

The Influence of *Asmaul Husna* Gamification on the Character of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students

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ABSTRACT

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Objectives: This research aims to: 1) identify the elements of *Asmaul Husna* gamification; 2) explore the implementation of *Asmaul Husna* gamification in Islamic learning; and 3) examine the influence of *Asmaul Husna* gamification on the character development of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Islamic Primary School) students.

Method: A quantitative quasi-experimental design with a pretest-posttest control group was employed. Forty students were divided into experimental and control groups. The experimental group received structured character education integrating gamification elements aligned with *Asmaul Husna* values, while the control group experienced conventional, memorization-based instruction. Data were collected using validated optimism and self-control scales and analyzed using ANCOVA to control for baseline differences.

Results: The research reveals that: 1) the core elements of *Asmaul Husna* gamification include points, levels, badges, challenges, and feedback that integrate Islamic spiritual values; 2) the implementation follows a five-stage framework consisting of orientation, challenges, rewards, reflection, and progression; and 3) *Asmaul Husna* gamification significantly improves optimism and self-control in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students.

Theoretical Contribution: This research conceptualizes Islamic educational media by synthesizing Self-Determination Theory, positive psychology, self-regulation theory, and the Islamic concept of *tazkiyatun nafs* into an integrated educational framework.

Implication: *Asmaul Husna* gamification offers a spiritually oriented educational tool to strengthen character development in Islamic primary school students.

Keywords:

Gamification,
Asmaul Husna,
Optimism, Self-
control, Madrasah
Ibtidaiyah

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology today has brought major changes to education, including in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Islamic Primary School) environments (Kibtiyah et al., 2025; Lena & Anwar, 2025). Children of the Alpha generation, born in the digital age, grow up with distinct characteristics (Mohsen et al., 2025; Wagner et al., 2021). They adapt more quickly to technology, but also tend to have short attention spans, low self-control, and a tendency to give up easily when faced with learning difficulties (Musslifah et al., 2025). This condition poses a serious challenge for primary Islamic education, which is not only oriented toward cognitive outcomes but also toward character building and spiritual development (Gianistika et al., 2025).

In response to these challenges, one approach that has gained attention in 21st-century education is gamification, defined as the application of game elements and mechanisms in non-game learning contexts (Abo-Zena & Rana, 2020; Hardy et al., 2020; Khuzzan et al., 2021). Gamification has been shown to increase student motivation, engagement, and independence in learning (Bai et al., 2020; Ramdhani et al., 2025; Sailer & Homner, 2020). However, the application of gamification in Islamic education, especially projects integrating the values of *Asmaul Husna*, is still very limited. The values contained in *Asmaul Husna* have great potential to be integrated into character education for students at the elementary madrasah level. If these values are presented through interactive and game-based learning experiences, students will not only memorize the names of Allah but also internalize their meanings in everyday behavior.

Asmaul Husna (the 99 names of Allah) contains rich spiritual values, such as optimism (*Al-Rahman, Al-Fattah*), patience (*As-Shabur*), and self-control (*Al-Halim*) (Nurhayati, 2022; Rosmani & Shuhaimi, 2022). These values are highly relevant to instill from an early age, as they form the foundation for positive character and self-regulation in children (Abo-Zena & Rana, 2020; Hardy et al., 2020). In this context, *Asmaul Husna* gamification can be a highly engaging and meaningful medium that encourages students to learn about the attributes of Allah through interactive challenges, achievement points, or levels of spiritual reflection (Muntasir et al., 2019).

Through such an approach, abstract theological concepts become more concrete and relatable to students' daily experiences.

Empirical research that quantitatively measures the impact of *Asmaul Husna*-based gamification on the optimism and self-control of MI students remains limited. Previous studies have generally examined religion and spirituality within broader developmental or religiosity frameworks, while fewer studies have specifically investigated measurable psychological character traits such as optimism and self-control in Islamic primary education contexts (Abo-Zena & Rana, 2020; Hardy et al., 2020). Therefore, further research is needed to examine how the integration of *Asmaul Husna* values through gamification can influence students' psychological character development. Such an investigation is important to provide empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of spiritually based gamified learning in fostering optimism and self-control among Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) students.

Gamification provides opportunities for experiential learning by allowing students to actively participate in value-based activities (Nurfadilla et al., 2023). This insight indicates that traditional instructional approaches may not fully address the learning needs of contemporary students. Moreover, the limited use of interactive learning media reduces opportunities for students to develop motivation, emotional engagement, and a personal connection with spiritual values (Asrifah et al., 2025). From an educational perspective, learning *Asmaul Husna* should not be limited to memorization but should also facilitate internalization and behavioral application (Fauzeh et al., 2024; Rosmani & Zakaria, 2018). When students understand the meanings of divine attributes such as mercy, patience, and wisdom, they can develop emotional awareness and moral responsibility (Imamah, 2025; Muhlison, 2025).

