

The Effect of the Educational Game Make A Match on Improving Students' Social Interaction

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Abstract

Social interaction is an important aspect in student development because it plays a role in forming communication skills, cooperation, and positive social relationships in the school environment. However, the reality in the field shows that students' social interactions have not developed optimally. Therefore, innovative and fun learning strategies are needed to improve students' social interactions. This study aims to determine the effect of the Make A Match educational game on improving students' social interactions. A quantitative approach with a pre-experimental design of the One Group Pretest-Posttest Design type was used. The subjects of the study were 32 students of class VII G of SMPN 2 Banjarmasin in the 2025/2026 academic year who were selected using a purposive sampling technique. The research instrument was a social interaction questionnaire that had passed validity and reliability tests. Data analysis was carried out using descriptive statistics, normality tests, homogeneity tests, and hypothesis testing using paired sample t-tests. The results showed an increase in the average social interaction score from 153.53 in the pretest to 167.09 in the posttest. The paired sample t-test results showed a significance value of less than 0.05, indicating a significant difference between social interactions before and after the treatment. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Make A Match educational game significantly improved students' social interactions.

Keywords: Make A Match, Social Interaction, Students

Abstrak

Interaksi sosial merupakan aspek penting dalam perkembangan peserta didik karena berperan dalam membentuk kemampuan komunikasi, kerja sama, dan hubungan sosial yang positif di lingkungan sekolah. Namun, kenyataan di lapangan menunjukkan bahwa interaksi sosial peserta didik masih belum berkembang secara optimal. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan strategi pembelajaran yang inovatif dan menyenangkan untuk meningkatkan interaksi sosial peserta didik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh permainan edukatif *Make A Match* terhadap peningkatan interaksi sosial peserta didik. Pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain pre-eksperimental tipe *One Group Pretest- Posttest Design*. Subjek penelitian adalah 32 peserta didik kelas VII G SMPN 2 Banjarmasin tahun ajaran 2025/2026 yang dipilih menggunakan teknik purposive sampling. Instrumen penelitian berupa angket interaksi sosial yang telah melalui uji validitas dan reliabilitas. Analisis data dilakukan dengan statistik deskriptif, uji normalitas, uji homogenitas, dan uji hipotesis menggunakan uji paired sample t-test. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan rata-rata skor interaksi sosial dari pretest sebesar 153,53 menjadi 167,09 pada posttest. Hasil uji paired sample t-test menunjukkan nilai signifikansi kurang dari 0,05 yang berarti terdapat perbedaan signifikan antara interaksi sosial sebelum dan sesudah perlakuan. Dengan demikian, bisa disimpulkan

bahwa permainan edukatif *Make A Match* berpengaruh signifikan terhadap peningkatan interaksi sosial peserta didik.

Kata Kunci: *Make A Match*, Interaksi Sosial, Peserta Didik

Introduction

Humans are social creatures, so they always need the help of others in everything they do. As social beings, we must interact with our surroundings. Social interaction is the basis of human life because through interaction, individuals can fulfill their needs, form their identity, and establish relationships with their environment. According to Gilin in Soekanto (2012), social interaction is a relationship between one or more individuals who engage in social contact and communication. Social interaction influences, changes, or improves one another. In social interaction, the relationship that occurs is reciprocal. When interacting, one individual adapts, thus concluding that they are influenced by the other (Christyastari & Rusmawan, 2023)

In the context of education, social interaction not only means communication between individuals, but also student involvement in building healthy, cooperative, and meaningful social relationships. Through social interaction, students learn the norms, values, attitudes, and social skills needed to adapt to everyday life (Benito-Ruiz et al., 2022). Positive social interactions can strengthen interpersonal relationships and create a classroom climate conducive to learning. Conversely, low social engagement can lead to negative experiences such as feelings of isolation, lack of engagement in class activities, and even decreased motivation to learn (Nurkholis et al., 2025). School is a suitable environment for children to learn about social interaction because there they have many opportunities to interact with peers.

