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Appraisal Attitude in Students' Game-Based Learning Experiences: A Case Study

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Abstract

Student attitudes play a central role in shaping EFL learning success, yet they remain underexplored from a linguistic perspective, particularly in non-digital game-based learning (GBL) contexts. Most existing studies examine digital GBL or rely on general psychological measures, leaving a gap in linguistically grounded analyses of secondary-level learners' attitudes toward non-digital activities. This study examined how eighth-grade female EFL students' attitudes toward a four-session non-digital GBL intervention were realized through the Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation domains of Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Framework. Using a qualitative case study design bounded by one intact class at a junior secondary school integrated with an Islamic boarding school in Karawang, Indonesia, data were collected from ten students through guided reflective journals (94 entries) and semi-structured interviews with five volunteering participants. A total of 617 primary-domain attitudinal instances were coded following Ary et al.'s (2019) procedure and checked through expert validation. Appreciation was the most frequent domain (246 instances, 39.9%), followed by Judgment (191 instances, 31.0%) and Affect (180 instances, 29.2%). Students shifted from fatigue-related disengagement to active participation, emphasized effort and cooperation, and evaluated the games as engaging and educationally valuable. These patterns suggest that non-digital GBL can foster positive, multidimensional attitudes among secondary EFL learners in resource-limited settings when supported by adequate orientation and teacher facilitation; because language achievement was not independently measured, these claims are limited to students' perceived experience. Future research should examine these patterns in larger and more varied populations using longitudinal, mixed-method designs.

INTRODUCTION

Student attitudes are widely recognized as a pivotal factor in determining the success of foreign language learning (Smith, 1971). A positive attitude tends to encourage stronger motivation, sustained engagement, and better academic outcomes, while negative attitudes can hinder learning progress (Dajuela et al., 2024; Mashwama et al., 2025). Attitude is not only related to students' feelings toward their learning experiences, but also to how those feelings shape their participation and performance (Gardner, 1985; Martin & White, 2005). Despite this significance, students' attitudes have remained relatively underexplored in EFL research, where most studies emphasize measurable performance outcomes rather than learners' affective and evaluative experiences (Getie, 2020; Rezai et al., 2025). Closer attention to how students express their attitudes is therefore essential for understanding the quality of their learning experience in EFL classrooms.

These attitudes are shaped substantially by the teaching practices adopted by teachers, many of which remain grounded in conventional, teacher-centered approaches that position students as passive recipients of information (Engida et al., 2024; Zhong, 2024), a pattern linked to reduced engagement and limited active participation (Liu et al., 2025). Game-based learning (GBL) has gained increasing attention as a potential response to this need (Rezai et al., 2025; Zhou, 2024), defined as a learning approach with specific instructional objectives in which gameplay serves as the primary medium for achieving those objectives (Plass et al., 2015; Rye et al., 2025). Key characteristics of GBL include structured challenges,

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learner interaction, collaboration, competition, and immersion (Nadolny et al., 2020). In language learning specifically, games can be classified into linguistic games that emphasize accuracy and communicative games that focus on interaction and information exchange (Hadfield, 1999). Several studies report that GBL can improve both language performance and learner attitudes (Yang et al., 2024; Yang & Li, 2023; Yaqubova, 2020), though the effectiveness of GBL is not determined by learning outcomes alone; students' attitudes toward the process itself also shape how effective the approach ultimately becomes (Iqbal et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2022).

Understanding how students construct and express evaluative responses toward interactive approaches such as GBL is therefore an important area of inquiry. The Appraisal Theory developed by Martin and White (2005) offers a useful analytical lens for this purpose, focusing on three domains of attitude: Affect (emotional response), Judgment (evaluation of behavior according to social norms), and Appreciation (evaluation of things, processes, or outcomes). The appraisal system is organized into three main domains: Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation. Within the Attitude subsystem, which is the focus of this study, three categories are distinguished: Affect, which concerns emotional responses such as happiness, security, and satisfaction; Judgment, which evaluates human behavior against social norms; and Appreciation, which evaluates things, processes, or outcomes in terms of their reaction, composition, and value. Analyzing students' attitudes through this framework allows for a more detailed understanding of their emotional engagement, perceptions of learning effectiveness, and responses to game-based instruction.

