, several studies in mathematics and social science (IPS) education have revealed that the consistent use of domino card media can increase students' average scores from one cycle to the next, while also increasing the number of students who meet the minimum competency standards (Arifin et al., 2021). This demonstrates that the positive impact of this learning media is not limited to a single subject area but extends across disciplines. Furthermore, the media is considered suitable and effective for creating an interactive and engaging learning environment, especially in primary education, where students typically prefer game-based and group-oriented learning activities (Muthoharoh & Cholifah, 2020).

The findings of this study reveal that the implementation of the Joyful Learning method utilizing Arabic domino card media is effective in increasing

students' motivation and comprehension. This approach can serve as an alternative instructional strategy, particularly in creating more engaging and meaningful language learning experiences.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the implementation of the Joyful Learning method combined with domino card media in Arabic language instruction significantly enhances students' motivation and comprehension. This is evidenced by the increase in the average pretest score from 29.42 to 74.74 in the posttest, with a mean difference of 45.32 points, which is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). This enjoyable and interactive learning approach not only creates a more dynamic and collaborative classroom environment but also boosts students' active participation throughout the learning process.

The use of domino card media as a learning tool has proven effective in helping students understand the material, strengthen their vocabulary acquisition, and improve their Arabic literacy skills. Beyond its positive impact on learning outcomes, this approach also reduces the pressure commonly associated with conventional teaching methods, allowing students to feel more relaxed and motivated to engage in the learning process. Therefore, the Joyful Learning method, which incorporates educational games such as domino cards, can serve as an innovative and effective alternative strategy to enhance the quality of Arabic language instruction in schools.

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