

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the research background of this study as well as its problem identification, research limitation, research question, research objective, and research significances.

1.1 Research Background

In order to help students to achieve the expected English academic performance, many researchers and educators have been investigating more effective teaching strategies. Especially in English learning at school, many students are still struggling to keep up with the lesson in the given time and lose motivation. Moreover, when it is conducted monotonously and does not engage students' participation (Derakhshan et al., 2021; Kholili, 2023). This improvement is also required for supporting materials, including student worksheets. When worksheets fail to engage students' interest, learners can easily lose focus and become less enthusiastic about completing the assigned tasks (Mufidah & Yaumi, 2022).

A student worksheet or activity sheet is a teaching material in the form of sheets that contain information and instructions for students to work on questions and practical learning activities (Setianingrum et al., 2022). This tool is very important for students' learning development. Student worksheets can help students to explore the given materials independently and deepen their understanding of the

theory explained by the teacher (Almis, 2023). The students are also trained to formulate problems, make arguments, evaluate and decide, implement particular problems, and enhance their critical thinking skills (Rosianti & Wilujeng, 2023). Therefore, an engaging worksheet is essential to make learning more meaningful for students.

As people become more fluent in digital technology, many educators try to develop student worksheets with digital tools. For example, creating e-student worksheets (Ostian et al., 2023; Rosianti & Wilujeng, 2023; Wahyuni et al., 2021), or with quiz-like games such as Socrative (Dirgayasa et al., 2023) and Kahoot! (Sitepu, 2022). However, digitalization is not the only solution for improving student worksheets. Non-digital strategies can still be considered to improve students' engagement and motivation for this teaching tool. For example, by applying non-digital game-based learning to the student worksheet. This strategy has been applied by an English teacher at SMP Negeri 1 Gerokgak. She combined student worksheets with physical game activities such as Finding a Treasure, Snowball Throwing, and Window Shopping. In addition, she also applied other engaging teaching strategies, such as a spelling bee. Over her five years of teaching, these methods have proven effective in keeping students motivated to learn English and in helping them achieve satisfactory final test scores.

To understand this approach theoretically, it is important to define the framework of this strategy. Non-Digital Game-Based Learning (NDGBL) is a learning approach that applies existing physical games, such as cards, dice, and board games, or teacher innovation to enhance the learning environment (Hamid et al., 2022). Game-based learning itself is defined as the implementation of a full-

fledged game form, rather than gamification that only applies the game elements in a non-game context (Al Fatta et al., 2019). Meanwhile, the observed combined strategy of a non-digital game with student worksheets was a full-fledged game using the Finding a Treasure game. The game activity was given at the start, before the students could do the worksheet. The worksheet papers were scattered in a certain area, requiring the students to find them as part of the game mechanics. Accordingly, this strategy can be called as Game-Based Student Worksheet (GBSW) or Non-Digital Game-Based Student Worksheet (ND-GBSW) for the applied physical game.

The implementation of ND-GBSW in this school shows that teachers continue to employ non-digital teaching even when the world is familiar with technology. This is in line with the statement by Naderi & Moafian (2023), that the arrival of technology does not mean non-digital strategies can be ignored in language learning (Naderi & Moafian, 2023). This is also supported by the recent raising of the studies that explored non-digital game-based learning (NDGBL). Although most previous research has centered on digital games, research on NDGBL has recently increased, mostly due to the lack of research exploring this topic and the need to develop a more comprehensive understanding of game-based learning methods for effective classroom implementation (Annamalai et al., 2021; Aqilah et al., 2021; Balakrishna, 2023; Naderi & Moafian, 2023; Pratiwi et al., 2023; Russo et al., 2024; Simbolon, 2025). These researchers found that there is no significant difference between digital and non-digital game-based learning on the students' competences, motivation, and their effective learning (Balakrishna, 2023; Hamid et al., 2022; Naderi & Moafian, 2023; Pranata, 2023; Russo et al., 2024).

Moreover, non-digital learning media have been found to promote students' learning participation, collaboration, and satisfaction better than digital learning (Budiningsih et al., 2024). This is also in line with the studies on NDGBL from Simbolon (2025) and Naderi & Moafian (2023) for English learning. In her study, Simbolon (2025) found that non-digital games can improve the students' English learning skills and collaboration (Simbolon, 2025). Naderi & Moafian (2023) also found that non-digital games can improve the students' vocabulary mastery better than digital games (Naderi & Moafian, 2023). In addition, Rahutami et al. (2019) stated that traditional games also allow physical movement that is beneficial for body health (Rahutami et al., 2019). In the study by Mas'odi & Arma (2024) also found that direct interaction between teachers and students and physical materials can significantly increase students' engagement and understanding (Mas'odi & Arma, 2024). Therefore, NDGBL can provide physical activity and direct interaction that are less achievable through digital games, while also supporting the students' vocabulary mastery and collaboration skills. These advantages remain important for creating more active learning experiences and complement the digitalization of today's learning environment. Accordingly, ND-GBSW has the potential to create more engaging worksheet activities while supporting students' understanding during task completion.