A number of studies have examined student attitudes toward GBL across various educational levels and contexts, generally using technology acceptance models or general psychological perspectives. These studies, conducted with university and secondary school populations in Japan (Andersson, 2022; Hofmeyr, 2023), Indonesia (Irwanto et al., 2024; Pratiwi et al., 2023), Jordan (Jarrah et al., 2021), Thailand (Tongsom, 2022), Iran (Hashempour & Mobini, 2022), and the Philippines (Lasala, 2024), consistently report positive student attitudes toward both digital and non-digital game-based activities, associated with increased enjoyment, motivation, engagement, and retention. For instance, Pratiwi et al. (2023) found that non-digital GBL fostered positive attitudes among Indonesian undergraduate EFL students across dimensions of enjoyment, motivation, retention, and involvement, while Tongsom (2022) reported positive affective, behavioral, and cognitive attitudes among tertiary students in grammar-focused GBL. A smaller body of research has applied Appraisal Theory specifically, examining attitudes in vocabulary learning (Haqiki, 2023), teacher talk (Zhu, 2023), and academic writing (Setyaningsih et al., 2025), and has likewise found predominantly positive evaluative patterns, with Appreciation often emerging as the most frequently realized domain.

Despite these contributions, several gaps remain. Research specifically focusing on eighth-grade EFL learners is still limited, and few studies analyze student attitudes from a linguistic perspective using a systematic framework such as Appraisal Theory. In addition, existing research predominantly examines digital GBL, which may not capture how students respond to non-digital game-based activities (Haqiki, 2023). This study addresses these gaps by analyzing eighth-grade female secondary school students' attitudes toward a non-digital GBL intervention using the Appraisal Framework by Martin and White (2005). The research question guiding this study is: how are students' attitudes, as expressed through Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation, reflected in game-based learning activities based on the Appraisal Framework?

The novelty of this study lies in combining these features. Pratiwi et al. (2023) used a quantitative attitude questionnaire with undergraduate Biology-major students to measure enjoyment, motivation, retention, and engagement. In contrast, this study analyzes junior secondary EFL learners' attitudes toward

non-digital GBL using a systemic-functional linguistic framework, Appraisal Theory. Haqiki (2023) applied an Appraisal-based case study to a single vocabulary-focused game among seventh-grade students. This study extends the Appraisal approach further, to a four-session, multi-skill, non-digital GBL intervention set in a boarding-school context where smartphone use is institutionally prohibited. To the researchers' knowledge, no prior study has combined these elements: eighth-grade learners, multi-skill non-digital GBL, a boarding-school EFL setting, and Appraisal-based linguistic analysis.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative case study design to investigate a phenomenon in depth within a bounded, real-life context (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018). The bounded case is one intact eighth-grade class's attitudinal experience across a four-session non-digital GBL intervention, in a junior secondary school integrated with an Islamic boarding school in Karawang, Indonesia, where smartphone use is prohibited. Non-digital games were also chosen for affordances beyond this restriction: face-to-face negotiation of meaning, embodied movement to counter fatigue from a demanding dual curriculum, and equal access regardless of digital-device ownership. Four meetings allowed each of four games to be implemented once, within the school's schedule.

Participants were one intact class of eighth-grade female students (n = 10), selected through homogeneous purposive sampling in coordination with the subject English teacher (Palinkas et al., 2015). Five students who volunteered and consistently completed their reflective journals were selected for interviews.