Social interaction is essentially a fundamental process that underlies human life. Soerjono Soekanto defines social interaction as a reciprocal relationship between individuals and groups that influences each other's behavior, attitudes, and actions. Gillin & Gillin in (Sembiring et al., 2025) adding that social interaction is a dynamic relationship that allows for the formation of solidarity, cooperation, and the resolution of differences. From a developmental psychology perspective, Piaget emphasized that interactions with peers play an important role in shaping social thinking skills and understanding other people's perspectives (Owunna et al., 2025).

Social interaction is a fundamental aspect of student development in school because it is directly related to communication skills, cooperation, tolerance, and the formation of positive social attitudes. Theoretically, Lev Vygotsky (1978) in Sociocultural Theory states that social interaction plays a crucial role in children's cognitive and social development, where learning occurs first through social relationships (inter-psychological) before becoming an individual's internal process (intra-psychological). Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) concept suggests that students' social and cognitive abilities develop most optimally when they work with more skilled peers or fellow classmates on challenging but achievable tasks with mutual assistance. This is achieved through dialogue, discussion, and collaborative management of social experiences. The social interaction indicators used as a reference in this study are social interaction indicators according to Vygotsky (1978) through the Social Development theory which emphasizes that social interaction is an important means in children's cognitive and social development, because through interaction students internalize values, language and knowledge from their environment (Luong, 2022). There are 4 indicators of social interaction, namely (1) social participation, (2) collaborative skills, (3) meaningful communication, and (4) social acceptance and understanding of peers.

The *Make A Match* game is an educational game model that integrates the activity of matching question and answer cards in pairs within a discussion group or team. This game is

not only designed to help students understand academic material through the process of matching answers, but also naturally encourages them to interact with each other through active communication, strategic negotiation, and group collaboration. Furthermore, although many studies use the terms learning model or learning strategy, Make A Match as an educational game has been proven to increase student activity and interaction. Other research results show that when students are involved in the activity of matching cards or questions, they tend to be more active in speaking, providing opinions, and helping friends when they encounter difficulties, which are important aspects of social interaction development. (Full Moon, 2023). The interactions that occur during the game are expected to encourage active social involvement of students, so that not only cognitive aspects but also social skills develop (Ramadhani, 2021)

In line with Vygotsky's perspective, an educational game-based learning approach is a relevant strategy for bridging this practical gap because play activities facilitate meaningful social interactions between students. The Make A Match Educational Game is a form of game-based cooperative learning implementation that encourages students to communicate, collaborate, help each other, and exchange ideas in matching pairs of question-and-answer cards in groups. This activity is not just a game, but also a social vehicle where students actively participate in dialogue, shared strategies, and support among classmates (Salimah & Pritasari, 2024)

Several previous studies have shown that the Make A Match game can improve children's social skills (Wahyuni & Sari, 2022), conceptual understanding (Wulandari & Haryanto, 2022), influences the social emotional development of students (Rahmadani, 2023) and collaboration and communication (Irene et al., 2024). It can be concluded that the educational game Make A Match influences students' social-emotional development, social skills, including increased ability to interact and cooperate in learning activities. In the context of guidance and counseling. The Make a Match media can be modified to explore students' understanding of important themes, such as decision-making, self-awareness, social relationships, and self-control. By formulating contextually relevant questions, this game can simultaneously serve as a guidance and counseling tool, a fun and meaningful reflection tool (Setiawan et al., 2025). However, the majority of research still positions games as merely a complement to learning activities or group therapy, rather than a core strategy in guidance and counseling services. Nevertheless, there is limited research specifically examining the impact of the Make A Match method on improving students' social interactions, particularly in the context of secondary education (Majidah, 2021).

Based on the results of an interview with one of the Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers at SMPN 2 Banjarmasin, there are still a number of students who show limitations in social interaction, for example, being less active in group discussions, tending to be alone, or having difficulty when asked to collaborate with friends. The use of conventional methods such as lectures or discussions sometimes makes students less enthusiastic. This finding is an important basis for designing innovative and student-centered learning strategies to improve the quality of the learning process and outcomes at SMPN 2 Banjarmasin. This indicates an important research gap to be bridged, namely related to how methods such as Make A Match can significantly influence the affective aspects of students, in terms of social interaction skills.

