GAME CHOICES: PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF TRADITIONAL VS DIGITAL GAME-BASED LEARNING (DGBL) FOR PEER-TEACHING PRACTICES

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Abstract:
Game-based learning (GBL) is widely used to enhance student engagement and motivation in English language teaching. Yet, limited studies compare pre-service teachers' perceptions of traditional and digital game-based learning (DGBL) approaches. Thus, this study explores the benefits, challenges, and preferences of 60 pre-service English teachers at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung regarding traditional games and DGBL in peer-teaching practices. A mixed-methods approach is used, with quantitative data showing traditional games scored a mean of 3.65 for promoting collaboration, while DGBL scored a mean of 3.89 for technological integration and interactivity. Qualitative findings reveal that while traditional games are appreciated for fostering social interaction and teamwork and offering a technology-free alternative, DGBL is valued for its ability to enhance engagement, provide real-time feedback, and integrate technological skills. However, challenges such as technical issues, resources limitation, and the need for advanced skills were highlighted for DGBL. The study suggests integrating both approaches in teacher training to address diverse learning needs and better prepare pre-service teachers for modern classrooms.

Keywords: *Game-based learning, pre-service teachers, DGBL, traditional games, peer-teaching.*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, game-based learning (GBL) has become a popular approach in English language teaching, as it offers teachers innovative ways to engage the students and boost their motivation through interactive learning experiences (Munawarah et al., 2024; Setiawati et al., 2024; Zhou & Wei, 2024). The GBL approach, which includes traditional and digital game-based learning (DGBL), offers diverse tools and methods to achieve the learning objectives. Traditional games in language teaching, such as Snakes and Ladders, Scrabble, Board Games, Charades, and Flash Cards, have been widely used in educational settings to enhance students' social skills, collaboration and teamwork. These games can also promote students' interaction with other students and practice their English skills in a fun and dynamic environment (Thanh Nam et al., 2024). However, traditional games often lack flexibility, which is not aligned with specific educational objectives and cannot offer personalised learning needs.

In contrast, the rise of digital game-based learning (DGBL) has led to the development of digital games such as Kahoot!, Quizlet, and Duolingo, which integrate multimedia features and provide real-time feedback, offering new possibilities for language acquisition. DGBL can provide a personalised learning method and immediate assessment, promoting students' attention and fostering interactive learning, which is relevant in today's digital era of learning (Aguilera & de Roock, 2022; All et al., 2016; Anastasiadis et al., 2018). However, the integration of DGBL still also has challenges, particularly regarding the technical resources and skills required to manage such tools effectively in the classroom.

Many studies highlight the potential of GBL in enhancing English language skills and transforming classroom activities. Different studies have shown the effectiveness of various games in fostering language skills such as vocabulary acquisition and classroom engagement. For example, Mahendra et al. (2024) studied the impact of traditional games like Scrabble, which has significantly improved vocabulary acquisition and language skills. This

game facilitates vocabulary learning and fosters a collaborative activity that engages students in social skills (Sari et al., 2022). Similarly, Charades, where students act out vocabulary or phrases, have improved confidence, memory retention and overall engagement in learning. This is supported by Mardhiah & Solekhah's (2024) literature review study, which concluded that Charades could effectively improve students' language skills, listening, speaking and writing, vocabulary retention, and communication skills.

Moreover, the role of technology in GBL cannot be understated, and some studies on the use of DGBL in English language teaching successfully enhance student engagement and language acquisition. For example, Tanabalan & Hashim (2023) examined how Quizlet improved the fourth grade of 12 Malaysian primary school students' vocabulary and engagement through flashcard-based activities. The study's outcome showed that students have a favourable perception of using Quizlet to boost their vocabulary learning. This is in line with the study of Lubis et al. 2022); through analysing 20 articles about Quizlet, they found that Quizlet could be a valuable means for assisting students' vocabularies to get better learning outcomes as this game platform offers various learning activities for students.

Similarly to Quizlet, Kahoot! also positively impacted classroom engagement by promoting competition and excitement among students (Licorish et al., 2017, 2018; Wang & Tahir, 2020). According to a literature review study by Wang & Tahir (2020), Kahoot! is the most popular game-based learning platform, with 70 million monthly users. From 93 studies of Kahoot!, Wang & Tahir (2020) concluded that Kahoot! can have a positive effect on learning performance, classroom dynamics, students and teachers' attitudes. These findings suggest that competitive and cooperative elements of game-based learning like Kahoot! Foster a more engaging classroom environment, which is crucial for language acquisition.