GBL was implemented across four sessions (2 x 40 minutes), each following Bado's (2019) three-stage structure: pre-game (introduction), game (implementation with teacher assistance), and post-game (reflection). The researcher designed the lesson plans and facilitated the games, but the class's regular English teacher delivered all sessions. The researcher only designed the intervention, observed, and collected data, to reduce the influence of the researcher-participant relationship on students' responses. Table 1 summarizes the four games.

Table 1. Summary of the Four Non-Digital GBL Sessions

Game	Language Focus	Grouping	Core Task	Teacher's Role
True or False Race	Reading comprehension and justification (a text on self-acceptance)	Individual response within whole class	Judge statements true/false by raising cards and justify answers	States statements, gives hints (not direct answers) to struggling students/groups, manages class, gives feedback after each item
Opinion Plane	Asking for and giving opinions with reasons (I think…, because…)	Individual paper-airplane exchange; 3 volunteers present	Write opinion questions, exchange folded "planes," answer with opinion and reason, present	Assists sentence construction, manages the "take-off" order, gives feedback/correction after presentations
Whisper Chain	Listening and speaking about abilities/passions (I am good at…, I like…)	Two teams (A and B) in relay lines	Relay a sentence by whispering; last student states what was received	Assists students who struggle to hear/relay, manages turn order and discipline, leads comparison/clarification

				discussion after each round
Match and Patch	Completing a listening dialogue about abilities/passions using target expressions	2–3 small groups (A, B, C)	Match sticky-note answers to blanks in a dialogue transcript within a time limit, using up to 3 "helping cards" for hints; present and justify answers; complete a personal "Ability Stamp" reflection	Circulates to give hints when a helping card is raised, manages the presentation/argument session, confirms answers and clarifies distractors

Two instruments were used. The guided reflective journal, adapted from Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Framework, asked students to record responses across three focus areas (Affect, Judgment, Appreciation) after each session, in Indonesian; 94 of a possible 120 entries were valid, due to absences and incomplete responses. The interview guide, nine questions adapted from Haqiki (2023) and divided evenly across the three dimensions, was administered by the researcher to the five selected students after all sessions, audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Both instruments were adapted, a limitation offset by the independent coding check described below. Together, 515 journal-derived and 102 interview-derived codes yielded 617 primary-domain instances; secondary meanings in multi-meaning utterances were recorded as cross-domain annotations and excluded from this total to avoid double counting.

Table 2 gives one sample guided question per domain from each instrument; the complete instruments are available from the corresponding author upon request.

Table 2. Illustrative Guided questions from the Instruments

Domain	Sample Reflective Journal Prompt	Sample Interview Response
Affect	How did you feel at the beginning, during, and after today's English lesson? (e.g., excited, nervous, bored, curious, relieved, or frustrated?)	How did you feel while playing the games throughout these four meetings? If you had to choose 2–3 adjectives, which words would best describe your feelings?
Judgment	How would you describe your own attitude and behaviour during today's English lesson? (e.g., were you focused, hardworking, distracted, passive, or brave enough to speak up?)	Do you think you were active while playing the games throughout the four meetings? Elaborate your answer.
Appreciation	Did today's English lesson activity grab your attention and make you want to participate? What made it feel engaging or interesting to you?	What was the first thing that caught your attention when you first saw the games? Why?

Data analysis followed Ary et al.'s (2019) three-phase procedure: familiarizing and organizing the data, coding according to the Attitude system, and interpreting the findings. Each coded excerpt received a traceable data code (e.g., RJ-S1-M1-AFF) indicating source, student, meeting, and domain, and was coded for subtype, polarity, and realization (inscribed/invoked).

The unit of segmentation was each student response to a single guided sub-question, whether from the journal or the interview; a response carrying more than one attitudinal meaning was segmented into separate instances. For example, in response to an Affect prompt about how the lesson felt (RJ-S1-M1-AFF), one student wrote, "I feel sooo excited," coded as Affect: Un/happiness, positive polarity, high intensity, and inscribed realization, since the affect is named directly rather than implied. Where a response's content diverged from its eliciting prompt's domain, it was coded under its true domain and cross-referenced as a cross-domain annotation, excluded from the primary count to avoid double coding.

