



The Application of PBL Assisted by Wordwall on Learners' Interest at SMP Negeri 7 Kisaran

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Article history: Received Revised Accepted	<p>This research explores the application of PBL integrated into a game-based digital platform namely Wordwall to enhance learners' interest in learning English. Initial findings from class VIII-6 at SMP Negeri 7 Kisaran showed that learners demonstrated very poor interest, with a pre-cycle score of only 18.75%. Learners expressed the need for more interactive and engaging learning experiences, particularly through games. The study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) over two cycles, each consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection. The data in this study were collected by using questionnaires. Four indicators were used to assess interest: attention, interest, excitement, and involvement. The result of this study revealed a consistent increase in learners' interest across both cycles. In Cycle 1, scores rose from 44.53% in the first meeting to 52.34% in the second meeting. In Cycle 2, interest further increased to 71.87% and 87.5%, reaching the "very high" category. The highest improvements were seen in attention and involvement, indicating that learners became more focused and active during lessons. This study concludes that integrating PBL into Wordwall significantly boosts learners' interest and engagement in English. It supports the idea that digital, game-based tools can enhance classroom participation and help address low interest among learners.</p>
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INTRODUCTION

Education serves as the spearhead of national progress and the cornerstone of societal development. Its success relies heavily on the collaboration of the three pillars of education: family, school, and community, where teachers, as part of the formal education system, play a pivotal role. Teachers, as agents of change, play an important role in preparing learners to face challenges and opportunities in the future. In line with this, Zunidar & Suwandi (2025) states teachers are hoped to renew their roles. Teachers do not just provide information or disseminate knowledge; they also act as facilitators, guiding learners to become critical thinkers, problem solvers, and lifelong learners (Hidayati & Fauziyah, 2023). This means that teachers are instrumental in shaping meaningful and effective learning experiences by designing instructional strategies that align with learners' needs and the evolving demands of the 21st century. One of the key components in achieving this is the implementation of appropriate learning model and media.

A learning model serves as a structured conceptual framework that guides educators in planning and delivering instruction to meet specific learning objectives. It not only supports teachers in organizing content and classroom activities but also encourages a more student-centered approach to the learning process. Among the various learning models available, Problem-Based Learning (PBL) has gained prominence for its emphasis on developing learners' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. According to Fogarty (1997), as cited in Asmara & Septiana (2023), PBL immerses learners in complex and open-ended real-world problems, prompting them to engage in inquiry, discussion, and collaborative solution-seeking. This approach reflects the unpredictability of real-life situations, thereby equipping learners with essential 21st-century competencies such as adaptability, creativity, and analytical thinking. PBL transforms the classroom dynamic from teacher-centered instruction to learners-driven exploration, fostering a deeper understanding and long-term retention of knowledge. Furthermore, integrating technology into education is increasingly essential for enhancing the effectiveness of the learning process. In today's digital age, technological tools have become

crucial resources that support both teaching and learning. As noted by Nento and Manto (2023), modern technologies provide innovative platforms and media that enable learners and educators to accomplish tasks and deliver content more efficiently. Similarly, Salsabila & Agustian (2021) emphasize the importance of technology as a facilitator of various educational activities, ranging from interactive multimedia presentations to digital assessment tools. The use of technology not only enriches instructional delivery but also motivates learners and boosts their engagement. According to Jannah & Masnawati (2024), the integration of technology in education significantly contributes to transforming traditional classrooms into dynamic learning environments that promote active participation, enthusiasm, and academic success. Besides that, Astuti & Anafiah (2024) that word usage as a learning media is relevant to teaching and learning in this era. This is because Wordwall provides problems that can be solved by learners in a quiz form.

Preliminary data in this study revealed that learners displayed low interest in learning English, often viewing the subject as dull and disconnected from their interests. Feedback from learners expressed a desire for more engaging and interactive experiences, particularly through games. To address this challenge, the researchers applied a Problem-Based Learning model assisted by Wordwall, an educational game platform, to evaluate its effectiveness in enhancing learners' interest. By combining PBL with engaging educational technology, this approach aims to create a more stimulating learning environment that not only increases learners' interest but also boosts their overall language proficiency and enthusiasm for learning.