Another benefit of digital game-based learning is providing real-time feedback and immediate assessment. For example, Ningsih (2023) studied the use of Slido.com as a new game platform in the form of quizzes, polls, and

surveys for university students, and the findings showed that Slido.com could foster immediate feedback and increase students' engagement. In another study, a game platform, Duolingo, now integrated with artificial intelligence (AI), has significantly enhanced language learning by offering personalised, interactive experiences and immediate feedback. (Vega et al., 2024).

Despite these insightful findings, examining the impact of GBL's traditional and digital-based games on pre-service English teachers' teaching practice is crucial, particularly regarding their perceptions and preferences in implanting GBL strategies in language teaching. Some studies suggest that pre-service teachers who engage with GBL during their training are more likely to incorporate these strategies into their teaching practices, demonstrating the need for training programs that help them with the necessary skills and confidence to use GBL effectively (Munawarah et al., 2024; Setiawati et al., 2024). However, there is limited research examining the comparative benefits and challenges of traditional versus digital game-based learning from the perspective of future educators.

Therefore, this study aims to address the gaps by exploring how pre-service English teachers perceive traditional games, and DBGL approaches to understand the factors influencing their willingness to adopt these strategies. Examining pre-service English teachers' perceptions will contribute to the ongoing discussion on integrating game-based learning in teacher training programs. It will provide insights on how future educators can be better prepared to use these approaches in their real classrooms later. Moreover, understanding the potential benefits and challenges of traditional and digital game-based learning can help to design more effective teaching and promote teachers' strategies aligned with modern pedagogical approaches. More specifically, teachers can adapt to the needs of diverse students' backgrounds and preferences.

METHOD

This study employs a mixed methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to comprehensively understand pre-service English teachers' perceptions of game choices for teaching practices. Mixed methods allow for a more in-depth exploration of the research topic by integrating numerical data from questionnaires with qualitative data from open-ended questions (Dawadi et al., 2021; Strijker et al., 2020).

This study's participants are 60 pre-service students majoring in English language teaching at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung. These students are enrolled in the Classroom Management course offered by the faculty English language teaching department. The participants were selected from two classes, ensuring a diverse representation of pre-service English teachers. The participants were 50 female and ten male students, representing diverse backgrounds in technology familiarity and teaching experience.

Descriptive statistics is employed to analyse the questionnaire responses using a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree) to assess perceptions of traditional and DGBL methods. This analysis calculates each statement's mean to determine the participants' average perceptions regarding game choices for peer-teaching practices. Descriptive statistics provides a numerical summary of the data, allowing for comparisons and identifying patterns or trends in participants' perceptions.

Regarding the qualitative analysis, the open-ended questions gathered in-depth feedback on participants' experiences, challenges, and preferences and were analysed using thematic analysis. The responses were carefully examined to identify common themes or categories from the students' responses. This analysis classifies the qualitative data based on the identified themes. It provides a deeper understanding of the participants' perspectives and gives insights into their perceptions of game choices for peer-teaching practices.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The research aimed to investigate pre-service English teachers' perceptions and preferences of traditional and digital game-based learning (DGBL) for peer-teaching in classroom management courses. The participants were asked to rate their agreement with ten statements about the effectiveness and practicality of traditional games compared to DGBL. The ratings were on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree (SD) to Strongly Agree (SA). This range score was adopted by the study of Zaki & Ahmad (2017), in which the mean values indicate the average response for each statement. The first result focused on the students' perceptions of the traditional games, followed by the DGBL.