Coding was carried out by a single researcher. To strengthen credibility, the coded dataset was reviewed by an independent expert validator, who checked domain, polarity, and realization placement against the cited excerpts; this led to minor revisions, notably to the intensity criteria. Source triangulation compared patterns across journals and interviews; where interview data surfaced dimensions less visible in the journals (e.g., the social dimension of in/security), this is noted in the Results.

Because participants were minors, permission was obtained from the school authorities and subject teacher, and informed consent was sought directly from students, who participated voluntarily; pseudonyms were used and data kept confidential.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 617 attitudinal instances were identified across the reflective journals and interviews. These figures represent counts of coded attitudinal instances, not counts of students holding a given attitude; because a single expressive student could contribute many instances, the frequencies below should be read as a description of the corpus rather than as a measure of how many students shared a view. Table 3 presents the overall distribution across the three Attitude domains.

Table 3. Overall Frequency Distribution of Attitude Domains

Attitude Domain	Reflective Journal	Interview	Total
Affect	137	43	180
Judgment	169	22	191
Appreciation	209	37	246
Total	515	102	617

Appreciation emerged as the most frequently realized domain (246 instances, 39.9%), followed by Judgment (191 instances, 31.0%) and Affect (180 instances, 29.2%). The following sections discuss each domain in turn.

Affect: Students' Emotional Responses in Game-Based Learning

Affect, which concerns emotional responses, accounted for 180 instances and is divided into four sub-categories: dis/satisfaction, un/happiness, in/security, and dis/inclination, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Frequency Distribution of Affect Sub-Categories

Sub-Category	Positive	Negative	Total
Dis/satisfaction	59	41	100
Un/happiness	28	14	42
In/security	7	20	27
Dis/inclination	8	3	11
Total	102	78	180

Positive evaluations accounted for 56.7 percent of all Affect instances. Dis/satisfaction was the most frequent sub-category (100 instances), with the dominant pattern being a contrast between sleepiness and boredom associated with conventional instruction, and alertness and energy associated with game-based sessions:

> "*Awalnya **ngantuk** yacc karna kipasnya terlalu kencang & dekat... Tapi lama kelamaan enggak pas udh nyampe akhir pembelajaran*." (At first I was *sleepy* because the fan was too strong and close... but as time went on, I was no longer sleepy by the end of the lesson.) (RJ-S2-M1-AFF)

> "*Kalo belajar biasa tuh **bosen**, bikin cepet **ngantuk**, kalo pake game engga*." (Regular learning is *boring*, it makes you *sleepy* fast; with games, it doesn't.) (INTV-S1)

> "*Kadang **bosan** tapi aku selalu **semangat**! Seru banget pelajarannya*." (Sometimes I was *bored*, but I was always *energized*! The lesson was so much fun.) (RJ-S8-M2-AFF)

This pattern is consistent with Martin and White's (2005) account of dis/satisfaction as tied to the fulfilment of expectations, and resonates with Self-Determination Theory's (Ryan & Deci, 2017) emphasis on autonomy, competence, and relatedness and with Flow Theory's (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) account of how matched challenge and skill can reduce attention to physical discomfort; these theoretical connections are offered here as interpretive lenses for the pattern observed, not as frameworks that were tested or confirmed by this single case. It is important to note that this Affect contrast concerns students' response to the GBL sessions specifically rather than their underlying attitude toward English as a subject.

Un/happiness, the second most frequent sub-category (42 instances), was predominantly positive and closely linked to enjoyment of the games, as illustrated in "*Jujur **syukakk** karna bikin otak mikir kerazz... Aku **senanggg***." (Honestly I *like it*, because it makes my brain think hard... *I'm happy*.) (RJ-S5-M1-AFF). The few negative instances, expressed through the English loanword badmood, were consistently attributed by students to pre-existing emotional conditions rather than to the learning activity itself, an important distinction when interpreting the overall positivity of the data.