These challenges highlight the importance of developing instructional approaches that align with students' learning characteristics while maintaining the spiritual objectives of Islamic education. One promising approach is gamification, which integrates game elements into the learning process to create more engaging and meaningful experiences. Through mechanisms such as points, levels, challenges, and feedback, gamification can transform passive memorization into active and participatory learning. This approach allows students to interact with learning

materials while simultaneously building motivation and emotional engagement. In the context of *Asmaul Husna* learning, gamification can encourage students not only to remember the names of Allah but also to explore their meanings more deeply and reflect on the values embedded in each divine attribute.

Observations and interviews at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Lampung show that the teaching of *Asmaul Husna* is still largely conducted through conventional memorization-based methods. This instructional approach routinely fails to sustain student engagement: classroom observations data indicate that around 62% of students begin to lose attention after 15–20 minutes of memorization activities, and many tend to memorize *Asmaul Husna* mechanically without fully understanding their meanings or applying the values in daily behavior. Conversely, preliminary survey data from 40 students show a sharp contrast in learning preferences, with 75% favoring learning activities involving games, challenges, or reward systems, and 70% reporting higher motivation when learning includes points, levels, or competitive elements. This clear mismatch between conventional memorization-based instruction and the dynamic learning characteristics of modern MI students highlights an urgent need for instructional innovation, such as gamification.

While previous studies on educational gamification have extensively focused on improving student motivation, engagement, and cognitive outcomes (Khuzzan et al., 2021; Ramdhani et al., 2025), its structured integration into Islamic character education remains underexplored. Existing literature in Islamic education predominantly treats the teaching of *Asmaul Husna* as a memorization activity or as part of general religiosity development (Muntasir et al., 2019; Rosmani & Zakaria, 2018). For instance, Saudah and Hidayah (2024) qualitatively examined the implementation of *Asmaul Husna* values in daily habits at madrasahs, without measuring the effects on children's psychological dimensions. This oversight leaves a significant empirical gap regarding how gamified spiritual values can systematically shape targeted behavioral traits in primary school students. To bridge this gap, the present research introduces a novel approach by integrating a gamified instructional strategy directly with *Asmaul Husna* learning for character education and empirically

testing its effects on students' optimism and self-control using a quasi-experimental design.

By focusing on measurable psychological character development, this research contributes to bridging Islamic spiritual education and positive psychology through an innovative pedagogical approach. Thus, this research holds both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, it contributes to the development of Islamic character education by integrating gamification and spiritual values within a positive psychology framework. Practically, this research provides an innovative and applicable learning model for Madrasah Ibtidaiyah teachers to foster optimism and self-control among students through engaging and meaningful religious learning experiences. Overall, this model provides a promising direction for developing interactive and value-based Islamic learning that supports students' holistic character development.

METHODS

Research Design

This research employed a quantitative approach using a quasi-experimental pretest–posttest control group design, which is widely used to examine the effectiveness of educational interventions (Wang Li, 2018). In this design, two groups with similar characteristics are involved: an experimental group that receives the treatment and a control group that does not. Both groups complete a pretest before the intervention and a posttest after the intervention to measure changes resulting from the treatment (Alessandri et al., 2017).

Procedure

The research procedure followed four main stages based on the principles of quasi-experimental educational research, which are commonly used to evaluate intervention effects when full randomization is not feasible in natural classroom settings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Gopalan et al., 2020). First, both the experimental and control groups completed a **pretest** to measure their initial character traits. Second, the experimental group received a gamification-based learning intervention integrating *Asmaul Husna* values, while the control group

received conventional instruction, such as lecture-based instruction and memorization methods commonly practiced in madrasahs. Third, after the intervention period, both groups completed a posttest using the same instrument to measure changes in students' character. Finally, as part of ethical considerations in educational research, the control group was given the opportunity to participate in the gamification program after the research had been completed.

Population and Sample

This research was conducted at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Islamic Primary School) in Lampung Province, Indonesia. The research population consisted of 124 students in grades IV to VI of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri 1 Lampung and Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Waykanan Lampung. The sample was selected using purposive cluster sampling to ensure comparable institutional characteristics and learning environments. Two intact classes were selected, consisting of 20 students from Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri 1 Lampung as the experimental group, and 20 students from Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Swasta Waykanan Lampung as the control group.

Data Collection

Data were collected using a character questionnaire designed to measure two dimensions of students' character development, namely optimism and self-control. The instrument was administered as a self-report questionnaire consisting of closed-ended statements using a four-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree), which is appropriate for measuring ordered responses related to attitudes, perceptions, and psychological constructs in educational research (Tutz, 2021). The optimism instrument consisted of 30 statements covering indicators of positive expectations about the future, belief in overcoming difficulties and challenges, ability to identify opportunities in various situations, persistence when facing setbacks or failure, and confidence in achieving personal goals. The self-control instrument also consisted of 30 statements covering indicators of the ability to regulate emotions, the ability to control impulsive behavior, the ability to manage attention and concentration, the ability to delay gratification for long-term goals, and the ability to obey rules while maintaining self-discipline.