Table 1. Perceptions of Traditional Games in Peer-Teaching Practices

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean
		(In percentage)					
1.	Traditional games are more effective than DGBL for peer-teaching practice.	1.7	20	45	25	8.3	3.18
2.	Traditional games foster social interaction and collaboration among students in peer-teaching practice.	1.7	0	18.3	40	40	4.17
3.	Traditional games offer a technology-free alternative for peer-teaching practice.	3.3	0	36.7	48.3	11.7	3.68
4.	I find it easier to incorporate traditional games into my peer-teaching practice.	10	0	41.7	38.3	10	3.48
5.	Traditional games allow for the development of various teaching skills and outcomes.	1.7	5	26.7	53.3	13.3	3.72
Average							3.65

As shown in Table 1, the data shows the pre-service English teachers' perceptions of traditional games for peer-teaching practices, with various perceptions and an overall mean of 3.65. For example, Statement 2, 'Traditional games foster social interaction and collaboration among students,' received the highest percentage of Strongly Agree responses (40%) and highest mean (4.17), suggesting that pre-service English teachers strongly valued the collaborative benefits of traditional games. Similarly, Statement 5, 'Traditional games allow for the development of various teaching skills and outcomes, ' also received a high level of agreement, with 66.6% of pre-service English teachers strongly agreeing and a mean of 3.72.

Moreover, Statement 3, 'Traditional games offer a technology-free alternative for peer-teaching practice,' had a moderate mean of 3.68 and 60% agreement, indicating appreciation for their practicality but less enthusiasm than collaboration benefits. Then Statement 4, 'I find it easier to incorporate traditional games into my peer-teaching practice,' received a mean of 3.48, with fewer pre-service English teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing (48.3%), reflecting some challenges in implementation.

Furthermore, Statement 2, 'Traditional games are more effective than DGBL for peer-teaching practice,' had the lowest mean (3.18) and highest neutral response (45%), suggesting uncertainty among participants of pre-service English teachers about their comparative effectiveness. Therefore, this finding indicates that pre-service English teachers perceive traditional games positively, particularly for fostering and offering teaching alternatives, even though there is still some disagreement regarding the ease of use and effectiveness compared to DGBL.

Table 2. Perceptions of DGBL in Peer-Teaching Practices

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean
		(In percentage)					
1.	DGBL enhance student engagement and active participation in peer-teaching practice activities.	1.7	6.7	25	38.3	28.3	3.85
2.	DGBL promote teamwork and cooperation in peer-teaching exercises.	0	8.3	30	43.3	18.3	3.72
3.	DGBL provide opportunities to incorporate technology into peer-teaching practices.	3.3	1.7	15	50	30	4.02
4.	DGBL require additional technical skills and preparation for effective implementation in peer-teaching practices.	0	1.7	26.7	51.7	20	3.90
5.	DGBL offer immediate feedback and assessment options for evaluating peer-teaching competencies.	1.7	1.7	21.7	48.3	26.7	3.97
Average							3.89

The data found in Table 2 shows that the research findings reveal pre-service English teachers' perceptions of DGBL for peer-teaching practices. The responses to the statements on DGBL revealed a generally positive perception with an overall mean of 3.89. First of all, Statement 3, 'DGBL provide opportunities to incorporate technology into peer-teaching practices,' received the highest mean of 4.02, with 80% of pre-service English teachers agreeing and strongly agreeing. This means that pre-service English teachers highly value the potential of DGBL to integrate technology into their teaching

practices.

Furthermore, Statement 5, 'DGBL offer immediate feedback and assessment options for evaluating peer-teaching competencies,' also received a strong positive response with a mean of 3.97 and 75% agreement. It can be noted that pre-service English teachers have an essential view of DGBL's feedback and assessment feature when evaluating their teaching practices.

Next, Statement 4, 'DGBL require additional technical skills and preparation for effective implementation in peer-teaching practices,' had a moderate mean of 3.90, showing that while teachers recognise the need for extra technical skills, they still view the tool positively for peer-teaching activities. For Statement 1, 'DGBL enhances student engagement and active participation in peer-teaching practice activities, 'there was a mean of 3.85, showing strong agreement among participants that DGBL is effective in fostering engagement and participation.

Lastly, Statement 2, DGL promote teamwork and cooperation in peer-teaching exercises,' perceived a mean of 3.72, reflecting a positive perception but somewhat lower than the other statements. Therefore, based on these findings, it can be suggested that pre-service English teachers perceive DGBL as highly beneficial for integrating technology, even though they also need technical skills to use DGBL.