In/security was the only sub-category in which negative instances (20) outnumbered positive ones (7), expressed mainly through confusion and fear in the first meeting:

> "*Awalnya tu pasti kaya 'ih **bingung** siah', 'ih **takut** siah' gitu... tapi kesini 'ko **seru** yah*'." (At first it was 'so *confusing*,' 'so *scared*'... but then, this 'is actually *fun*!') (INTV-S2)

This decline after the first meeting supports Bado's (2019) emphasis on the pre-game stage as a period of emotional adjustment. Dis/inclination (11 instances) revealed a distinction between enjoyment and willingness to engage: one student simultaneously inscribed positive Appreciation yet negative dis/inclination ("*Menarik perhatian sih tapi aku gamau ikut berpartisipasi*," RJ-S4-M3-APP, cross-domain), suggesting that interest does not automatically translate into participation. A limitation is that Affect data relied entirely on self-report, so the reported rise in alertness may partly reflect a novelty effect, and example emotion words in the journal prompts may have shaped some lexical choices.

Judgment: Students' Evaluation of Behavior and Character

Judgment accounted for 191 instances, divided into Social Esteem and Social Sanction as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Frequency Distribution of Judgment Sub-Categories

Category	Sub-category	Positive	Negative	Total
Social Esteem	Tenacity	74	8	82
	Capacity	9	18	27
	Normality	23	10	33
Social Sanction	Propriety	34	10	44
	Veracity	5	0	5
Total		145	46	191

Social Esteem (142 instances) occurred far more often than Social Sanction (49 instances), indicating that students focused more on ability and effort than on moral behavior. Tenacity, the most dominant sub-category (82 instances, 74 positive), and Capacity, the only sub-category with more negative than positive instances (18 versus 9), were realized as follows:

> "*Aktifnya itu gara-gara eu greget* ***karena aku gabisa Bahasa inggris harus nanya-nanya mulu***." (My activeness came from frustration, *because I can't speak English so I had to keep asking questions*.) (INTV-S5)

> "*Hari ini otaknya kaya* ***menolak*** *belajar,* menolak *ngerti*" (Today my brain feels like it *refuses* to learn, *refuses* to understand), before concluding, "*Tapi akhirnya aku* ***NGERTI*** *YUHUUU*" (But in the end I *UNDERSTOOD*, yay!) (RJ-S5-M1-JUD)

Together, these excerpts illustrate a tentative interpretive pattern this study terms the Tenacity-Capacity paradox: limited self-perceived ability appearing alongside persistence rather than withdrawal, and a shift toward understanding that can happen within the same session. This pattern echoes Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development, in that peer interaction allowed some students to perform beyond their independent ability. Given the limited number of excerpts supporting it, this pattern is proposed here as an emergent proposition for future verification rather than an established construct. Not every student responded this way; one stated simply, "*Engga hehehe / Gatau,* ***gabisa Bahasa inggris***" (No, hehe. / I don't know, *I can't speak English*) (INTV-S4), echoing Getie's (2020) observation that low confidence can persist even within engaging activities.

Within Social Sanction, Normality (33 instances) required careful interpretation, since deviations from routine classroom behavior are formally coded as negative even when experienced positively, while Propriety (44 instances) reflected peer cooperation and appreciation for the teacher's facilitative role:

> "***Berbeda*** *karna ada ice breakingny*" (*Different*, because there was an ice-breaking activity) (RJ-S4-M3-JUD)

> "*miss AB* ***selalu suprot*** *kok agar kita bisa berbahasa inggris*" (Miss AB *always supports* us so we can speak English) (RJ-S8-M1-JUD)

The Normality excerpt above demonstrates that evaluative polarity cannot always be determined from surface wording alone: this deviation from routine was coded negative by convention but experienced positively by the student. The Propriety excerpt confirms strong peer cooperation found elsewhere in the corpus (e.g., "*Saling support dan saling bantu*," RJ-S1-M2-JUD) and a positive evaluation of the teacher's facilitative role, consistent with the teacher's documented role in Table 1 of circulating to

give hints and manage group activity; negative Propriety, by contrast, was tied to specific disruptive incidents rather than dissatisfaction with GBL itself. These findings extend Lasala's (2024) report linking GBL to improved social engagement and Nadolny et al.'s (2020) identification of collaboration as a defining GBL feature. A limitation is that Judgment data relied on self-report rather than observation, and many instances were invoked rather than explicitly stated, requiring interpretive judgment.