The use of Make a Match is also in line with the principles of BK services which willtifik, humanistik, and contextual. The guidance and counseling teacher simply composes questions in the form of a case or short scenario, then students match them with the most appropriate response. The application of Make a Match in classical guidance is also proventieffecttifas a formal assessment methodtif. Guidance and counseling teachers can observetistudent responses to the issues raised in the question cards and use them as indicators of the need for further services (Setiawan et al., 2025). Therefore, this study has

novelty because it lies in the influence of the Make A Match educational game in BK services, especially classical services. The Make A Match educational game, originally known as a paired card-based learning method, in this study was modified as a classical service medium, group counseling to encourage social interaction. Through the activity of finding card pairs, students engage in meaningful communication, work collaboratively, and demonstrate participation in groups. This activity is in line with Vygotsky's view that social interaction is the main means of development, while also strengthening indicators of student social interaction such as social participation, meaningful communication, collaborative cooperation, and social acceptance.

Based on this background, the purpose of this study is to analyze the effect of the educational game Make A Match on improving students' social interactions. The benefits of this study are expected to contribute to the development of science, particularly in the fields of education and guidance and counseling. This study can also serve as an empirical reference supporting the theory of social development, particularly the view that social interactions can be developed through collaborative and participatory learning activities, as well as serve as a reference for other researchers in developing educational game-based Guidance and Counseling media.

Method

This study uses a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental design, the One-Group Pretest-Posttest Design type. The data collected uses an instrument that has passed the validity and reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha with the help of SPSS version 27. The questionnaire instrument in this study was compiled based on the indicators of social development theory proposed by Lev Vygotsky (1978), which include (1) social participation, (2) collaborative abilities, (3) meaningful communication, (4) social acceptance and understanding. Before conducting the research, the researcher conducted a validity and reliability test on 50 statement items that had been prepared and the trial was conducted in class VII D at the same school where the research was conducted. In the social interaction variable, the social interaction scale instrument was used, which was compiled by researchers based on Vygotsky's theory. *Social Development* which has 4 indicators with a total of 48 valid questionnaire items for the social interaction scale from 50 statement items with a reliability of 0.963. Only 48 items were valid and these items were used for the pre-test and post-test.

This one-group pretest and posttest design is conducted on one group without a control or comparison group. This design includes a pretest before the treatment and a posttest after the treatment (Br Purba et al., 2025). This design only involves one class, namely the experimental class, which begins with a pre-test before being given treatment, then a post-test after being given treatment using the educational game Make A Match. Therefore, the results of the treatment can be known more accurately because they can be compared with the conditions before being given treatment according to Sugyono (2019:74) in (Br Purba et al., 2025). The design can be seen from Table 1, social interaction measurements were carried out twice, namely before and after the implementation of the Make A Match educational game. Through this method, it is hoped that the effect of the Make A Match educational game on improving students' social interactions can be determined.

Table 1. One Group Pretest-Posttest Design

Pretest	Treatment	Posttest
O1	X	O2

The subjects in this study were grade VII G students at SMPN 2 Banjarmasin in the odd semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. Subjects were selected using a purposive sampling technique based on practical considerations and the availability of classes that could be used for intervention. The sample used was 32 students from one class.

This study used descriptive analysis to describe the level of social interaction among students. Furthermore, prerequisite tests were conducted, including normality and homogeneity analyses, as well as hypothesis testing using paired sample t-tests. Prior to the main analysis, instrument validity and reliability tests were conducted to ensure the validity of the measurement tool. Data normality testing was conducted using SPSS version 27 software using the Shapiro-Wilk method, considering the sample size was less than 50 respondents (Sianturi, 2024).

Results and Discussion

The learning process began with the provision of pre-test questions to students. This was followed by treatment using the educational game Make A Match. In the first meeting, the teacher showed a video of service material related to "Social Interaction." Each student received a card containing questions or answers randomly, and the teacher explained how to play paired cards. Students appeared enthusiastic and eager to do the activity. Next, students were asked to find the matching pair of cards within the specified time. After students found their pair of cards, they were asked to discuss and present the contents of the cards they received. During the activity, the teacher acted as a facilitator who guided and directed students to follow the rules of the game in an orderly manner. This activity encouraged students to actively move, think, and interact with their classmates.