Students Feedback on Using Traditional Games and DGBL for Peer Teaching Practices

The feedback provided to the pre-service English teachers through open-ended questions highlighted several perceptions of the benefits and challenges observed when using traditional games and DGBL in their peer-teaching activities. The responses were then categorised into relevant themes.

Table 3. Summary of Students' Feedback on the Benefits of Using
Traditional Games for Peer-Teaching

No.	Theme	Example of Students' statements
1.	Effectiveness and Engagement	"In my experience, learning by using traditional games is more effective. Traditional games can make the class vibes more active and lively." "I think using traditional games is easy to understand." "Traditional games offer more flexible results on the activities."
2.	Social Interaction and Cooperation	"In my opinion, traditional games may enhance students' social skills and teamwork, better than DGBL." "Cooperation and communication with friends become stronger." "Strengthen student relationships and make us know the type of student." "The benefits are they can gather together and increase their friendship."
3.	Enjoyment and Fun	"Liven up the class atmosphere" "Traditional games make me more active in class and make me feel more eager to win those games." "For me, it was fun when using traditional games for the class because I can see the students' excitement during and after the games."
4.	Physical and Mental Health Benefits	"We can use our body and make us healthier." "Apart from improving mental and physical health, playing traditional games makes learning at school more fun and helps students understand the material easily." "The body feels healthier because it moves rather than using technology like today."
5.	Technological Considerations	"Traditional learning is only for memorizing a few vocabularies, while technology-based learning adds more vocabulary." "No signal required because sometimes some places don't have a good signal." "In traditional games, I like it when we can only pay attention to the teacher and the games itself, but if in digital games, I also like it because it's really complete in one web or app."

First, the participants were asked, 'In your experience, what specific benefits have you observed when using traditional games for peer-teaching practice in this course?'. Then, five main themes were summarised: effectiveness and engagement, social interaction and cooperation, enjoyment and fun, physical and mental health benefits, and technological considerations.

Many participants expressed that traditional games were more effective and engaging in enhancing classroom activities. For example, a student's statements, ' Traditional games make the class vibes more active and lively,' and 'I think using traditional games is easy to understand', emphasise that these activities create an engaging environment. Students also stated that traditional games add an element of adaptability and flexibility, allowing this game to fit various learning styles' needs.

For the second theme, social interaction and cooperation, students' feedback noted that traditional games foster better social interaction and teamwork than digital DGBL. For example, students said that traditional games strengthen student relationships and make them know the students' type. This statement suggests that traditional games provide opportunities for students to practice communication and cooperative skills in a more personal and direct manner.

Another benefit students are concerned about is the enjoyment and fun of using traditional games. Many students said they felt more motivated and active when using traditional games during the lesson. One student mentioned that traditional games make them more active in class and more eager to win those games. Therefore, maintaining students' engagement and enthusiasm during teaching activities needs to be considered through some enjoyment activities.

Interestingly, several students mentioned that traditional games could positively benefit their physical and mental health. For example, a student said, 'The body feels healthier because it moves rather than using technology.' This statement shows how traditional games can provide positive physical activities that are important for students' well-being.

Lastly, students also took a positive view of the absence of technology features in using traditional games. They thought traditional games did not need any signal as some places on the campus required a better signal. This shows how traditional games can be used in varied environments with limited technology resources. It means that they can also focus on the game without any technology difficulties as distractions of peer-teaching.

Table 4. Summary of Students' Feedback on the Benefits of Using DGBL for Peer-Teaching

No.	Theme	Example of Students' statements
1.	Practicality and Convenience	"They're more simple, and I don't have to bring any kind of heavy thing that usually use for any traditional games." "By using DGBL, students are able to play the game at anytime and anywhere. It is simply more practical than traditional games where you must be physically present in order to play the game." "DGBL are easier because they are not complicated but less optimal when compared to traditional games."
2.	Technological Integration	"Of course, it's different because it uses technology in it and trains students to keep up with technological developments." "DGBL are more modern and make the class not too monotone. It also helps introduce technology to the students." "The advantage is that we can understand learning games on cell phones, be more creative, educate us in modern technology, and we can understand how to operate technology learning games."
3.	Engagement and Motivation	"Using DGBL in learning is able to make learning not monotonous, not easily bored, and modern." "Since DGBL have never been used before and traditional games are sometimes boring, using DGBL in peer education raises students' curiosity and excitement about new subjects." "DGBL increase overall motivation and attentiveness in the classroom."