Appreciation: Students' Evaluation of Learning Activities and Game Features

Appreciation was the most dominant domain, with 246 instances, comprising Reaction, Composition, and Valuation, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Frequency Distribution of Appreciation Sub-Categories

Category	Sub-category	Positive	Negative	Total
Reaction	Impact	78	7	85
	Quality	23	3	26
Composition	Complexity	40	17	57
	Balance	17	2	19
Valuation		58	1	59
Total		216	30	246

Reaction (111 instances) and Composition: Complexity (57 instances, the sub-category with the highest proportion of negative evaluations) were realized as follows:

> "*Sangat2* ***menarik*** *& ingin membuatku untuk ikut berpartisipasi*." (Very, very *engaging*, and it made me want to take part.) (RJ-S2-M2-APP)

> "*Awal2 sangat* ***sulit*** *di pahami krna tidak mengerti, ttpi pas di tengah tidak terlalu sulit sprti di awal*" (At first it was very *hard to understand* because I didn't get it, but by the middle it was not as hard as it was at the start) (RJ-S3-M1-APP)

Impact was especially prominent within Reaction (85 instances, 78 positive), and the term menarik (engaging) recurred consistently across the corpus. Physical, movement-based elements were consistently linked to engagement, while the few negative Impact cases were tied to pre-existing dislike of English as a subject rather than to weaknesses in game design, a distinction consistent with the separation between GBL-specific and general-English attitudes noted above. These results align with Hofmeyr (2023) and Jarrah et al. (2021), suggesting that appreciation stemmed from the games' capacity to capture attention and provide physical engagement rather than from technology, relevant for resource-limited EFL classrooms. Complexity followed a similar arc to that seen in Affect and Judgment: negative evaluations were concentrated in the first meeting (e.g., "*Sulit dipahami karna aku teu ngarti euuy*," RJ-S4-M1-APP), turning positive by later sessions (e.g., "*Lebih mudah memahami materi*," INTV-S3), supporting Bado's (2019) emphasis on pre-game orientation as a buffer against initial difficulty. Composition: Balance (19 instances, 17 positive) was evaluated positively when students focused on structural coherence and gradual scaffolding; the two negative Balance instances stemmed from group dynamics and lost materials rather than instructional design flaws.

Valuation, the most consistently positive sub-category (58 of 59 instances), linked the activities directly to learning benefits, though not without exception:

> "*Sangat* ***bermanfaat*** *krna membuat materi lebih cepat masuk dn tidak ngantuk*." (Very *beneficial*, because it makes the material sink in faster and I don't get sleepy.) (RJ-S1-M2-APP)

"***Hoki-hokian*** *jawaban paling bener*" (It was just *luck* that the answer was right) (RJ-S8-M4-JUD, cross-domain)

These evaluations explicitly connect GBL to students' perceived understanding, retention, and language skill development; because this study did not independently measure language achievement, these findings should be read as evidence of positive perceived value rather than demonstrated learning gains. This is consistent with Zhu (2023) and Setyaningsih et al. (2025), who likewise found Appreciation as the dominant Attitude domain in EFL discourse. The negative Valuation excerpt above, attributing a correct answer to luck, points to a risk that perceived educational value can decline when outcomes feel chance-driven. A further qualification came from the student who described the materials as engaging yet stated reluctance to participate, confirming Gardner's (1985) view that evaluative and behavioral attitudes do not always align. Limitations include the single-class qualitative scope, possible social desirability bias, a possible contrast effect against the demanding boarding-school routine, and the short implementation period limiting claims about long-term sustainability.