Learning continued in the second meeting by providing the same treatment. At the end of this second meeting, students were divided into 4 groups and the teacher explained how to play pair cards. Each group received 10 cards containing problems and solutions randomly, students discussed in their groups to solve the correct problem card on the solution card. Each group competed to win. After the discussion, it continued with group presentations. The group that completed the answer the fastest was selected to present first. The next stage was reinforcement of the results. Other groups were asked to respond to the answers from the presenting group, then the teacher provided reinforcement by explaining each problem on the solution card and providing the correct answer. The next stage was giving awards to the winning group and punishments to the losing group as a form of motivation. After all the data was obtained, the researcher conducted normality tests, homogeneity tests, descriptive statistical tests, and hypothesis tests.

A normality test is a prerequisite test used to determine whether the obtained data is normally distributed. The test indicates that data is normally distributed if the sig. >0.05. The results of the normality analysis can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2.Data Normality Test

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	ddf	Sig.
pretes	.100	32	.200*	.962	32	.307
postes	.113	32	.200*	.951	32	.159
*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.						
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction						

The table above explains the results of the data normality test in this study. The table above shows the results of the Shapiro-Wilk test, where the significance value (Sig) for the pre-test data was recorded at 0.307, while the significance value for the post-test data was 0.159. Based on the data analysis, both Sig values were greater than the alpha level (Sig > 0.05). Thus, it can be concluded that the pre-test and post-test data in this study were normally distributed, as indicated by the results of the normality test.

The homogeneity test is a requirement to determine whether the research data can be further tested, namely the paired sample t-test. To conclude that the data is homogeneous, the researcher used SPSS version 2.7 software in his calculations, the results of which can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Homogeneity Test Results

Test of Homogeneity of Variance					
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
HASIL	Based on Mean	.013	1	62	.909
	Based on Median	.005	1	62	.941
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.005	1	61.933	.941
	Based on trimmed mean	.009	1	62	.925

Based on the homogeneity test results listed in the table above, the Sig value obtained from the "Based on Mean" row is 0.909. This Sig value indicates that the value is greater than the Alpha value (Sig > 0.05). Therefore, it can be concluded that the data is homogeneous. This homogeneity indicates that the distribution of data between student groups before and after treatment is uniform, thus allowing the application of parametric tests with higher validity. This condition also provides confidence that the increase in student social interaction that occurred in this study was not influenced by the comparison of group variances, but actually came from the treatment given, namely the application of the Make A Match educational game. To perfect the homogeneity test if the data in this study is homogeneous or comes from variance, thus allowing further testing to be carried out.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistical Test Results

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Pre	32	133	178	153.53	12,313
Post	32	148	187	167.09	12,121
Valid N (listwise)	32				

Based on the descriptive statistical analysis of the data presented in the table above, the number of respondents in this study, indicated by the N value, was 32 people. In the pre-test data, the minimum score was recorded at 133, while the maximum score reached 178, with an average of 153.53. In addition, the standard deviation of the pre-test data was 12.313. In contrast to the pre-test data, the post-test data analysis showed that the minimum score was 148, and the maximum score was 187. The overall average of the post-test data was 167.09, with a standard deviation of 12.121. This value indicates that after the treatment was given, most students were able to interact more actively and positively, such as being more courageous in communicating, working together with friends, and showing mutual respect

in learning activities. Students' social interactions were no longer limited to certain individuals but had involved most of the class members.

The paired sample t-test was used to test the hypothesis because the data in this study had a normal distribution. The decision on the hypothesis was based on the significance value. The null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted if the significance value is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted if the significance value is less than 0.05. The results of hypothesis testing using SPSS version 27 are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Paired Samples Test Results

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	pretes - postes	-13.56250	8.41250	1.48713	-16.59553	-10.52947	-9.120	31	<.001

If Sig. (2-tailed) > 0.05, then H_0 is accepted and H_a is rejected, likewise Sig. (2-tailed) < 0.05, then H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. Based on the results of the paired sample t-test shown in Table 5, the significance value (sig.) from the SPSS output results shows that the t-test result is -9.120, and sig. (2-tailed) is <0.001. Furthermore, the results of data analysis using the paired sample t-test, obtained a significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) of <0.001, which is smaller than the significance level of 0.05. Thus, H_0 rejected and H_a accepted, which means there is a significant difference between students' social interactions before and after the implementation of the Make A Match educational game. These results indicate that the Make A Match educational game has a significant effect on increasing students' social interactions.