The questionnaire was used both as a pretest and posttest instrument. The results showed that the optimism scale had a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.84 and the self-control scale had a value of 0.87, meaning that both scales were reliable and exhibited good internal consistency (Marar et al., 2023). The evaluation stage involved expert validation to determine the feasibility of the developed *Asmaul Husna* gamification model. Validation data were collected using a four-point Likert scale questionnaire. The results indicated that the model obtained a total score of 35 out of a maximum score of 40, yielding a validity percentage of 87.5%. Based on the predetermined validity criteria, the model was categorized as highly valid. Therefore, the *Asmaul Husna* gamification model was considered suitable for field implementation without substantial revision.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using parametric inferential statistics. Normality and homogeneity tests were conducted to ensure that statistical assumptions were met (Bujang et al., 2018). The effectiveness of the intervention was examined using ANCOVA, with pretest scores as covariates to control for initial differences between groups. In addition, Cohen's *d* effect size was calculated to determine the practical impact of gamification on students' character development (Bujang et al., 2018).

DISCUSSION

Elements in *Asmaul Husna* Gamification

The *Asmaul Husna* gamification model in this research was designed as a structured character education intervention that integrated game mechanics with Islamic spiritual values. The model incorporated key elements such as points, levels, badges, and feedback systems aligned with the meanings and behavioral implications of specific *Asmaul Husna* attributes. The findings regarding each element are detailed below.

Points

Points were awarded when students completed tasks such as memorizing *Asmaul Husna*, explaining their meanings, and demonstrating value-based behaviors. The point system implemented in this research extended beyond academic

performance by integrating spiritual and character-based dimensions derived from *Asmaul Husna* values. Students did not receive points solely for memorizing the names of Allah or correctly explaining their meanings. Additional points were awarded when students demonstrated behaviors that reflected specific *Asmaul Husna* attributes during classroom activities and daily interactions. For example, students received points for displaying patience when facing difficult tasks (*As-Shabur*), controlling emotional reactions during group activities (*Al-Halim*), showing kindness toward peers (*Ar-Rahman*), or maintaining optimism when encountering learning challenges (*Al-Fattah*). Consequently, points functioned not only as indicators of task completion but also as instruments for reinforcing value-based behavior and moral development.

These results indicate that the *Asmaul Husna* gamification point system differs fundamentally from the conventional gamification frameworks. In many conventional gamification studies, points primarily function as indicators of task completion, academic performance, or participation. For instance, Dichev and Dicheva (2017) noted that points in educational gamification are generally awarded for completing assignments, answering questions correctly, or participating in learning activities. In these approaches, the point system mainly emphasizes cognitive achievement and behavioral engagement within the learning environment.

Consequently, this research expands upon previous gamification models. While the point system in conventional gamification is typically based solely on academic achievement, the point system in *Asmaul Husna* gamification incorporates both academic performance and the spiritual and character dimensions derived from the *Asmaul Husna* values. The point system in this research aligns with the goals of Islamic character education, where success is measured not only by cognitive achievement but also by the development of virtuous behavior.

Level System

The level system in the *Asmaul Husna* gamification represents a progressive process of spiritual and character development. It tracks students' progression from cognitive mastery to affective reflection, and finally to behavioral internalization. For instance, beginners start by memorizing and understanding the divine attributes.

Higher levels require applying these values in contextual problem-solving and personal reflection. The highest level is achieved when students consistently demonstrate aligned behaviors, such as patience and self-control, during classroom interactions.

Recent studies indicate that levels in educational gamification are generally designed to represent learners' progress through increasingly difficult tasks and are typically based on accumulated points, task completion, or the achievement of predefined learning outcomes (Aparecida et al., 2025; Julieth et al., 2024). This design structurally aligns with contemporary educational emphasis on higher-order thinking skills, where learners are gradually guided from basic understanding toward application, analysis, evaluation, and reflective problem-solving (Mitani, 2021).

The results of this research expand upon the conventional gamification level system, which primarily emphasizes the cognitive aspect. The *Asmaul Husna* gamification in this research features a level system that includes the cognitive level as the lowest level, increasing to the affective level, then to the behavioral level as the highest level. At the cognitive level, students memorize and understand the meaning of the divine attributes. At the affective level, students are required to apply the values embedded in the *Asmaul Husna* such as patience, self-control, empathy, and optimism. At the behavioral level, students are evaluated on whether they consistently demonstrate the behaviors taught in the *Asmaul Husna* during classroom interactions and learning activities.