Read across domains, the negative instances follow a consistent temporal arc tied to the four meetings, rather than to the games themselves. Negative instances were concentrated in Meeting 1, when the non-digital format was still unfamiliar, and this shift often appears within a single account, as shown above in Dis/satisfaction (RJ-S2-M1-AFF), Judgment: Capacity (RJ-S5-M1-JUD), and Composition: Complexity (RJ-S3-M1-APP): each moves from an explicit negative response toward a positive one within the same or a later session. This recurring pattern, observed independently across three separate domains, supports reading the negative instances as a result of initial unfamiliarity with the non-digital format, rather than a stable dislike of the games. This is consistent with Bado's (2019) account of the pre-game stage as a period of emotional and cognitive adjustment.

Taken together, the three domains present a coherent picture: Appreciation reflected recognition of the games' engagement and educational value, Judgment highlighted effort, persistence, and cooperation shaped by language confidence and supported by the teacher's facilitative role, and Affect captured the most dynamic dimension of students' experience within a demanding boarding-school context. These findings suggest that this non-digital GBL intervention fostered multidimensional and educationally meaningful positive attitudes in this resource-limited case, though the small, single-class scope means these patterns should be treated as context-bound rather than generalized claims about non-digital GBL's effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how eighth-grade female EFL students' attitudes toward a four-session non-digital GBL intervention were reflected through the Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation domains of Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Framework, drawing on 617 attitudinal instances from guided reflective journals and interviews. The findings indicate predominantly positive attitudes across all three domains. In Affect, students' emotional responses shifted from fatigue and disengagement toward alertness and motivation, with confusion and anxiety concentrated in the first session. In Judgment, students evaluated behavior primarily in terms of effort, persistence, and cooperation rather than moral conduct, with awareness of limited English proficiency more often encouraging persistence than withdrawal, alongside strong appreciation for the teacher's facilitative role. In Appreciation, students viewed the games as both enjoyable and educationally valuable, with negative evaluations largely confined to the unfamiliarity of the first session.

These findings indicate that, within this bounded case, students' attitudes toward non-digital GBL emerged from the interaction of game design, emotional experience, language confidence, peer

collaboration, teacher support, and the specific demands of the educational context, rather than as a simple or automatic outcome of using games. The Appraisal Framework was useful for capturing this dynamic, multidimensional pattern of student attitudes; the connections drawn to Self-Determination Theory and Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, including the tentative Tenacity-Capacity paradox, are offered as interpretive support consistent with a single small case rather than as evidence that extends or confirms these theories.

Practically, these findings tentatively support considering non-digital, physically interactive GBL as a supplementary instructional strategy in similarly demanding, resource-limited settings, conditioned on adequate preparation. Because negative Affect and Composition: Complexity evaluations concentrated in the first meeting, teachers are encouraged to provide structured pre-game orientation to reduce initial confusion; because Propriety and Tenacity findings pointed to the value of peer support, grouping students with mixed proficiency levels may encourage peer scaffolding; and because teacher facilitation was repeatedly evaluated positively, an actively encouraging, hint-based (rather than answer-giving) facilitative role, as described in Table 1, appears important to sustain. Non-digital GBL of this kind may be less suitable, or may require additional scaffolding, where instructions are entirely unfamiliar to students, where group composition leaves large proficiency gaps unaddressed, or where a student's disengagement stems from a prior dislike of English rather than from the activity format. As a qualitative case study involving a single class over a relatively short period, the findings are context-specific and should be interpreted with caution regarding generalizability. Future research is encouraged to pursue longitudinal designs with a second independent coder and formal inter-coder reliability reporting, to combine self-report data with systematic classroom observation, and to examine whether the Tenacity-Capacity paradox identified here holds across larger and more varied EFL populations.

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