The improvement in social interaction is evident from the change in post-test scores, which were higher than the pre-test scores. In the pre-test session, students' social interaction skills before being given treatment were at a sufficient level, where students were able to interact with peers, but had not yet demonstrated optimal social interaction overall. Furthermore, based on the post-test results, it is clear that the condition of students' social interactions after the treatment was at a better and more developed level than before the treatment. Students appeared more active, communicative, and cooperative in the learning process. Thus, descriptively, it can be said that the treatment provided had a positive impact on improving students' social interactions.

This indicates that after participating in the Make A Match learning game, students became more active in communicating, collaborating, and interacting with their peers during the learning process. This game requires students to find matching cards, discuss them, and interact directly, thus creating a collaborative and participatory learning environment. According to Sailer & Homner, 2020 In the journal Educational Psychology Review, it was stated that game elements in learning can improve social interaction through cooperation, healthy competition, and meaningful communication between students. In this study, the

competition and collaboration elements contained in the Make A Match game were proven to encourage students to engage socially in the learning process, improving aspects of students' social interactions in the learning context.

Results This research aligns with Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Development Theory, which emphasizes that a person's cognitive and social development occurs through social interactions with other individuals and the surrounding cultural context. According to Vygotsky, the learning process does not occur solely individually, but rather through collaboration, dialogue, and scaffolding provided by more experienced individuals such as teachers or peers (the principle of social constructivism). In the context of this research, the Make A Match educational game provides a structured social interaction framework in which students participate in activities that require communication, coordination, and cooperation, thus creating a learning situation that is in line with the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Within the ZPD, students can complete tasks that they cannot yet do independently with the help of their peers or teacher facilitation. Card game activities that involve discussion and finding card pairs place students in a collaborative learning process that allows for the internalization of more complex social interaction skills.

The effect of the Make A Match educational game on students' social interactions in this study can also be seen from the changes in students' behavior during the treatment, which led to them being more able to establish social relationships, communicate with each other, cooperate, respect turn-taking, and tolerate the opinions of their peers. This is in line with the findings of research by Olivia et al., 2019 The use of the educational game Make A Match as a learning strategy to improve social interaction was marked by significant changes after treatment compared to pre-treatment conditions. Research by Wahyuni & Sari, 2022 showed that the implementation of the cooperative game Make A Match through collaboration in matching cards and peer-to-peer interaction in small groups, in early childhood significantly improves children's social skills, including communication and cooperation skills in groups. Furthermore, Rahmadani & Rakimahwati, 2023 showed that game-based learning Make A Match can significantly improve students' social and emotional skills. Thus, the increase in students' social interactions after the implementation of the Make A Match game can be understood as a result of the social learning process as explained in Vygotsky's theory. This game provides space for interaction, communication, and cooperation for students, which ultimately strengthens their social skills.

Conclusion

Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that the Make A Match educational game has a significant effect on improving social interaction in class VII G students of SMPN 2 Banjarmasin. This is proven by the results of the paired sample t-test which shows a significance value of <0.001 , so there is a significant difference between the social interactions of students before and after the treatment. The increase in social interaction is seen from the increase in the average post-test score compared to the pre-test. Students show positive developments in social participation, meaningful communication, collaborative cooperation, and attitudes of mutual acceptance and respect among peers. The Make A Match game encourages students to actively interact through card matching activities, discussions, and cooperation, resulting in a learning environment that involves active and collaborative participation. The success of this method is greatly influenced by the readiness of students to participate actively, the dynamics of interaction in groups, and the competence of teachers in managing the class in a conducive and directed manner. Time limitations in classical services

cause the social interaction process that occurs to tend to be situational and not yet developed in depth. Thus, a more consistent, structured, and sustainable implementation is needed, as well as further studies on various student characteristics and learning conditions to obtain more optimal effectiveness. The implications of this study indicate that the Make A Match educational game can be used as an alternative innovative strategy in Guidance and Counseling services, as a BK medium and especially classical services, to improve student social interaction. The use of this game supports the principles of active, humanistic, and contextual BK services, and functions not only as a learning medium, but also as a medium for formative assessment and social skills development.

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