4.	Accessibility and Flexibility	"When using DGBL, learning can be accessed anytime and anywhere, unlike traditional games which can only be done during learning." "DGBL are more accessible and easy to understand, as well as accessible because everyone must have a smartphone." "DGBL are easier and more efficient to implement, requiring no physical equipment. Traditional games require equipment and are less efficient, but traditional games increase interaction between students."
5.	Interactivity and Feedback	"While traditional games have their own benefits, DGBL provide additional advantages such as increased interactivity, customization, real-time feedback, access to diverse resources, and opportunities for collaboration and global connections." "DGBL provide opportunities for collaboration and global connections." "DGBL have many advantages because digital games makes it easier for students to see and practice directly, even online."

Secondly, Based on Table 4, students were asked, 'What advantages do you see in using DGBL for peer-teaching, and how do they differ from traditional games?'. Then, five main themes were summarised: practicality and convenience, technological integration, engagement and motivation, accessibility and flexibility, and interactivity and feedback. Students noted feedback on the several benefits of DGBL, which differ from the benefits of traditional games.

Students' comments on practicality and convenience sum up that DGBL is more practical than traditional games, where we must be physically present to play. DGBL offers increased convenience, allowing students to engage with learning materials without the need for physical setups or limitations on location. One student noted, ' Using DGBL, students can play the game anytime and anywhere.'

Moreover, technological integration is another benefit of applying DGBL, which suits current technological trends and prepares students as pre-service English teachers for future developments. It can be concluded

from students' comments in Table 4 point 2 that DGBL fosters familiarity with modern tools, making lessons more engaging and interactive. As one student mentioned, "DGBL is more modern and makes class less monotone. It also helps introduce technology to the students."

Another benefit of DGBL is maintaining students' engagement and motivation. For example, a student noted, "Since DGBL have never been before and traditional games are sometimes boring, using DGBL in peer teaching raises students' curiosity and excitement about new subjects'. Unlike traditional games, which can become repetitive, DGBL can improve students' motivation and engagement in teaching activities.

Lastly, the ability to access DGBL is one of the significant benefits of the DGBL's accessibility and flexibility factors. DGBL can be accessed anytime and anywhere, which is better than traditional games that sometimes require physical presence. A student mentioned, "DGBL offers easier implementation as it does not require physical equipment." Students also mention interactivity and feedback as benefits of using DGBL. A student stated, "While traditional games have their benefits, DGBL provide additional advantages such as increased interactivity, customisation, real-time feedback, access to diverse resources, and opportunities for collaboration and global connections.

Table 5. Summary of Students' Feedback on the Limitations of Using DGBL for Peer-Teaching

No.	Theme	Example of Students' statements
1.	Technical Challenges	"There are some technical problems like the projector cannot connect to the presenter's laptop and other problems like network trouble." "Sometimes there will be problems with the signal if the game is online-based." "The challenge is that the platform used is sometimes unusable/errors, for example, a projector that suddenly turns off."

2.	Access and Resource Limitations	"Not everyone has a mobile phone, for example, in remote areas where there is rarely internet." "The obstacle with modern-based learning is that not everyone has access to the internet and there is a lack of preparation before learning begins." "Some students don't really understand the technology or how to operate it, and not all places have good signal."
3.	Student familiarity and Skill Requirement	"Challenges may be finding a creative but also innovative and effective way of making DGBL because, in order to achieve that, I'll need a more advanced technical skill." "Some students may face challenges in understanding and using new technologies or game platforms. This learning curve can take up valuable class time and may require additional support or training for both students and teachers." "Not all students can use technology properly." "Sometimes they confuse how to play the games, but with explanation, they will understand." "Yes, some students don't really understand the technology or how to operate it."
4.	Distractions and Classroom Management	""DGBL, while engaging, can also be potential sources of distraction." "Incorporating DGBL may require careful classroom management strategies." "Sometimes the times in the digital games version are more tight, and sometimes I can't finish the game on time."

To know more about pre-service English teachers dealing with the usage of DGBL, especially its limitations, another question was asked: 'Are there any limitations or challenges that you have encountered when incorporating DGBL for peer-teaching? If yes, please elaborate." Then, four main themes were summarised into technical challenges, access and resource limitations, students' familiarity and skill requirements, and distractions and classroom management.