METHOD

This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) as the research methodology. According to Suhirman (2021, p. 51), CAR is a reflective approach that involves systematic actions aimed at improving teaching and learning practices within the classroom in a more professional and structured manner. The primary objective of this research was to enhance the learners' interest, particularly in the English learning process for VIII-6 learners at SMP Negeri 7 Kisaran. CAR was deemed appropriate for this study because it enables educators to directly address specific classroom issues while fostering collaboration between teachers and learners to improve the overall learning environment. The research was conducted during the second semester of the 2024/2025 academic year, specifically in class VIII-6, which comprised 28 learners with varying levels of English proficiency. The study took place at SMP Negeri 7

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Kisaran, located at Jalan Labu I No. 10, Siumbut Baru, Kecamatan Kota Kisaran Timur, Kabupaten Asahan, North Sumatra.

The implementation of the research followed the standard four stages of Classroom Action Research: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. In the planning stage, the researchers designed learning activities incorporating the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model, supported by Wordwall to address the issue of low interest. During the implementation stage, these activities were carried out through classroom instruction over several cycles, allowing for ongoing evaluation and refinement of teaching strategies. In the observation stage, the researchers systematically observed classroom interactions and learning processes, paying close attention to learners' engagement, responses, and overall interest. Data collection involved direct classroom observations and analysis of learners' worksheets, particularly those related to the topic of Quantifiers. Finally, in the reflection stage, conducted after each cycle, the researchers analyzed the gathered data to evaluate the impact of the applied model. This reflective process aimed to assess improvements in learners' interest and identify aspects of the instructional design that required enhancement. Through this study, it is expected that an effective instructional model for teaching Quantifiers can be established, one that significantly boosts learners' interest and engagement. Suyinto (2004: 73) argues that there are 5 criteria for determining learners' interests. Below is the table to help researchers analyze learners' interests.

Table 1: Learners' Interest

Interest Percentage	Category
80% - 100%	Very high
60% - 80%	High
40% - 60%	Fair
20% - 40%	Poor
<20%	Very poor

Adapted from: Suyinto (2004:73)

FINDINGS

This study was conducted on VIII-6 learners of SMP Negeri 7 Kisaran. Researchers analysed the learners' interest based on 4 indicators. According to Safari (2003), several indicators are used to measure learners' interest in learning, namely attention, interest, excitement, and involvement. Dan & Tod (2014) stated that learners who have an interest in learning have feelings such as:

1. Positive feelings when learning,
2. Enjoyment/comfort when learning, and
3. The ability and capacity to make decisions related to their learning.

Efforts to increase interest in learning are varied. As the primary agents in the learning process, teachers can boost learners' interest by implementing innovative learning model and

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media, such as educational games, and fostering a conducive and cooperative classroom environment. This can be accomplished by involving as many learners as possible in every step of the learning process through positive communication. According to the pre-cycle questionnaire, it was discovered that the learners' interest was 18.75%. In addition, researchers applied a journal reflection that the learners need to complete. The results of the journal reflection indicated that the learners require the integration of games in the teaching and learning process to enhance their interest in learning.

To address the problem, the researchers revised the teaching strategy by incorporating games as learning media. Researchers used Wordwall as a solution to enhance learners' interest. Matitaputty et al. (2023) state that Wordwall is a web-based learning application designed for interactive learning media. Sutrisno, Nasrullah, and Redna add that Wordwall can also serve as an engaging tool for learning evaluation. The researchers utilized several Wordwall templates, including matching the picture, completing the sentences, and word search. The application of Wordwall is hoped to promote learners' interest in learning English. Furthermore, the researchers expect that the applied media will encourage learners to actively participate by answering the given questions. These activities boost learners' attention and excitement during the learning process. Below is the result table of learners' interest in the application of PBL-assisted Wordwall.

Table 2: Learners' Interest

No.	Indicator	Pre-Cycle	Cycle 1	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 2
			1 st meeting	2 nd meeting	1 st meeting	2 nd meeting
1	Attention	65	120	180	220	280
2	Interest	55	150	190	250	310
3	Excitement	65	140	140	220	260
4	Involvement	55	160	160	230	270
Total Score		240	570	670	1,280	1,120
Percentage		18.75	44.53	52.34	71.87	87.5

Based on the results from cycle 1 of the first meeting, the VIII-6 learners' interest was indicated at 44,53%, which is categorized as fair. In the second meeting, the learners' interest increased to 52.34%. However, the researchers decided to implement the next cycle to achieve the best results for the learners' interest. In the first meeting of cycle 2, the learners' interest represented 71.87% with high categorization, and in the second meeting, it rose to 87.5%, with

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the score categorized as very high.