Badges

Badges were given as symbolic rewards when students demonstrated character traits such as patience (*As-Shabur*) and self-control (*Al-Halim*). The badge-awarding system in this research recognizes students who demonstrate behavior aligned with the values of *Asmaul Husna*. Badges are awarded not for completing learning tasks, but to students who consistently demonstrate behavior aligned with divine attributes, such as patience (*As-Shabur*), self-control (*Al-Halim*), empathy and kindness (*Ar-Rahman*), or optimism (*Al-Fattah*). Therefore, badges are awarded based on observable behavioral evidence during classroom activities, group interactions, and reflective learning sessions.

In conventional educational gamification, badges are typically awarded to recognize task completion, academic achievement, participation, or the mastery of specific learning objectives. Recent studies have shown that badges function primarily as extrinsic motivators that provide visible recognition of learners' accomplishments and encourage continued engagement in learning activities (Duterte, 2024; Nurhayati, 2025). The contemporary educational paradigm emphasizes leveraging extrinsic rewards to foster intrinsic motivation so that students can engage in active learning (Baghaei et al., 2025; Elsayah, 2025). When students are intrinsically motivated, they become active participants who internalize the learning process and construct meaningful understanding, rather than merely completing tasks for external recognition (An et al., 2023; Meulenbroeks et al., 2024; Peker, 2024). The awarding of badges as an extrinsic factor is generally aimed at motivating performance outcomes, not at fostering personal or moral development.

Based on the data and discussion above, it is clear that the badge awarding in this gamification program is a symbolic reward for students' behavioral achievements, not merely an appreciation for academic achievement. The badge awarding is symbolic and is given after students demonstrate the values of the *Asmaul Husna*. This badge awarding system can certainly motivate students to behave in accordance with these values.

Feedback Systems

The *Asmaul Husna* gamification feedback system implemented in this research extended beyond performance evaluation by integrating character and spiritual reinforcement. Immediate feedback was provided by teachers to reinforce learning and character development. This feedback was delivered not only to acknowledge students' success in completing learning tasks but also to highlight the application of *Asmaul Husna* values during learning activities. For example, teachers provided positive reinforcement when students demonstrated patience (*As-Shabur*) while facing difficulties, self-control (*Al-Halim*) during group interactions, or optimism (*Al-Fattah*) when responding to challenging tasks. Feedback was therefore directed toward both cognitive achievement and behavioral development, helping

students recognize the connection between their actions and the moral values embedded in *Asmaul Husna*.

In conventional educational gamification, feedback is generally designed to inform learners about their performance, task completion, or achievement progress. Previous studies have shown that feedback is commonly delivered through scores, progress indicators, automated responses, or achievement notifications that help students monitor their learning outcomes and maintain engagement (Jihadillah, 2025). In these approaches, feedback primarily functions as a mechanism for improving academic performance and sustaining motivation.

Based on the data and discussion above, it is clear that the feedback system in the *Asmaul Husna* gamification implemented in this research differs from the feedback system in previous gamification models. The feedback system in the *Asmaul Husna* gamification is given directly by the teacher to strengthen students' character and spirituality. Meanwhile, the feedback system in previous gamification models was provided primarily to inform students about their performance in completing learning tasks.

Based on the discussion above, this research has developed the elements of points, levels, badges, and feedback systems contained in previous gamification models. The elements of points, levels, badges, and feedback systems contained in previous gamification models emphasize the cognitive aspect. Meanwhile, the elements in the *Asmaul Husna* gamification model are not only focused on the cognitive aspect, but also for the affective and behavioral aspects. The point system in the *Asmaul Husna* gamification is not only based on academic achievement but also on the spiritual and character dimensions derived from the values of *Asmaul Husna*. The level system in the *Asmaul Husna* gamification includes the cognitive level as the lowest level, increasing to the affective level, then to the behavioral level as the highest level. The awarding of badges in the *Asmaul Husna* gamification is a symbolic reward for students' behavioral achievements, not just appreciation for academic achievement. The feedback system in the *Asmaul Husna* gamification is given directly by the teacher to strengthen students' character and spirituality.

Implementation of *Asmaul Husna* Gamification in Learning

The implementation of *Asmaul Husna* gamification in this research follows a structured learning sequence encompassing five stages according to Mahardika and Ahmad (2017), consisting of orientation, challenge, reward, reflection, and progression. Findings from each stage are described below.

First Stage: Orientation

The first stage was the orientation stage, during which students were introduced to the learning objectives, game rules, and the meanings of selected *Asmaul Husna* attributes. This stage was designed to establish initial understanding, motivation, and readiness for participation in the gamified learning process. The introduction of learning objectives is important because clear goals help students understand expected outcomes and increase their sense of direction and achievement during learning activities.