The first limitation students faced was technical challenges. Students noted connectivity problems, such as projectors failing to connect laptops or network trouble in online games. Therefore, these technical problems can

hinder the practical application of DGBL activities. For example, a student once experienced the issue of the projector turning off unexpectedly.

Secondly, access and resource limitations become one of DGBL's problems. Some students mentioned that not everyone had smartphones or reliable internet access, particularly in remote regions like Tulungagung. This lack of resources can create barriers to implementing DGBL activities, as only some students can effectively engage if they have the necessary tools or good internet connectivity.

Last, distraction and classroom management are also other limitations of concern. Some students mentioned that DBL could become a distraction if not managed properly. They also stated that time constraints in DGBL sometimes lead to incomplete activities due to some factors, which means careful planning is needed to make sure the DGBL fits within the class schedule and does not become a disruption.

Table 6. Summary of Students' Preference on the Using Traditional Games compare to DGBL for Peer Teaching

No.	Theme	Example of Students' statements
1.	Preference for DGBL	"I would prefer DGBL for peer-teaching in a classroom management course because we can simultaneously follow the development of the technological age" "I prefer DGBL because it's practical and more varied" "I think DGBL is more fun because there are so many options, and it's more modern too" "In my opinion, games with technology need to be developed quickly because they are very motivating and increase enthusiasm for learning than the old one" "I think DGBL is more fun because there are so many options of games and we can learn new things with technology" "As a teacher, I agree more with using technology because it can be accessed by all, anytime and anywhere, so it facilitates learning" "For peer-teaching in a classroom management course, I prefer to use DGBL because there are more choices of learning methods and they are more modern and practical too"

2.	Preference for traditional games	"I prefer traditional because the time to my presentation is short, and I still don't have an idea of what kind of modern games I will use in my presentation." "I am more interested in using traditional games because they are more interesting and understandable. It's not complicated to use." "Traditional games make learning feel less monotonous and improve teamwork" "Traditional games may seem outdated with so many online educational games available, but they allow students to detach from gadgets." "Traditional games are suitable for the students' first meeting in class; later, we can use DGBL to develop their soft skills." "Traditional games are are simpler". "Traditional games offer a hands-on, interactive experience, promoting teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills. They also require minimal technology and adapt well to different classroom settings."
3.	Preference for both games	"Very interesting, because combining those two methods will create a comfortable and well-organized classroom atmosphere. Besides fostering friendships among each other, we are also contributing to advancing technology in our country." "It will depend on the students. The age, gender, etc., would be important to think before choosing which one to use. My preference is using ITC on teens and traditional games on kids" "Maybe traditional games make learning feel monotonous, but with traditional games, students are better able to improve teamwork/increase cohesiveness, while DGBL do make learning more exciting, but the risk of error games is greater" "Combining both traditional and DGBL sounds interesting and fun." "We need to balance traditional and DGBL so students can be flexible in facing future challenges." "The choice between traditional and DGBL should depend on factors like learning objectives, available resources, and students' preferences." "Using a mix of traditional and DGBL can provide an engaging experience, catering to diverse student needs and preferences."

To know students' perspectives on the use of traditional games versus DGBL for peer-teaching practice, a question was asked, "As a pre-service English teacher, what are your overall thoughts and preferences regarding the use of traditional games vs DGBL for peer-teaching practices?."

Based on their feedback in Table 6, many students prefer DGBL due to its alignment with technological advancement, practical use, and variety of options. Additionally, the students' comments showed they appreciated the DGBL's modern, engaging nature and the ability to access it anytime and anywhere. For example, a student said, "DGBL is more fun because there are so many options.' They also stated that DGBL's motivating qualities and its ability to increase enthusiasm for learning, more superficially in their peer-teaching practice as pre-service teachers.

While some students prefer DGBL, many also favour traditional games for their simplicity, hands-on interaction, and ability to foster teamwork without relying on technology. Students commented that traditional games were considered less complicated and more suitable for initial lessons. They also focused on the value of face-to-face engagement, noting that conventional games allow students to detach from gadgets.