Researchers found that Wordwall media increases learners' interest in learning gradually. As listed in the figure below, learners' interest is very low when Problem-Based Learning has not been integrated with the Wordwall. However, when researchers applied PBL assisted by Wordwall, learners' interest increased gradually. Even so, in Cycle 1 there are still learners who are not very involved in the learning process. So, the researchers continued to cycle 2 to overcome it. Based on the results of the application in Cycle 2, it is evident that learners' interest in learning has increased significantly to 87.5%, which has a positive impact on the learning process.

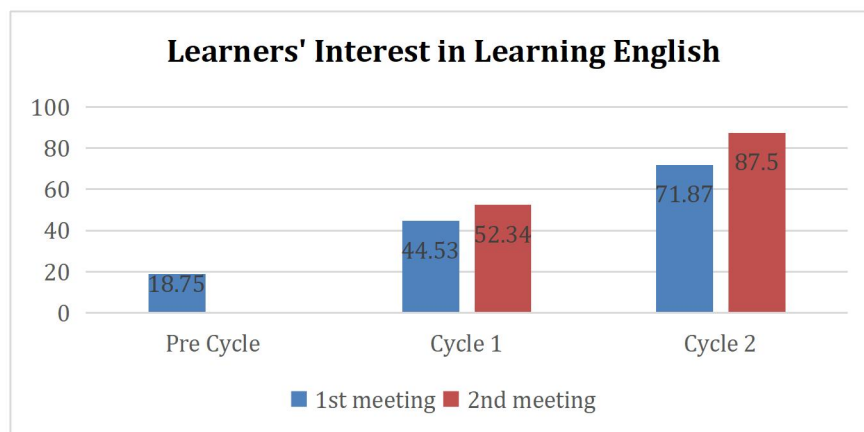


Figure 1: Percentage of learners' interest

DISCUSSION

The result of this study indicates a substantial improvement in learners' learning interest following the implementation of PBL within Wordwall as an interactive instructional tool. This progression from an initial percentage of 18.75% to 87.5% by the end of the second cycle demonstrates the effectiveness of integrating digital media in fostering learners' engagement and enthusiasm in language learning.

Theoretically, these findings support Safari's (2003) assertion that learning interest is multifaceted, encompassing indicators such as attention, interest, excitement, and involvement. The steady increase across all dimensions confirms that learners became progressively more focused, emotionally invested, and participative. Furthermore, this outcome aligns with the ideas of Dan and Tod (2014), who emphasize that learners with a genuine interest in learning experience positive emotions, comfort, and an enhanced ability to make self-directed choices. The presence of these affective traits during the intervention validates the pivotal role of emotional engagement in driving motivation.

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From an instructional standpoint, the use of Wordwall introduced a dynamic shift in classroom interaction. Activities like *matching the picture*, *completing the sentences*, and *word searching* offered a multi-sensory learning experience, which in turn encouraged active participation. The transition from passive reception to interactive involvement highlights how well-designed digital resources can energize the learning atmosphere and provide a platform for learners to express themselves more freely.

The researchers' decision to proceed to a second cycle, despite moderate improvements in the first, reflects a commitment to reflective practice and continuous refinement of pedagogical strategies. This adaptive approach ensured that residual gaps in engagement particularly in learners' involvement were addressed effectively, leading to a more inclusive and stimulating environment in the subsequent sessions.

On a broader level, this study reinforces the significance of learner-centre instruction that leverages technology not merely as an add-on but as a core component of the learning design. The successful application of PBL assisted by Wordwall illustrates how digital tools when employed purposefully, can enhance not only content delivery but also learners' motivation and classroom dynamics. Such outcomes suggest promising implications for wider application across different subjects and educational contexts.

The evidence affirms that the thoughtful combination of PBL and interactive media fosters both cognitive and emotional interest among learners. Nonetheless, the present findings provide strong support for incorporating engaging, game-based platforms into everyday teaching to cultivate more motivated, active, and responsive learners.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the application Problem-Based Learning (PBL) assisted by Wordwall significantly increases eighth-grade learners' interest in English at SMP Negeri 7 Kisaran. After implementing it, there was a noticeable improvement in learners' interest. This indicates that the application of PBL-supported Wordwall plays a key role in boosting learners' interest and involvement, leading to active participation in the learning activities provided by teachers. Additionally, using PBL supported by Wordwall makes the teaching and learning experience more meaningful and enjoyable for learners. Furthermore, researchers hope this study will serve as a useful reference for others, enabling them to conduct further research to foster learners' needs and interests in various ways.

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