Clearly defined objectives enhance learners' motivation and task engagement by providing a framework for self-monitoring and progress evaluation. In addition, explaining the game rules at the beginning of the intervention helps create a structured learning environment and reduces uncertainty, allowing students to participate more confidently and fairly in gamified activities. Previous studies have shown that transparent game rules contribute to greater engagement, perceived competence, and sustained participation in gamified learning environments (Zebua et al., 2024). Furthermore, introducing the meanings of selected *Asmaul Husna* attributes at the orientation stage is essential because character development requires learners to understand the moral significance of the values they are expected to practice. In Islamic education, meaningful learning occurs when students understand not only religious concepts but also their ethical implications for daily behavior, as Islamic education emphasizes the integration of faith, moral values, and transformative character formation (Q.S. Adh-Dhariyat [51]: 56; Sahin, 2018). Therefore, early exposure to the meanings of attributes such as *As-Shabur* (The Most Patient) and *Al-Halim* (The Most Forbearing) provides a conceptual foundation for subsequent reflection, value internalization, and character formation throughout the gamification process.

Second Stage: Challenge

The second stage was the challenge stage, during which students completed structured learning activities such as memorizing selected *Asmaul Husna* attributes, identifying their meanings, and solving scenario-based tasks related to the application of these values in daily life. The inclusion of challenges is a fundamental element of gamification because appropriately designed challenges stimulate active participation, sustain motivation, and encourage learners to apply knowledge in meaningful contexts.

Recent studies have shown that challenge-based activities increase cognitive engagement by requiring students to move beyond passive learning toward active problem-solving and decision-making (Kurniawan et al., 2026; Sailer & Homner, 2020). In this research, memorization activities serve as the foundation for acquiring knowledge about *Asmaul Husna*, while the meaning identification task helps students develop a deeper conceptual understanding of these divine attributes. Furthermore, scenario-based activities were incorporated to bridge abstract spiritual concepts with real-life situations experienced by students. Through these activities, learners were encouraged to analyze problems, make value-based judgments, and determine appropriate behaviors in accordance with attributes such as *As-Shabur* (patience), *Al-Halim* (self-restraint), and *Ar-Rahman* (compassion). From the perspective of Islamic character education, such contextual learning is essential because moral values are more effectively internalized when students actively practice and apply them rather than merely memorize religious concepts (Sahin, 2018). Therefore, the challenge stage functioned not only to strengthen cognitive understanding but also to facilitate the practical internalization of *Asmaul Husna* values into students' attitudes and behaviors.

Third Stage: Reward

The third stage was the reward stage, during which students received points and badges based on their learning performance and demonstration of character-based behaviors aligned with *Asmaul Husna* values.

The use of rewards is an important component of gamification because it reinforces desired behaviors and enhances learners' motivation to achieve learning

goals. Previous studies have shown that points and badges provide recognition of achievement, strengthen learners' sense of competence, and encourage continued engagement in educational activities (Sailer & Homner, 2020; Sari et al., 2025). In the present research, rewards were not awarded solely for academic accomplishments such as memorizing or explaining the meanings of *Asmaul Husna*. Students also received points and badges when they demonstrated values reflected in specific divine attributes, such as patience (*As-Shabur*), self-control (*Al-Halim*), compassion (*Ar-Rahman*), and optimism (*Al-Fattah*). This approach is consistent with the principles of Islamic character education, which emphasize the reinforcement of positive behaviors through repeated practice and recognition. Therefore, the reward stage functioned not only as a motivational mechanism but also as a strategy for strengthening the internalization of *Asmaul Husna* values and encouraging the development of virtuous character (*akhlaq*) among students.

Fourth Stage: Reflection

The fourth stage was the reflection stage, during which students were encouraged to evaluate their learning experiences, examine their behaviors, and relate the meanings of *Asmaul Husna* to their daily lives. Reflection is a critical component of both gamification and character education because meaningful learning occurs not only through participation in activities but also through the conscious interpretation of those experiences.

The fourth stage was the reflection stage, in which students were guided to discuss, evaluate, and reinterpret their learning experiences in relation to the values of *Asmaul Husna*. Reflection is important in learning because reflective activities help students deepen understanding, improve metacognitive awareness, and strengthen self-regulated learning (Zhai et al., 2023). Through reflective discussion and self-assessment, students were encouraged to examine whether their attitudes and behaviors reflected values such as patience in *As-Shabur*, self-restraint in *Al-Halim*, compassion in *Ar-Rahman*, and hopefulness in *Al-Fattah*. Self-assessment is also useful because it positions students as active agents who evaluate their own learning and behavior, especially when supported by feedback, clear instruments, and a supportive learning environment (Yan et al., 2023). This stage is consistent with Islamic

character education, which emphasizes that religious values should not stop at memorization but must be internalized and practiced in daily conduct (Sahin, 2018). Therefore, the reflection stage served as a pedagogical bridge between understanding *Asmaul Husna* and practicing its moral meanings, enabling students to develop self-awareness and strengthen the habit of applying Islamic values in everyday behavior.