Even though some students have stated their preferences, some students also supported a balanced preference for both traditional games and DGBL. They saw this as a way to offer flexibility and meet students' needs. One student said, "We need to balance traditional and DGBL so students can be flexible in facing future challenges." They argued that traditional games and DGBL are ideal for adapting to different learning contexts and enhancing engagement and teamwork.

DISCUSSION

This study explored pre-service English teachers' perceptions of traditional games and digital game-based learning (DGBL) for peer-teaching practices. Based on the data analysed, the findings indicate that both traditional games and DGBL offer valued benefits, but each also comes with

challenges and limitations.

The data findings indicate a positive attitude towards traditional games among pre-service English teachers, with many expressing a preference for physical interactive activities that facilitate teamwork. They also prefer these games as they promote social interaction, simplicity as no complex technology is required, and physical interaction makes learning using traditional games more engaging. These preferences are related to the study conducted by Hermaniar & Palupi (2019)and Thanh Nam et al., 2024), who noted that traditional games promote active student interaction, offering fun and a natural environment in the English classroom. Moreover, the collaboration and communication skills gained from traditional games could enhance students' teamwork (Abdullah Alhebshi & Saeed Halabi, 2020).

However, some studies have pointed out a potential limitation of traditional games (Moeller et al., 2020). The students' dependence on physical presence and face-to-face interaction limits their effectiveness in more extensive or diverse classrooms. Despite this limitation, the students' feedback suggests that these challenges are outweighed by the benefits of direct engagement and social aspects of the games, making this traditional game a favoured choice for many students.

Furthermore, when dealing with DGBL, students appreciate the technological aspects of these games, such as the interactivity and personalised feedback. Still, they also expressed challenges with the complexity or technical difficulties and the need to be more connected to their peers when using digital games compared to traditional games. These findings align with Ningsih's (2023; Vega et al., 2024) studies, which utilised DGBL to provide significant benefits for personalised learning, allowing students to practice at their own pace while receiving real-time feedback.

However, many students in this study thought that the technical issues found in DGBL need to be improved. Similar to this case, a study by (Maulidya et al., 2023), who focused on using DGBL media by pre-service teachers to teach English vocabulary learning, found that technological

barriers, such as device incompatibilities, can hinder the effectiveness of DGBL. Moreover, another researcher also argued that factors such as lack of training and difficulty finding good games can challenge teachers to adopt educational games in their classrooms. (Dubé & Dubé, 2021)

After comparing students' perspectives and preferences regarding traditional and DGBL approaches, we found that students prefer traditional games for their social aspects and simplicity. At the same time, they also recognise the DGBL for its personalisation and technological benefits. According to a study by Pando Cerra et al. (2022), combining traditional learning with game-based learning significantly improves academic performance and motivation, which they implemented in engineering students in this study. It can be said that integrating both traditional games and DGBL can also enhance students' engagement and learning outcomes, which, in this study, learning outcomes may not be considered significant advantages by the pre-service teachers involved.

Implication and Limitations

This study implies the importance of integrating traditional and digital-game-based approaches into teaching. In this case, we used these tools for peer-teaching practices for pre-service English teachers. A balanced use of these tools can cover diverse learning preferences and equip future teachers with skills to adapt to various teaching contexts. Additionally, this study highlights the need for educational resources and technology training to overcome barriers faced in implementing DGBL effectively.

This study also has limitations that include the small sample size of two classes of 60 students and does not specify the game names for all the peer-teaching practices done during this class in one semester. Thus, further research with a larger, more diverse sample and more detailed game approaches would provide deeper insights into new insight on the effectiveness of traditional games and DGBL on peer-teaching practices. Lastly, it can also explore the specific technical challenges the pre-service teachers face, particularly in regions with limited access to technology.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study contribute to the effectiveness of using traditional games and digital game-based learning (DGBL) based on pre-service English teachers' perspectives and preferences. While traditional games are favoured for their social interaction and simplicity, DGBL is recognised for its technological advantages and personalised learning potential. The pre-service teachers' preferences for a combing approach suggest that educators should consider integrating both methodologies to maximise student engagement and learning outcomes. Future research could further explore the implementation of such two integrated games in diverse educational contexts to better understand the impact on teaching and learning, specifically on English language classrooms.

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