There are a few researchers who have tried to combine a student worksheet with a non-digital game activity. For instance, Sutalistya (2018) created a chain card game media that can be applied in student worksheets. This chain card game was purposed to improve the sixth-grade students' writing skills for English language learning. The result showed that the chain card game improved the students'

learning outcomes and motivation to learn English writing. Next, Mastuang (2020) developed a student worksheet on natural science with a card game named *Kokami* (*Kotak Kartu Misterius*). Their research is purposed to enhance the students' learning outcome. However, their research article was only purposed to describe the feasibility of the student worksheet with *Kokami* media without including its actual effect on the students' learning outcome. Additionally, Raupu et al. (2022) and Khyoon and Zuhair (2024) also created similar student worksheets. However, they did not investigate the effects of the worksheet, and one did not use it as the main focus of the research.

Given the potential of ND-GBSW, it is also important to investigate how the students perceive this strategy implementation. Perception can be described as how people form their impressions and conclusions about other people or their world (Putriani et al., 2022). Therefore, a study of students' perception is an attempt to discover their impression of what they gain in their school. Students' perception is important to discover their preferences in learning that's highly required by teachers in preparing their teaching method and materials (Damayanti et al., 2020). Creating a learning environment that matches the students' preferences will inevitably enhance the effectiveness of their learning. Investigating the students' perception is also important to learn whether the ND-GBSW strategy is acceptable to students and supports their learning. Therefore, researching the students' perception of this ND-GBSW will help teachers to learn if this strategy can improve the effectiveness of learning through the enhancement of student worksheets.

Several studies have investigated the students' perception of using student worksheets in different learning. Damayanti, Irwan, and Jusriati (2020) investigated

the students' perception of the use of worksheets as helping tools in semantics class and their advantages. They found that the students have positive perceptions of the worksheet and gained advantages that motivate them to learn English Semantics. Moreover, Yusuf and Ali (2022) also conducted research to investigate the students' perceived experiences of using the "Liveworksheet" website and its potential to promote self-learning, activeness, and autonomy in listening practices. The result of this study was that the students perceived Liveworksheet as beneficial for their vocabulary mastery, learning autonomy, and technology skills. In another study, Mufidah and Yaumi (2022) conducted research to investigate the students' perceptions on the use of student worksheet but in speaking skill. They also wanted to learn the factors that influence the use of student worksheets for this skill. The results showed that the students have both positive and negative perceptions of this student worksheet. Lastly, Perry (2025) designed an open-source smart worksheet that offers pedagogical effectiveness and investigated the students' perception towards it. The results show that the students were highly satisfied with the worksheet's benefits to enhance their conceptual understanding and ease the analysis process.

These studies show that students' perception of learning media varies depending on the design and method used. The generally positive responses also suggest that well-designed worksheets can effectively support learning. However, to date, limited studies have investigated students' perception of Non-Digital Game-Based Student Worksheets. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by investigating how students at SMPN 1 Gerokgak perceive the use of ND-GBSW with the Finding a Treasure game in English learning. The findings are expected to

provide insights for teachers to enhance students' engagement by utilizing non-digital media and complementing the use of digital media in English learning.

1.2 Problem Identification

Maintaining students' motivation is an important aspect of effective English learning. This aspect should also be reflected in teaching media, including student worksheets. Student worksheets play an important role in improving the students' comprehension and making learning more meaningful. To make worksheets more engaging, teachers do not always need to rely on digital media. Instead, student worksheets can also be combined with a non-digital game-based learning strategy. One English teacher at SMPN 1 Gerokgak has been implementing this strategy in her teaching, which has contributed to satisfactory English learning outcomes among students. Several previous studies have also developed similar non-digital game-based student worksheets (ND-GBSW). Investigating how the students perceive this strategy will provide better insight into how it affects students and their learning before further implementation. Based on the reviewed literature, limited studies have investigated students' perception of ND-GBSW in English learning. Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap by investigating students' perception of ND-GBSW with the Finding a Treasure game for English learning at SMPN 1 Gerokgak.

1.3 Research Limitation

Based on the research background and problem identification, this study only investigates students' perception of the use of non-digital game-based student

worksheet (ND-GBSW) with the Finding a Treasure game in English learning at SMPN 1 Gerokgak.

1.4 Research Problem

According to the background above, this research will only answer this question:

1. What are the students' perceptions of the use of non-digital game-based student worksheet (ND-GBSW) with the Finding a Treasure game for English learning at SMPN 1 Gerokgak?

1.5 Research Objective

Based on the research problem, this study aims to investigate the students' perceptions of non-digital game-based student worksheet (ND-GBSW) with the Finding a Treasure game for English learning at SMPN 1 Gerokgak.

1.6 Research Significances

After conducting this research, the benefits that are expected to be gained are:

1. Theoretical Significances

The results of this study are expected to enrich the literature on Game-Based Learning (GBL), especially in the context of Non-Digital Game-Based Learning, by providing insight into students' perspectives.

2. Practical Significances

- a. For teachers

The results of this study can serve as a reference for teachers in designing Non-Digital Game-Based Student Worksheet to achieve the English learning goals without relying on technological tools.

b. For other researchers

The results of this study can serve as supporting data or a reference for future researchers who explore similar topics in non-digital game-based learning and student worksheets.