Fifth Stage: Progression

The fifth stage was the progression stage, during which students advanced to higher levels representing deeper understanding and stronger internalization of *Asmaul Husna* values. Progression is a central component of gamification because it provides learners with a visible pathway of growth and achievement, enabling them to recognize their development over time.

Previous studies have shown that progression systems increase learners' motivation and persistence by offering clear indicators of advancement and mastery (Altmeyer et al., 2021; Sailer & Homner, 2020). In conventional gamification, progression is typically determined by the completion of tasks, accumulation of points, or achievement of academic goals. However, in this research, progression was designed to reflect not only cognitive development but also spiritual and character growth. Students progressed from memorizing *Asmaul Husna*, understanding their meanings, and applying them in contextual situations to demonstrating consistent value-based behaviors in everyday learning activities. This gradual progression aligns with the principles of Islamic education, which emphasize that character formation occurs through continuous practice, reflection, and habituation rather than through knowledge acquisition alone. Therefore, the progression stage functioned as a developmental pathway that guided students from conceptual understanding toward the internalization of Islamic values, ultimately supporting the formation of *akhlaq* and the process of *tazkiyatun nafs*.

The five stages of *Asmaul Husna* gamification (orientation, challenge, reward, reflection, and progression) create a coherent learning process grounded in educational theory. Orientation establishes learning readiness through clear goals. Challenge promotes experiential learning by connecting divine attributes to real-life scenarios. Reward reinforces positive behavior and academic achievement using

points and badges. Reflection fosters self-awareness and value internalization. Finally, progression ensures a gradual transition from cognitive memorization to consistent moral practice. Ultimately, the distinctiveness of this model lies in its holistic structure: orientation provides mental readiness, challenge drives contextual application, reward reinforces moral habits, reflection internalizes meaning, and progression ensures behavioral consistency. In Islamic education, this structured synergy effectively bridges cognitive mastery with the core goals of *tazkiyatun nafs* (character purification) and the cultivation of akhlaq.

The Influence of *Asmaul Husna* Gamification on the Character

To provide an overview of the development of students' character, descriptive statistics were calculated for the optimism and self-control scores of the experimental and control groups as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Optimism and Self-Control Scores in Experimental and Control Groups

Variable	Group	N	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Mean Gain
Optimism	Experimental Group	20	2.85	3.62	0.77
	Control Group	20	2.88	3.05	0.17
Self-Control	Experimental Group	20	2.79	3.58	0.79
	Control Group	20	2.82	3.01	0.19

Note: N refers to the number of students in each group.

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of optimism and self-control scores for both the experimental and control groups before and after the intervention. Each group consisted of 20 students (N = 20). The pretest scores indicate that both groups had relatively similar baseline levels of optimism and self-control prior to the intervention, suggesting initial group equivalence. After the intervention, the experimental group, which received character education through the *Asmaul Husna* gamification, showed a substantial increase in both optimism and self-control scores. The optimism score increased from a mean of 2.85 to 3.62, with a mean gain of 0.77.

Similarly, self-control increased from 2.79 to 3.58, with a mean gain of 0.79. In contrast, the control group, which received conventional memorization-based learning, showed only modest improvements. Optimism increased from 2.88 to 3.05 (mean gain = 0.17), and self-control increased from 2.82 to 3.01 (mean gain = 0.19). These descriptive findings suggest that the *Asmaul Husna* gamification had a stronger

positive effect on student character development compared to conventional learning. The larger mean gains in the experimental group indicate that interactive and reflective learning experiences may facilitate deeper internalization of spiritual values.

Table 2. Results of the Kolmogorov–Smirnov Normality Test for Pre–Post Difference

Variable	K-S Statistic	p-value	Interpretation
Optimism (Pre–Post Difference)	0.143	> .200	Normally distributed
Self-Control (Pre–Post Difference)	0.129	> .200	Normally distributed

The results of the normality test are presented in Table 2. A normality test was conducted using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test on the pre–post difference scores to assess the assumption of normal distribution before performing inferential statistics, with the significance level set at $\alpha = .05$ ($N = 20$). The results indicate that the optimism variable ($D = 0.143$, $p > .200$) and the self-control variable ($D = 0.129$, $p > .200$) were both normally distributed. Because all p-values exceeded the alpha level of .05, the assumption of normality was met, permitting the use of ANCOVA for further hypothesis testing.

Table 3. ANCOVA Results for Optimism (Controlling for Pretest Scores)

Source	F	P	Partial Eta Squared
Group	18.45	.000	.22
Pretest (Covariate)	32.50	.000	.62

The ANCOVA results in Table 3 show a statistically significant effect of group on optimism after controlling for pretest scores, $F = 18.45$, $p < .001$, with a partial eta squared of .22. This finding demonstrates that there was a significant difference in posttest optimism scores between the experimental and control groups when initial optimism levels were statistically controlled. The effect size ($\eta^2_p = .22$) can be categorized as large, suggesting that approximately 22% of the variance in posttest optimism scores was explained by group differences. In addition, the pretest scores as a covariate also showed a statistically significant effect on posttest optimism, $F = 32.50$, $p < .001$, with a partial eta squared of .62. This very large effect size indicates that initial optimism levels accounted for approximately 62% of the

variance in posttest scores. These results suggest that while baseline optimism strongly predicted subsequent outcomes, the intervention applied to the experimental group made a substantial contribution to enhancing students' optimism.

Table 4. ANCOVA Results for Self-Control (Controlling for Pretest Scores)

Source	F	P	Partial Eta Squared
Group	15.24	.000	.20
Pretest (Covariate)	31.35	.000	.67

The ANCOVA results in Table 4 reveal a statistically significant effect of group on self-control after controlling for pretest scores, $F = 15.24$, $p < .001$, with a partial eta squared of .20. This indicates that there was a significant difference in posttest self-control between the experimental and control groups when initial self-control levels were statistically controlled. The effect size ($\eta^2_p = .20$) can be categorized as large, suggesting that approximately 20% of the variance in posttest self-control scores was explained by group membership. Furthermore, the pretest scores as a covariate also showed a statistically significant effect on posttest self-control, $F = 31.35$, $p < .001$, with a partial eta squared of .67. This very large effect size indicates that initial self-control levels accounted for approximately 67% of the variance in posttest scores. These findings suggest that while baseline self-control strongly predicted later outcomes, the intervention implemented in the experimental group contributed substantially to improving students' self-control.

The findings of this research show a statistically significant and meaningful improvement in the character of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students, both in terms of optimism and self-control. After controlling for baseline differences using ANCOVA, the experimental group demonstrated significantly higher posttest scores than the control group. The effect sizes (partial $\eta^2 = .22$ for optimism and .20 for self-control) indicate large practical effects within the context of educational interventions. These results confirm that the structured integration of gamification within Islamic value-based instruction produces substantive character enhancement rather than superficial engagement effects. The findings also suggest that interactive

learning environments can strengthen students' psychological readiness to face challenges and regulate their behavior.

The significant improvement in students' optimism stems from a combination of psychological reinforcement and spiritual internalization. According to previous studies, optimism and resilience develop when individuals experience incremental success and supportive feedback (Timm et al., 2022). In this research, gamification elements like points and level progression provided structured opportunities for such success, boosting students' competence and confidence. Furthermore, integrating *Asmaul Husna* values, specifically *Al-Fattah* and *Ar-Rahman*, provided a spiritual framework that reinforced hope and perseverance during challenges. Consequently, this synergy of gamified positive reinforcement and spiritually grounded beliefs effectively cultivated students' optimistic perspectives.

The improvement in self-control can be explained through self-regulation theory, which emphasizes that self-control develops through repeated practice of behavioral monitoring, emotional regulation, goal-directed behavior, and reflective evaluation (Baumeister et al., 2018). Previous studies have shown that self-control can be strengthened through repeated self-regulatory practice, including behavioral monitoring, corrective feedback, self-assessment, and reflective evaluation of one's actions (Baumeister et al., 2018; Yan et al., 2023). Consequently, self-control is not merely an innate trait but a psychological capacity that can be strengthened through structured learning experiences.

The *Asmaul Husna* gamification provided several mechanisms that support the development of self-control. First, students were required to follow game rules, complete tasks systematically, and regulate their behavior during collaborative learning activities. These activities encouraged behavioral monitoring and impulse regulation. Second, immediate feedback from teachers enabled students to recognize inappropriate behaviors and adjust their responses accordingly. Third, reflection sessions encouraged students to evaluate their emotional reactions and behavioral choices in light of the moral teachings embedded in *Asmaul Husna*. The values of *Al-Halim* (The Most Forbearing) and *As-Shabur* (The Most Patient) were particularly relevant because they emphasize emotional restraint, patience, and the ability to

remain composed when facing challenges. Through repeated engagement with these values during challenges, rewards, and reflective discussions, students practiced regulating their emotions and actions in meaningful contexts. Therefore, the improvement in self-control can be attributed to the interaction between behavioral practice, self-monitoring, reflective learning, and the internalization of Islamic moral values that encourage patience and self-restraint.

The effectiveness of this intervention can be explained through several complementary theoretical frameworks. One of the most relevant perspectives is Self-Determination Theory, developed by Edward L. Deci, which proposes that intrinsic motivation emerges when learning environments satisfy the psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Hamzah & Publik, 2019). In this framework, students become more engaged when they feel capable of completing tasks, have a sense of choice in their learning process, and experience meaningful social connections with others. The gamification design implemented in this research incorporated elements such as points, levels, badges, progressive challenges, and collaborative reflection to create a structured motivational ecosystem. These elements allowed students to experience measurable achievement, which strengthened their sense of competence during learning activities.

From an Islamic educational and psychological perspective, the internalization of *Asmaul Husna* through gamification aligns with the concept of character purification (*tazkiyatun nafs*). Contemporary Islamic psychology and Islamic education studies emphasize that learning *Asmaul Husna* should not be limited to memorizing divine names, but should guide learners toward the internalization of moral values and the formation of virtuous character through the process of *tazkiyatun nafs* (Ma'muroh et al., 2024; Rothman & Coyle, 2018). This classical view is supported by contemporary scientific literature in Islamic psychology, which demonstrates that integrating divine attributes into learning frameworks significantly enhances moral development and emotional resilience (Rothman & Coyle, 2018). Specifically, the traits of self-control (*Al-Halim*) and patience (*As-Shabur*) reflect the Qur'anic emphasis on restraining anger (Q.S. Ali 'Imran [3]: 134) and are consistent with contemporary findings showing that religion and spirituality are associated with

self-control, self-regulation, and emotion regulation (Brandão, 2025; Marcus & McCullough, 2021). Furthermore, the attribute of compassion (*Ar-Rahman*) serves as the foundation for a supportive learning environment. Finally, the cultivation of optimism is intimately connected to *Al-Fattah* (The Opener). Believing in *Al-Fattah* instills a profound sense of hope that challenges can be overcome, a concept that parallels the psychological construct of optimism but is uniquely grounded in spiritual reliance, or *tawakal* (Rothman & Coyle, 2018). Thus, gamifying these specific *Asmaul Husna* values seamlessly bridges empirical psychological mechanisms with profound Islamic theological teachings.

Beyond contemporary psychology, the framework of this study is rooted in Islamic educational philosophy, particularly the concept of *tazkiyatun nafs* (purification of the soul), which has been discussed in recent Islamic education studies as a process of self-purification, self-discipline, and moral transformation (Hopipah et al., 2025; Ma'muroh et al., 2024). In Islamic pedagogy, character formation is not merely viewed as the acquisition of knowledge but as a gradual internal transformation that shapes the moral and spiritual dimensions of the individual. This transformation occurs through continuous practice (*riyadah*), self-discipline (*mujahadah*), and reflective engagement with divine attributes that guide human behavior and ethical decision-making (Hopipah et al., 2025; Ma'muroh et al., 2024).

The effectiveness of *Asmaul Husna* gamification in fostering character is driven by a synergy between structured psychological reinforcement and spiritual internalization. Drawing on the iterative and human-centered principles of design thinking (Micheli et al., 2019), this research implemented a human-centered pedagogical model where gamification elements (such as points, badges, and level progression) function as immediate reinforcement for mastery experiences, thereby strengthening students' self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation (Zainuddin et al., 2023). Beyond cognitive gains, this framework integrates *Asmaul Husna* values, such as *As-Shabur* (patience), *Al-Halim* (self-control), *Ar-Rahman* (compassion), and *Al-Fattah* (optimism), into a spiritual roadmap for *tazkiyatun nafs*. This approach aligns with contemporary Islamic education and Islamic psychology perspectives, which

emphasize that spiritual knowledge should be internalized through self-purification, self-control, moral development, and consistent virtuous conduct (Ma'muroh et al., 2024; Rothman & Coyle, 2018). Consequently, by bridging empirical psychological mechanisms with Islamic theological teachings, this gamified model successfully transforms learning into a meaningful process of character formation that transcends simple rote memorization.

CONCLUSION

The results of this research are: 1) the identification of elements of *Asmaul Husna* gamification which include points, levels, badges, challenges, and feedback that integrate Islamic spiritual values; 2) the identification of five stages in *Asmaul Husna* gamified learning, which include the stages of orientation, challenges, rewards, reflection, and progression; 3) it is proven that *Asmaul Husna* gamification significantly influences the character traits of optimism and self-control in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students, as evidenced by the ANCOVA results which confirm the significant effect of intervention on optimism with $F = 18.45$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2_p = 0.22$, and the significant effect of the intervention on self-control with $F = 15.24$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2_p = 0.20$. Theoretically, this research contributes to Islamic education by integrating Self-Determination Theory, positive psychology, and self-regulation theory with the Islamic concept of *tazkiyatun nafs*, thereby offering an integrative framework for spiritually grounded character formation. Practically, the results suggest that value-based gamification can transform religious learning from rote memorization into meaningful, experiential, and reflective learning that strengthens students' psychological and moral capacities. This research is limited by its relatively small sample size and short intervention period. Future research is recommended to expand the sample size and use a longitudinal design to test the sustainability of character development and explore the applicability of this model across various educational and cultural contexts.

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